

Nauska Salmon Episcopal Community

Anchorage has been referred to as the biggest native community in the state, and yet, many of the Alaska Natives have not found a church home when they move from the village to the city. There are Alaska Native people in all of the Anchorage congregations, but they are a small percentage. A number of the devout Episcopalians either stop going to church, or find a church home in some of the other denominations when they move to Anchorage. Nauska Salmon Episcopal Community is sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska, and was formed to try and attract people who have not felt comfortable in the current, established congregations.

Nauska Salmon Episcopal Community was named after two of the many Alaska Native saints in the Diocese of Alaska; they are The Rev. Norman Nauska and The Rev. Chief David Salmon. The Rev. Norman Nauska died in 2003, was Tlingit Indian, and I think was the first seminary trained Alaska Native priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska. The Rev. David Salmon died in 2007, was Athabascan, and gifted as a teacher. More will be written about them later.

We meet each Sunday from 5:00 p.m. to about 7:00 p.m. We meet for worship in the beautiful worship space of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church at 7208 Duben Ave. We start off with a time of singing from the Lift Every Voice And Sing II book, listen to the gospel of the day and a sermon, and informal intercessory prayers. There is opportunity for testimonies and healing prayer. We then gather around the altar for celebration of Holy Communion using the Book of Common Prayer. We use real bread and grape juice (unfermented wine). Since alcohol is a stumbling block to so many of the Alaska Natives, we want Communion to be a healing sacrament instead of a stumbling block. After worship we gather downstairs for potluck and fellowship.

Even though it is especially oriented toward the native population, all are welcome. The Rev. Gayle Nauska (hm 337-2974, cell# 529-5218; gnauska@gci.net) is the worship leader and coordinator. If transportation is an issue, please call in advance and arrangements can be made for a ride. Please spread the word to your relatives and friends in Anchorage who have not found a church yet.