

SEND North: a day in the life

WINTER | 2021





THE 60-70 WINDOW

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Letter from Jim Stamberg



I remember when my wife and I, newly married, were trying to figure out what God wanted to do with us. Upon hearing about SEND North and the need for Gospel witnesses in the remote villages of Alaska, we tried to wrap our minds around what daily ministry would look like for us. We asked so many questions of SEND North's leadership and ministry workers trying to understand what exactly we would do. They often struggled to answer, knowing how different each day could be in their differing ministries.

That was over 15 years ago. Now the incredible people of SEND North have become like family to us. We know their struggles and joys, their fears and hopes. We know that each of their ministries and days are incredibly unique. The one common theme that ties us all together is our passion to see people set free through the Gospel

of Jesus. So many people of the North are in spiritual bondage, as evidenced by our enormously high rates of suicide, abuse, and domestic violence. The need is dire and urgent, yet God is at work to bring light to the darkness.

Come along with me as we journey across Alaska and Northern Canada to experience a day in the life of many of our people. They are not super-Christians. They are people just like you, who have said "yes" to the call of God upon their lives.

Together in Christ,

Jim Stamberg

Area Director SEND North



**“Whoever serves Me
must follow Me;
and where I am,
My servant will be.
My Father will honor the
one who serves Me.”**

John 12:26

The Name is COVID



When your ministry takes you into jails or prisons, some jokes are unavoidable. The Lord literally “opened doors” for the Apostles to exit the jail in Jerusalem (Acts 5:19), and again for Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:26). I wonder if Paul had that in mind when he wrote the Corinthian church, saying he would remain in Ephesus “... because a wide door for effective ministry has opened” for him.

We speak of God “opening doors” to describe emerging ministry opportunities, but that same phrase is obviously awkward when speaking of jail ministry; jails (and prisons) are places where doors are closed, locked and kept secured. Special keys and encoded photo badges, and often an officer in the central control room are needed to open these doors. The sounds of heavy metal slamming shut, radio chatter and jangling keys are constant reminders that prison doors are used to prevent escape far more than to provide entrance.

But God has opened “a wide door for effective ministry” in Anchorage Correctional. That doorway has a name you are much too familiar with at this point. **It’s called “COVID.”**

As everywhere, Alaskan detention facilities have been closed to all visitors, all religious volunteers, non-essential staff and most chaplains. I know of only two chaplains who have unrestricted access

in a facility in our state. One is an Alaska state employee; the other...who shall remain unnamed...is a “volunteer chaplain.” It is this volunteer chaplain who could tell you of the ministry opportunities that abound at a time when so many ministries have been hindered or halted.

COVID has ensnared the court systems and slowed “due process” to a sluggish state, so inmate numbers are growing daily. COVID has eliminated all visitation, so this growing number of men can only speak to loved ones via phone; there are no friendly faces viewed through the glass. COVID has shut-down all programming within facilities, so men can’t work on getting their GEDs, or attend “Anger



Management" classes, or even go to "church" or "Bible study" in the chapel. COVID has caused many housing units to be "locked-down" as the facilities fight the spread of the disease.

So basically, there are about a thousand guys, packed into tight spaces, under a lot of stress, with a lot of time on their hands and nothing to do.

Does that sound like a great ministry opportunity to you? It certainly is! Only God can use "evil" for good, and He's doing just that.

We are distributing Bibles, devotional booklets and related materials at an amazing rate. We're even able to offer a nice Bible with the inmate's name imprinted, free to any guy who will do a basic Bible lesson on **who Jesus is and what He did on the cross**. We have given out literally hundreds of Bibles this way.

We give inmates packets of materials which include things like word-find puzzles (usually biblical), crosswords (biblical), articles to read (Christian) together with a calendar (with a Bible verse), Sudoku and more. The idea is to give even the most spiritually disinterested inmate some things he wants joined with Gospel content. This has been amazingly successful, and we've been doing it since March!

The latest, COVID-inspired "wide door for effective ministry" we've jumped through is called "self-study courses." We distribute lessons by pastors/teachers/authors such as Max Lucado (Ten Men of the Bible), James MacDonald (When Life is Hard) and Greg Laurie (Unsung Hero) and call them "Positive Role Models," "Hope in Hardship" and "The Effective Father." When guys complete all the lessons (reviewed by a volunteer who offers direction and encouragement), we give them a certificate and record their work in their files. All this means we have dozens of men doing Bible-based learning at a time when "all programming is on hold." (I really hope you have a smile on your face right now. I do!)

Before I close, I'll try to make this more personal with an individual example. Let's call him... "Starky."

My first look at Starky was a photo of him on my computer; shaved head, lots of tattoos. Starky was a scary looking dude. Seriously. It

turned out he was even a leader in a well-known gang, which didn't surprise me.

I first met him "down in the hole" (the max-security unit) which only added to his image. As I walked through the unit and talked with some of the guys, I always offered them materials, a Bible or whatever they were interested in. This was my first contact with him. "How you doin'?" "Need anything from the chaplain?" etc.

One brief meeting (through a 4-inch wide window, looking into a dark cell) led to more, and more, and over several weeks/months we developed something of a relationship. I sent him a Bible, and some other things, and then I offered him the first lesson in the "10 Men" course. He did it. He wanted more. It wasn't long before he did all ten and got his certificate (side-note; a copy of that certificate is stapled on the wall above my computer as I type this).

Starky has since been moved out of the Hole and into a "General Population" mod. When I saw him last, he was milling around the "day room" of his mod with dozens of inmates out of their cells; guys talking on the phone, watching TV, playing cards (before their mod was COVID quarantined). We greeted each other (in a COVID approved way) and chatted for a while before another inmate interrupted, asking about the "Ten Men" course. Starky answered before I did, and he promoted the course better than I ever could. That inmate, along with 2-3 others within earshot, asked to get the first lesson.

"...a wide door for effective ministry has been opened for me..."

...and that door's name is COVID!

"Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed." Acts 16:26



My Day

by Amy Miller

A Monday: It is dark and so I have to turn on the outside lights to see and shovel my steps and clean off my car. But before I do that, I spend time in the Word to give me strength for the day. After my devotions, I then have breakfast with Mom who moved up with me seven years ago. After getting dressed, I proceed to clear off the snow, so that I can move my car when the owner comes to clean our apartment driveway.

The next order of business is to go through my emails. This is usually the only time that I do my emails. I don't enjoy the digital world as I'd rather be with people or read. Mom and I then walk for 30 minutes in the church if the weather is good, or we walk in our apartment.

I study for my Sunday school lesson and put out what I will need to Xerox and list what I will need to buy for the crafts or games. I have lunch at noon and then go to the hospital as a volunteer spiritual caregiver. I usually spend two hours there and head over for my 3pm Bible study with one woman. My next Bible study is one that changes



A friend with cancer

time and so I can't book anything for the rest of the day. On days that the cannery is open, I have the study with them at 4pm. If they are still working, then it is usually 6pm when we have it. It can have anywhere from 3-8 people in the study and it includes dinner.

I have to get the mail sometime during the day as we have a post office box, and that when I come home, I slit all the letters open and go through the mail. My Mom is losing her sight and so I give her only the mail that she will be interested in. I also chat with her and share how my day has been and ask about hers. The rest of the evening I either read, do jigsaw puzzles or watch TV. I go to bed about 10.



view of Kodiak harbor and mountains

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The Starr Center

In 2019, SEND North purchased a property in Anchorage, to be named the Starr Center.

We are renovating the Starr Center to serve these areas of SEND North's ministry:

- 1. Leading and Supporting**—SEND North has fulltime ministry happening in 22 communities across Alaska and Northern Canada. The hub of this ministry is our Logistics and Support office staff and they will be located in the Starr Center.
- 2. Serving the Community**—Anchorage is home to people groups from all corners of the world. SEND North has a growing diaspora team that will use the Starr Center for ministry events to engage our neighbors.
- 3. Collaborate Together**—The Starr Center will include office space to be used by other ministries in Alaska.
- 4. Stewarding the Ministry**—The Starr Center property has extra commercial space with long-term tenants. The center will generate income for SEND North, keeping missionary fees low.

The Bonanza

For many years, SEND North has utilized aviation to bring people and supplies to the remote areas of Alaska and northern Canada. Airplanes will always be indispensable in *Making Northern Disciple-Makers*.

As SEND North's ministry grows, we need a second Beechcraft Bonanza aircraft to be based in Fairbanks, AK. We are raising funds to purchase and equip this aircraft. Key advantages:

- 1.** Increased speed and range for all-season use (the Bonanza is 40% faster than our current aircraft in that region)
- 2.** Increased fuel capacity for longer direct flights
- 3.** Safe and reliable transportation to the communities where SEND North missionaries live and minister

The Acts 1:8 Campaign total need is \$750,000

Ways to Give:

Give online: www.send.org/Acts1-8 • **Give over the phone:** 1-248-477-4210

Give through the mail: Use the enclosed form to make a donation or pledge a monthly/quarterly commitment (*check, money order, credit card*)

Love Heals the Wounds

by Joe Greeson

As a member care couple in SEND North, my wife and I frequently travel to villages to visit our people scattered across the 60/70 window in Alaska and Northwest Canada. For us, each visit is a real eye-opener, as life is far different from Anchorage where we live. Recently, we were asked to fill in for a SEND North family (we'll call them the Reeds) for several months as they went on Home Service. The Reed family has many ministries in their village and we (along with their just-out-of-college daughter) could only work to keep some of them going until they returned.

Our time there was beyond eye-opening—it was a big wakeup call on one hand and a great encouragement on the other. This family's ministries are typical of SEND North families, as are the attitudes of the residents of the village.

We woke up to a difficult reality; those representing Christ in Northern villages still have a horrible reputation to overcome. We met several residents who were still bitter about the way they or their relatives had been treated in church-run boarding or residential schools, though a public elementary and junior high school have existed for many years in the village. Some told us that one of the worst residential schools in the nation was located nearby. Certainly not all of the boarding schools in the North were nightmares, but neither was this one the only bad one.

The inexcusable physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and cover ups were made worse in that these schools were usually operating in Jesus' Name. In addition, young children were forced away from their families and, according to many accounts, were robbed of their culture, language and traditions. One example from that time: young students were forced to speak English only and beaten when they spoke their own language.

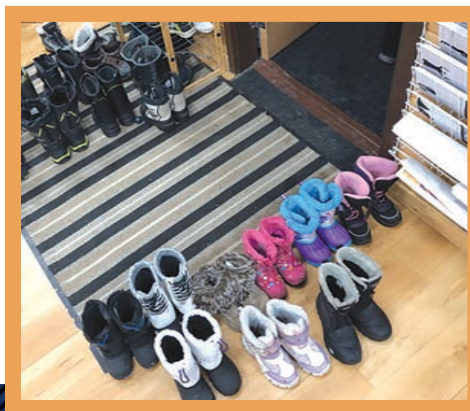
However, there is also abundant evidence of some courageous and compassionate missionaries who left their homes in the south with the goal of

proclaiming the hope of the Gospel and the love of God.

Still, the wounds of the people are deep and the horrible reputation persists, passed on from generation to generation. As a result, the name "missionary" is so charged with negative baggage that in some areas our SEND North workers identify instead as Christ followers or Christian workers.

Where is the encouragement in this sad reality? I was encouraged that the many ministries of the Reed family offer healing from these traumas in many ways. For example, the Reeds operate an afterschool program in Jesus' name that offers the village kids a safe and supervised place to hang out with friends. The Reed house is known in the village to be a safe refuge, where kids can go when their own homes are not safe. Instead of removing children in crisis from their relatives in the village, the Reeds take at risk children into their own home temporarily and return them when the relatives are ready to take them again. We met several young adults who had fond memories of living temporarily with this family. It was a joy to see the Reed's daughter speak to a three-year-old under her care in the local language instead of English, making sure he heard and understood it.

What encouraged me the most was that the ministries of the Reed family in this village lifts high the Name of Jesus, and that their neighbors now associate that Name with love and care in action, especially to the children. It is a joy to do what we can to keep families like the Reeds serving in remote villages. Though there are many obstacles to ministry in the North, the love of God is undeniable in the way the Reeds operate, and that love heals the deepest wounds.





Engage Alaska/Yukon gives young people (18+) a launching point into ministry, particularly ministry in the Far North. Interns can choose from four ministry tracks: Child/Youth Ministry, Cross-Cultural Ministry, Administration/Media, and Aviation.

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- Burdened with the North's need for more harvest workers.
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- More developed in your spiritual gifts and practical skills.
- Connected to many brothers and sisters in Christ and in ministry, all over the North.

For more information visit:

send.org/engage-north

Your Engage Alaska/Yukon adventure starts when you fill out a short form at send.org/pq

A SEND missions coach will connect with you soon. We look forward to hearing from you and serving with you!

Length of internship is flexible, from one month to one year.





His Work, His Way

by Tim Colwell

It is 7:45AM and the alarm goes off. I drag myself wearily out of bed as it has been a short night. If I am to have any sort of quiet time I need to get up before our five children awake and the house becomes a flurry of activity. An early morning ambulance call has allowed me to get only a few hours of shut eye, but that call allowed me and my wife the opportunity to share the Gospel with an individual who is dying of a terminal disease; we were also able to encourage his family.

At 8:15AM I wake the kids so they can start their morning routine before starting school. We do home schooling mostly due to the lack of a good education in the public school. One of our children comes to me for help with English and then it's off to work for me while the rest of the family continues life at home.

It is 8:45AM and the temperature on the thermometer outside is reading -50F. I go out to start the car. It's been plugged in all night but lets me know how cold it is, groaning to life and struggling to stay running. I turn the heater on full blast hoping there will be a little heat when I jump in to leave.

At 9AM, I bundle up in my Arctic Carhartt coat and moose skinned gloves, grabbing an armload of wood for the woodstove. The house is going to use quite a bit of wood today since it is so cold. I am so thankful for the teams who helped me get firewood last spring and summer.

As I get into the car and slowly back out of the driveway, I feel like I am on the back of a rodeo bronco. The tires have flat spots in them due to the extreme cold. By the time I get to my neighbors the ride is smoothing out and I take a quick (5 minute ride) around town to see if there are any people needing a ride to work or school this morning. I pick up one of the teens from the community. He grunts good morning and I take him to the school. Next I head across the street to the HOPE Centre where I will spend the rest of my morning.

At the HOPE Centre I immediately go to the furnace room to make sure the boiler is up to pressure and temperature. I'm happy to see the gauges reading

**“A man’s heart
plans his way,
But the Lord
directs his steps.”**

Proverbs 16:9



normal and say a quick prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord for keeping the building and us safe through the cold night. I also ask the Lord to guide my conversation today as people drop by.

I settle into my office chair to begin my long to do list, which consists of preparing for an upcoming mission meeting, writing an email update to our prayer partners and supporters, and trying to finalize Sunday's sermon. I barely get my computer turned on before R.M. stops in for a coffee. The coffee is not the only reason he's here. His son came home drunk last night and he's wondering how a Christian dad is to encourage his teenage son to live for the Lord. We look over some Scripture together and are praying as another person walks through the door.

This time it's an elderly gentleman who lives outside of town. He says he comes in to see how I'm doing, but, really, he is here because his wife is out of town and he hates to be in the house all day by himself. We sit and chat about various things. He challenges me on what I shared in the message on Sunday; we talk about what the Bible has to say and soon he is sharing stories of years gone by. He is a wealth of information, as he shares experiences of when he worked the trap line or worked in one of the local highway camps. After about an hour, he says he needs to get going if he's going to make it home for lunch.

I am left in the quiet of the office and begin to write an email update to our supporters. I'm typing the

first few words on my keyboard when C.W. walks through the door. C.W. is not a believer, but seems to find his way into the Centre at least twice a week—he is searching for something. I ask the Lord to direct the conversation and to give me boldness to give him the truth. We sit and chat about the weather and how cold it is. He tells me about his lack of anything to do and then asks about our recent trip to visit family. We talk about his job and then he asks me about something he's heard about the Bible. He does not read the Bible, but has heard this from others. I start to share the truth of the Scriptures with him and he quickly changes the subject. Oh, how I pray the Lord will soften his heart.

After about 40 minutes, he gets up to "go do a whole lot of nothing," as he says. I glance at the clock. It is 11:45AM. Another morning has quickly passed and I have done little of what I planned but I am reminded, "A man plans his way, but his steps are ordered by the Lord." I thank the Lord for the people he has brought across my path and go into the office to shut down the computer. I guess that email update will wait until tomorrow.

In a small town like ours, almost everyone goes home for lunch. I stop at the post office to "quickly get the mail," when I am stopped by a dad whose 20-year-old daughter left this morning on a skidoo and he has not seen her since...

(continued on page 10)

He is worried about her, as he tells me she has been struggling with depression for a couple of weeks. He's afraid she's headed out of town and was not dressed for the severe cold. I pray with him for his daughter's safe return and head home to meet the family for lunch.

The family is already seated at the table by the time I get there. The kids' hungry tummies were not going to wait any longer! I sit down with them and thank the Lord for our food and pray for the girl who is missing. We chat about their school work and they ask me who came to visit at the Centre this morning. We laugh and enjoy our time together around the table.

At 1PM, the kids start their school work again and I prepare to go out and visit a few of the community people whom we have prayed will come to church. As I am bundling up to leave, one of the ladies from our church calls and says she is having trouble with her battery in the cold weather. She asks if we can help. The visits scheduled for this afternoon will need to wait.

After grabbing the jumper cables and a thick pair of mittens, I head to G.T.'s house to see if we can get her car started. Though in her mid-seventies, she is still very active and hates being bound to her home. She is hoping to get her car running so she can visit a friend in the community 5 hours away. Like many in our community, the loneliness of winter has discouraged her. After sitting down and drinking tea for an hour, I go out (the temperature has warmed to -30F) and after a few attempts, the car starts. She thanks me for taking the time to help her.

Returning to our house, I glance at the clock—it's 2:45PM. We are to be at the school for Kid's Bible Club in ½ hour. There is no time to visit now. I sit down at the kitchen table and help one of the kids with their homework before we all get dressed and head to the school to begin our afternoon with 15–20 kids.

The kids are wild and crazy today as it is getting close to Christmas. They must have had cupcakes and candy at school—they

are practically bouncing off the walls! We corral them into the gym and start our 1 ½ hour Bible Club. Despite their craziness, they sit unbelievably well as we tell them the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand. We encourage them to put their faith in Christ and end the club by teaching them Philippians 4:19.

As we head home after dropping three kids off at their auntie's house, my phone rings. It's the dad whose daughter has disappeared. They are beginning a search of the highway system and wonder if we would help. My wife volunteers to make a pot of moose stew and bannock as I get bundled up in preparation to join the search.

After spending 6 hours going up and down the highway and exploring various cabin sites along the way, the daughter is found. She is severely frost-bitten, but alive. The ambulance is called to bring her safely back to town. My wife and the daughter get in the ambulance and head down the highway, while I return home to be with our kids.

It is nearly midnight when I finally get home. I am exhausted both physically and emotionally. It has been a busy day. As I step into the shower, I think over the day and thank the Lord for the chances He gave us to share His love with the people around us. The day did not go as I anticipated, but He has led us all the way through it as we relied on Him and His direction.

I crawl into bed alone as it will be some time before my wife is home. The girl was transported to a nearby community to get help. This will become another story of how the Lord was able to encourage the young lady and her parents.

Life for a missionary family is not always this crazy. We have learned that missionary life is often not about preaching a sermon, but living out a sermon in everyday life activities. We rejoice at the opportunities God gives us to be a part of His work, His way.

Average Day at -60°F

by Brandon Fischer



3:00am Put another log on the fire; check outside temperature; go back to bed

5:00am Put heat on snow machine and make sure it is covered well with blankets

7:30am Get up and get our three girls up; stoke fire; make cold breakfast because propane for stove is frozen; prepare school snacks

8:15am Try to start snow machine, but it is just too cold; leave heat on machine; spend some time with the girls

8:45am Try snow machine again, but it still won't start; bundle up the girls extra well and walk two older girls to school one mile away

10:00am Feed/water chickens, get eggs and plug in extra heat lamp for them; split some wood because it is really easy to do at this temperature and we are quickly going through it on a day like this

11:00am Make sure the circulating fan is turned on to keep the crawl space warm; make sure the radiator in pantry is turned on and running to keep the room from freezing

11:30am Work on inside projects: making something for an upcoming memorial potlatch, tanning hides, etc.

Noon Eat lunch

1:00pm Walk to visit an elder friend and hear stories about the way things used to be

and share a few things about what the Bible says about topics we covered

2:30pm Try the snow machine one more time after the outside temperature rises a few degrees and the heat has been blowing on the block for eight hours; it finally starts (yeah!); let snow machine run for 10-15 minutes

2:45pm Continue working on indoor projects; read a book to our one-year-old; study for future sermons

3:15pm Start snow machine again to let it warm up; check eggs again before they freeze

3:30pm Drive to the post office; pick up girls from school

5:00pm Announce on the VHF radio (everyone has one in their home) that there will be no programs at the church this evening because it is too cold

5:30pm Eat moose soup that Beth prepared using our wood stove because our propane is still frozen

6:00pm Spend a quiet night at home with the family



Fifty Below BIKE RIDE

by Martin
Hornfisher



It is 6 am, time to feed the boiler with birch wood to keep the house warm. Last time I filled it up was at 1am. When the temperatures drop to 40 below and colder you must put in a little more effort to heat the house. In fact, this morning the outside thermometer shows 50 below.

I'm on my way to start my little Toyota truck. Oh no, I forgot to plug in the car! What does that mean? Most cars in Alaska are equipped with an engine block heater that heats up the coolant (I know that sounds wrong but it helps). An additional heating pad underneath the car heats up the oil as well. At those temps, the oil gets really slow. For each 10° below, 1 hour heat up time is a good estimate of time. There is no way the car will start—I try it anyway, who knows?

The outside air hits me a like a frozen brick wall.

My nose hairs start to freeze up whenever I suck in air. Of course, the truck is not cranking over. It's real tough on the starter, and I know I should not have done it. Back inside.

At least I was smart enough to put my fatbike inside. This will be my only option this morning to travel the 5 miles to the school campus close to the airport. Since last year, I've been helping the school district driving the school bus. I need to be there at 7:15 am, so I have 30 more minutes. I start to bundle up. Long johns, wool socks, wool bibs and snow pants on top. I quickly stick two air activated heat pads in my socks before I slip into the 10-year-old Kamik boots. This equipment lasts quite a while since you mostly walk on snow; there is not much abrasion, wear and tear. It's just incredibly dry out here, so a coat of shoe wax once a year is helpful.

The head is last, the neoprene face mask comes first, a bomber hat comes on top of the fleece beanie. I finish dressing by putting on snow goggles, put two more hand warmers in my Cabela gloves and I am ready to go.

The bearing grease of my bike is at room temperature. That will change quickly. By the time I start to warm up, the grease gets really stiff and though the 5-mile ride is mainly flat, it feels like you are peddling uphill constantly. While my core starts to sweat profusely, my fingers start to get cold. I form a fist within my gloves to keep them warm. I am not even 5 minutes on the bike yet. We will see how long my headlight will last. The battery drains very fast as well at these temps.

The first part of the ride goes through a boreal forest. It is a semi-swampy area. The tall spruce trees are leaning in



different directions since the already shallow root system is even more limited by the permafrost.

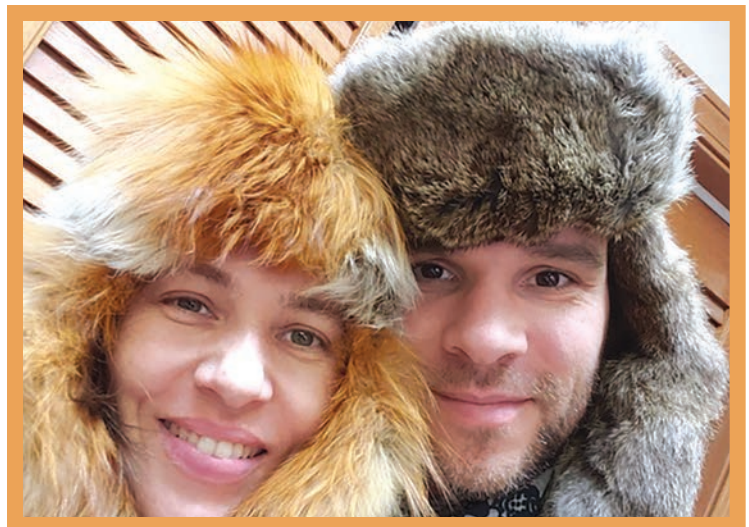
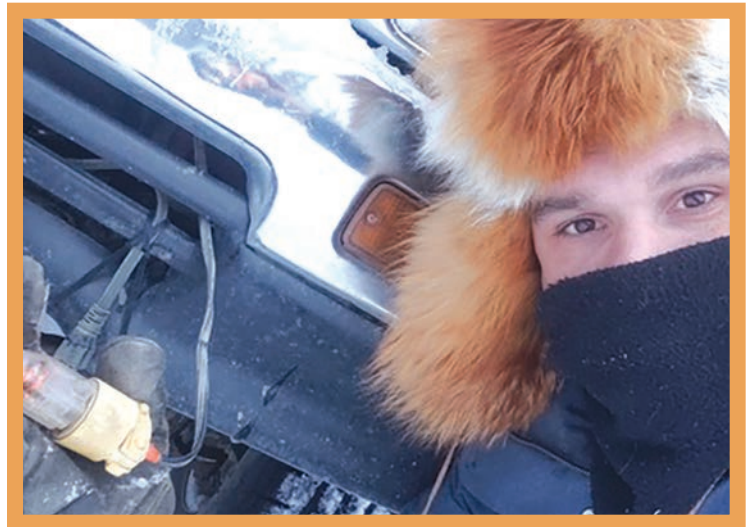
I think about the wolf sightings within Galena. Wolves started coming during the winter months a couple of years ago, mainly to hunt down moose with their young ones. For a long time, those big animals felt safe within the village. It seems like they move in as soon as hunting season starts. Moose have long legs which work great for walking through 3-4 feet of snow. However, it's still easier to walk on a plowed road. That is the reason that moose kill more people than bears—through car accidents. They are hard to spot when it is dark and unlike bears, they don't hibernate.

The pack of wolves might have already started following me. But the bomber hat makes me practically deaf, so the only thing I can hear is my heavy breathing. Just keep going.

The dyke road is coming up that surrounds the airport. It is just a little incline, but it feels like a major hill by now. I am half-way, at least distance wise. The bearing grease is getting more and more stiff. The frosty fog covers the airport, the almost full moon lights up everything, so I am not affected so much when my front LED light quits after 20 minutes. I am almost there.

I head off the dyke road, just past the airport and I'll be there. Even though it's downhill, I am not rolling a lot, nor will I gain speed. However, the brake is a welcomed rest. Not quite to the bottom of the hill, I start peddling again—but the gear is not catching. The bearing grease again! I never should have stopped! I am stuck in neutral. I walk my bike the last quarter mile. In the summertime, this would have been a 15-minute ride. But this morning, it's taken me half an hour. I make it just in time.

After getting the garage key at the dorm desk and opening the garage, I enter the bus where all heat switches are turned fully open, but at these temperatures, it will not get very warm. Soaked in sweat under my three layers, this may be the real cold ride this morning. The rest of the morning goes smoothly. Shortly after 9 am I am back home. My regular workday begins as I finish up the preparation for youth group tonight. Another day in the frozen remoteness of Alaska.

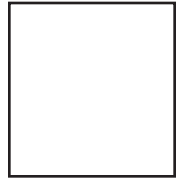


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**“How beautiful are the feet of
those that bring good news!”**

Romans 10:15

