

ONE OF ALASKA'S OLDEST NEWSPAPERS

ANCHORAGE

Daily News

Good Morning!



Alaska's ONLY Sunday and Morning Newspaper

Member Associated Press

Partly cloudy today and tonight. Cloudy tomorrow.  
High today near 49. Low tonight near 29.

HOURS OF DAYLIGHT		TIDES AT ANCHORAGE	
12 noon, 24 hours	High	High	Low
Sunset today 6:33 p.m.	5:12 a.m.	33.4	11:42 a.m.
Sunrise tomorrow 5:11 a.m.	5:23 p.m.	28.4	— p.m.

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**Visiting Churches:** Chris Thompson (stainedglass) is an amateur Alaskan biblical scholar and student of religion, especially as it relates to popular culture. He regularly attends national and regional American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature events to interact with and learn from worldwide religion scholars. Through unannounced mystery visits to churches in Anchorage and South-Central Alaska, he observes how guests (visitors) are treated during this initial church visit. Research indicates guests first visit perceptions affects further spiritual growth and religious attitudes as they search for a church home. Chris' church visits focus primarily on Christian churches. This blog contains accounts of those visits, and related posts about religion in culture. Chris looks for the following in his visits:

- Genuine welcome, true Christian hospitality
- Friendliness and warmth
- Effective, well-delivered, Bible-based, main teaching
- Music deepening the worship, not just entertainment



### Summary of Stainedglass's article as reported in the Anchorage Daily News:

Conveniently located, Midtown Anchorage's [First Christian Church](#) offers warm welcomes, participative services, and delightful camaraderie missing in many local churches. I felt welcomed from the very beginning. Although I visited them on December 14, 2008 the Third Sunday of Advent, I left feeling their warmth was not unusual for this or any other day. Offered a name tag, I was on a first name basis with everyone immediately.

A poignant recognition by the church of a long-term Sunday School teacher was a great sharing point. Pastor Dale Kelley's childrens story time and the star gift for each child helped underscore the importance of children to this slightly older congregation. The sermon was the first, among my Anchorage church visits, to be delivered by a woman. A sad but true sticky thought from her sermon was "Mary's song will not be heard as often this Christmas season as *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*."

Open communion was served followed by a time of food and fellowship to which I was invited numerous times. Many parishioners greeted me warmly during this time engaging me in meaningful conversation. No question about it. This is a great church to visit!