

## **Gustavus**

Gustavus, the Gateway Community to Glacier Bay National Park, is located approximately 48 air miles northwest of Juneau and offers experiences of a town steeped in a rich homesteader history, with wildlife sightings and world-class fishing. While Gustavus is the ancestral homeland of the Huna Tlingit, today's population is composed of 86% white, 7% Native Alaskans (City Data). The most recent pastor reported a core congregation of 15-20 people. The congregation may be able to provide a small stipend and housing by means of a church parsonage. Most pastors have either been appointed missionaries or bi-vocational.



### **Community:**

**Location** – Gustavus, the Gateway Community to Glacier Bay National Park, is located on the north shore of Icy Passage at the mouth of the Salmon River, forty-eight air miles northwest of Juneau (Explore North).

**Travel/Transportation** – Most people travel to Gustavus by jet, bush plane, or ferry ride from Juneau, Alaska's capital. Alaska Airlines services the modern airport during the summer (Gustavus Visitor Association).

**History** – Gustavus is the ancestral home of the Huna Tlingit. "The history of Gustavus has three timelines: The forces of nature that formed it in the last 200 years, which makes Glacier Bay a United Nations World Heritage Site; white settlement; and Native oral history and use," (Gustavus Visitor Association). According to Explore North, "When Capt. George Vancouver sailed through Icy Strait in 1794, Glacier Bay was completely enclosed by the Grand Pacific Glacier. Over the next century, the glacier retreated some 40 miles, and a spruce-hemlock forest began to develop. By 1916, it had retreated 65 miles from the position observed by Vancouver in 1794. Gustavus began as an agricultural homestead in 1914."

**Population** – City Data notes the 2019 population was 447 people.

**Demographics** – While Gustavus is the ancestral homeland of the Huna Tlingit, today's population is composed of 86% white, 7% Native Alaskans (City Data).

**Jobs** – Most common industries include arts, entertainment, recreation (24.2%), construction (12.1%), and educational services (10.0%) (City Date). There are many opportunities for summer jobs in the tourism industry. Estimated median household income in 2019: \$71,130 (City Date).

**School** – The school in Gustavus is part of the Chatham School District (City of Gustavus).

### **Church History:**

The Gospel Message in Gustavus has a long and rich history, beginning with Edith Parker, who traveled to Alaska with her husband and children in 1898 in search of gold. Edith

started a Sunday school for children around 1916. Jack Warden would become the first official pastor in 1970. Violet Christopherson served in Gustavus as pastor for nearly ten years and reported 27 regular attendees. The most recent pastor noted 15-20 core members.

**Sources:**

“Gustavus.” Gustavus Visitor Association. <https://www.gustavusak.com/>. Accessed May 26, 2021.

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