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Subject: Pastor's Monday
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Being 3500 miles away from grandchildren is tough, especially this time of year. So Judy and I try to bootleg grandkid time using surrogate grandkids. It is one of the reasons that Judy manages the three nurseries on Sunday morning! And why I love Open Arms! Occasionally we try to surrogate grandparenting together, offering to take care of young children for parents. We were all set to do that this past Friday evening for the Matherlys. Jim's bank was having their Christmas party, and in response to our offer, they asked us if we would keep the boys (five!). We checked our calendars and quickly said yes. Which was fine until Judy on short notice left on Thursday morning to spend a week with her mother in Annandale, VA. That left me with the boys. When I told the Moriah it would be just me, she wanted to know if I wanted out. Absolutely not! She said she would see if Sharon Gillen, a regular sitter of the boys, would come and help. She was able to come, but I would have the boys for about an hour before Sharon would arrive, could I handle that? Sure.

It was a wonderful time! When I arrived at 5:30, Moriah and Jim had things organized. I ate with the boys as Jim and Moriah finished getting ready. I was given a tour of the house (they bought Danny and Nancy Bernhart's home on Riverside), received a few instructions, got their cell phone number and they were off. The evening flew by. The boys, according to Jim, were excited that Pastor was coming to their house. And it showed. We had a great time. The twins, Max and Miles, are cuddle bugs! Jack is very much the older brother, doing things for the younger ones and the master of the TV/Cable/DVD remotes (three of them!). Ross continues to be the thoughtful one. Ross is the one whose "Jesus is My Hero" drawing was shared by Moriah with our Thanksgiving Day services. On the refrigerator was another assignment by Ross. This time, "what I will give for Christmas." He has five things listed, the first was "I will give forgiveness." And Hugh is a rambunctious, full of fun, full throated and tender hearted toddler!

This morning I had pictures of my three oldest granddaughters all dressed up for the "Nutcracker" which they attended yesterday afternoon in Norfolk. Having just had my grandkid fix with "the boys" made seeing those pictures just a little bit easier.

This past week is so typical of what makes being a Pastor in Fairbanks at Zion so wonderful. The LOVE Inc. troubles are being addressed by a wonderful coalition of committed pastors. Advent services on Wednesdays with Holden Evening Prayer just gets better and better as the years go by – this is the 15th year Zion is doing Holden for Advent. My PCCPCs (Pastor/Confirmand/Catechist/Parent/Conferences) are going very well. Eva Lose has shown a remarkable improvement the last couple of days. But with that goes the sadness of Amy Fry's Aunt Gaye McDowell being lost with the medivac helicopter last Monday evening on its way from Cordova to Anchorage. As I write this, one body (the nurse on board) has been found and the search continues.

Just got word that Alexander Anthony Barton was born this morning to Charlie and Kim. They are the couple that shared their story at the Wednesday evening Thanksgiving service. They attend the 8:30 service – Charlie flies helicopters for the Army and is one of our catechists. Yeah God.

Have you been to Celebrate Recovery on Friday Night? If not, this Friday is the night to come. Mark Hamilton of UAF will be the featured speaker.... And I would hope that you would all stay for the 101 newcomers orientation that always follows so you would have a full understanding of what CR is all about. For information, call Alice Heckert at 590-1062.

And of course... CHRISTMAS AT ZION 4:00 PM on Sunday and the Children's Program at 6:00.

Blessings.

Pastor K

PS, If you have not turned in your Consecrated Steward response card yet, please do so as this helps us plan for the coming year.