



COMMON GROUND

Newsletter of United Campus Ministry
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Zippering into the New Year!

I hope that you had a wonderful Christmas break; our family had a wondrous time in Hawaii taking in the sun's good vitamin D and seeing the lush green that is a distant memory in Alaska. It was beautiful and we had a great time together with a lot of fun with my mom who met us there. We enjoyed seeing whales and dolphins, mountains and waterfalls and all the beautiful botanical life. We visited with friends from here in Fairbanks and really enjoyed playing cards with Grandma. All in all it was a fantastic trip with great family time and a real refreshing break for all of us.

One of the many fun adventures that we had was to go Zip Lining at Piihola Ranch. They promised us an unforgettably exhilarating excursion. Let me preface this with Clarice and I are both afraid of heights and climbing a 42 foot tower and zipping over a valley took some courage from both of us. Our adventure began with several trips to the outhouse and many questions about the safety of zipping and questions about getting our money back if we chicken out. We then strolled across a 317-foot long suspension bridge leading to the first Zip line tower. The Chickens, that would be Clarice and I, were last in line. That was a big mistake; the wait was the worst, standing, thinking about what could go wrong. Finally, Conoa our guide called us up and hooked us into the safety rope as soon as we got up on the 42ft platform. He then got us harnessed up to the Zip Line. Clarice asked him to check her harness and then she asked him again and then again. He then untethered us, gave a 3, 2, 1 count and down the line we slid.

I think that Clarice was pretty well terrified the whole time but for me once I had climbed the first tower and got out over the open spaces my fears for the most part were gone. Over the next three Zips we flew over Eucalyptus forests, native Koa and Ohia trees, and many indigenous plants, and caught grand coastal and canyon views all along the ride.



So often it is hard for us to have the courage to step out of our comfort zone and follow what God has in store for us. I encourage you this semester to like Peter, when Christ came to him walking on the water, get out of the boat. Take that first step to a stronger prayer life, to digging deeper in to God's word, to fasting or just listening to what God wants you to do. Know that, like Clarice who zipped right beside me, others (who may be more afraid than you) go with you. We are praying for you. And know that, like Conoa who took care of us and hooked us in safely, as you risk in faith God will shield you and protect you and always be with you. Step out in faith; step out in Love, trusting that God has the very best in store for you this semester.

Weekly Events

Monday: Music Ministry- If you play an instrument or like to sing, come join us in the UCM office as we practice songs to sing for Tuesday's Evening Worship. Our first session will be this **Monday January 25th at 4pm**. We will determine a permanent meeting time then.

Tuesday: Vespers- Casual worship service in the Lola Tilly Commons lounge @ 7:30pm. It all starts **January 26th**. Bring a friend and we will bring the Pizza!

Thursday Evening Dinners! Every Thursday we will meet at the United Campus Ministry office and head over to the Moore's for dinner. Afterwards we will either have Bible Study, go to a UAF sporting event, or do a service project. For Bible Study this semester we will continue to study the Parables of Jesus. (**Starts January, 28th**)

Upcoming Special Events:

Yukon Quest-Saturday, February 6th: We will meet at the office at **9:30am** and head out to the home Tom Horton and Nancy Harries to watch the start of the Yukon Quest sled dog race. There will be fun, food, fire and a great view of the teams on the Chena River. We will return to campus by 2pm.

Spring Retreat- Friday, February 19th -20th – We will meet at the office at 5:45 pm and go to First Methodist Church for dinner, games and fun. On Saturday we will go to the Food Bank to serve and then go out for lunch.

Haiti Support Fundraiser Dinner and Talent Show- February 28th We will team with the youth at First Methodist Church to raise funds for the people of Haiti! We will meet at the office at **5pm** and head to First Methodist for this event. Come share your time and talent with all of us!

