

THE ANCHOR

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Hebrews 6:19

Mission Statement

The mission of the Alaska Christian Ministry to Seafarers is to establish and maintain a ministry of service to the seafarers calling on Alaska ports. This includes ministry to their physical, emotional and spiritual needs consistent with the Word of God as taught in the Bible and revealed in Jesus Christ through His life and the Holy Spirit. ACMS is a non-profit corporation run by a board of volunteer directors. All directors and volunteers of the organization shall be eligible to serve if they know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and are active in a local church body. Volunteers come from churches world-wide. Members of the board are Karl Bengtson, Bruce Laughlin, George Reichman, Burt Speath, and Ron Tan. Scott Johnson is the director of the missions in Seward and Whittier.

Seward Seaman's Mission

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We need your prayers! *by Scott Johnson*

The Apostle Paul declared "For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope..." Philippians 1:19-20

Please pray for us! God moves on your prayers to make a difference in our ministering and service to the thousands of seafarers coming to Alaska this 2023 season. We will be greeting countless new seafarers from dozens of nations working their first contract, sharing the life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ, teaching the Word of God in church services, driving thousands of miles on hazardous mountain highways with crazy tourist traffic, counseling homesick seafarers too fearful to share with colleagues on board, fighting personal fatigue, preparing and serving daily meals, and many unforeseen ministry challenges. We seek to do it all for the blessing of the seafarers and the glory of God. Thank you in advance for your prayers!

A Taste of Home *by Scott Johnson*

Serve the Lord with Gladness Ps 100:2

A signature characteristic of the ACMS is our fresh baked cookies. Fresh baked cookies make the mission building smell delicious. They give the entire mission a taste of home when you get greeted with a warm welcome and a freshly baked cookie! One seafarer last summer commented, "Eating these fresh



cookies is like a drug addiction! I can't stop eating them!" A volunteer family for many years mixed up all cookie dough batches each year. Then later, churches and individuals would regularly contribute batches of dough throughout the summer season. Several years ago, with the increased number of ships and before the summer cruise season started, we began mixing up all our dough in sessions with volunteers. This year in March, over a two-day period, a dozen devoted volunteers gathered in a home and all our needed cookie dough was mixed and packaged in gallon zip lock plastic bags. We enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship and service. Each filled bag contains a double batch of cookie dough and weighs 5 pounds. We made up 146 double batches resulting in 730 pounds of frozen cookie dough. Each double batch makes approximately 5-6 dozen cookies. We trust God will use our 9000 fresh baked cookies this summer to minister to many seafarers coming to the mission.



Sprucing up the Seward Mission *by Scott Johnson*

Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men... Col 3:23



Each spring the entire Seward Seaman's Mission building, gardens and grounds must be cleaned, raked, and prepared for the summer season. Normally, my wife and I will take our time and do it in progressive stages for our exercise. However this spring, the Alaska winter has gone on and on and on. The snow and cold extended long into April leaving yard and gardens covered with snow. God graciously provided volunteers from the Kenai Fjord Tours company just at the right time. With the company warehouse and housing directly across the street, we have become friends and neighbors with many of the new seasonal workers. One worker organized a crew to come on their day off to help clean up the mission grounds. Four individuals from four states (Mississippi, Indiana, Florida, and California) diligently raked the lawns, cleaned gardens, high-pressure washed the decks, and organized out buildings. We ended the day eating fresh smoked salmon and moose burgers with two volunteers agreeing "we sure don't need to go to the gym today!" We are so thankful for our many volunteers!

180,000 Miles of Service *by Scott Johnson*

The ACMS seeks diligently to take good care of our three transportation vehicles, but every so often an older mission van needs to be replaced. This was one of those years when we desperately needed to replace the old 2003 Mazda minivan with 180,000 miles. God provided \$30,000 funding through the ITF Seafarers' Trust grant program to purchase a used 2019 Honda Odyssey. Their website reads as follows "The Seafarers' Trust vision is to be the leader in promoting and improving the wellbeing of seafarers worldwide. We envisage a world where all



seafarers are healthy, happy and have decent work." The ITF Seafarers' Trust, a UK charity established in 1981, funds programs that advance the wellbeing of maritime workers, seafarers, and their families. We are funded by the Trust's own capital funds, and by the investment income of the Welfare Fund at the International Transport Workers Federation, a global federation of transport workers' unions with over 20 million worker members. The Trust is limited to supporting projects, which directly benefit individual seafarers spiritual, moral, or physical welfare. We thank God for their generosity as they have provided our mission with funds in the past for the purchase of our building, and later adding apartments to the building, and a previous vehicle purchase.

Repositioning Ships *by Jeannette Seale*

"Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. Romans 15:7

In March we seriously start thinking about the ships coming back, receiving quick notes and photos from crew members who are looking forward to "coming home" to the mission. Recently Joe and I experienced the 15 hour time change from Singapore to Anchorage and we have had days of confusion over body time and clock time. What do the crew experience as the ships sail to different parts of the world?

Some ships return to Europe from Florida. Some ships that have been cruising in Antarctica sail up the west coast to spend their summers in Alaska. Ships sail from Asia to the west coast of the US and Canada. One quick look at a time clock app and we can discover that cruising from Asia to Vancouver for the Alaska season not only involves 6 hours ahead but also a day is lost. Sailing to the Mediterranean from Florida involves 6 hours ahead. Every day when the crew awaken they must adjust to the time change. In five days during a crossing, they have lost or gained one hour each day! This is extremely hard on watch keepers on the bridge or engine room as they work a four-hour shift. As they sail, their hours to be awake and asleep change dramatically. One experienced crew member used the term "brutal" for this adventure.

For the crew that take the ship from point A to point B, they have experienced not only time zone struggles but temperature changes. Some crew coming to Alaska for the first time do not have a sweater or jacket because they have not experienced a cold climate before. We always must be alert to see the seafarer that visits the mission the first time in the rain without a jacket or hat. We need to be ready to help with this very personal need.

The crew who joins the ship in Vancouver after flying from Mumbai or Jakarta, or the Philippines travel more than 24 hours to join the ship. After arriving at their destination, they have 4-5 hours in a hotel to sleep before the agent collects them and delivers them to their ship. They are expected to change into their uniforms and report to work immediately. No one has a day or two to recover from the travel fatigue. Many days we hear stories of lengthy and difficult travel. Lord, please give us wisdom, discernment, compassion, and empathy to meet their needs.

World Conference of Port Chaplains, April 2023 *by Jeannette Seale*

"The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe." 1 Tim. 1:5;4:10

The retreat center lobby in Singapore was filled with laughter and hugs as we gathered for the first time in 6 years. Port chaplains came from Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Canada, US, Germany, Holland, and Australia with stories to share, both the triumphs and tragedies. Our discussions centered on our personal walks with Jesus and the two aspects that port chaplains deal with daily: evangelism and discipleship. Most port chaplains deal with tankers and freighters, centering on evangelism as they rarely see the seaman again. Discipleship is important, and if we do not see the seafarer again or have an email contact, discipleship is left up to God. We can make sure the seafarer has a Bible in his first language and Bible studies or good biblical books to read, but our main job is to be seed planters. God will give the growth. May we always remember the lessons we learned and do our utmost to share Christ to those with whom we come in contact.



One very special friend flew from the Philippines. About 30 years ago, he had been a plumber on a HAL ship coming into Seward. The Christian Chief Engineer had brought him quite against his will, to the Seaman's Mission. He could not say "no" to his boss! Eventually he came to trust Christ as his Savior, quit the ships, went to Bible school in the Philippines, and is a pastor of a thriving church. The church is busy reaching out to outlying villages with the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Joe and I had the privilege of inviting Captain Piet Sinke, as a special guest to one of the sharing sessions. He is a retired oceangoing tugboat captain who publishes the Maasmond Maritime email newsletter with a circulation of 45,000 7 days a week. He spoke about the importance of current seafaring news which his newsletter provides and how we all work together to make life better for seafarers.

Other guests were Captain Abhishek Asija, with his wife Namrata, whom Joe and I knew as a Chief Officer on container ships calling into Anchorage 20 years ago. He now lives in Singapore and is the Managing Director of the V Group of ships, overseeing 600 ships and 40,000 crew. He also stressed how important seafarer missions were for him during the covid pandemic.

