

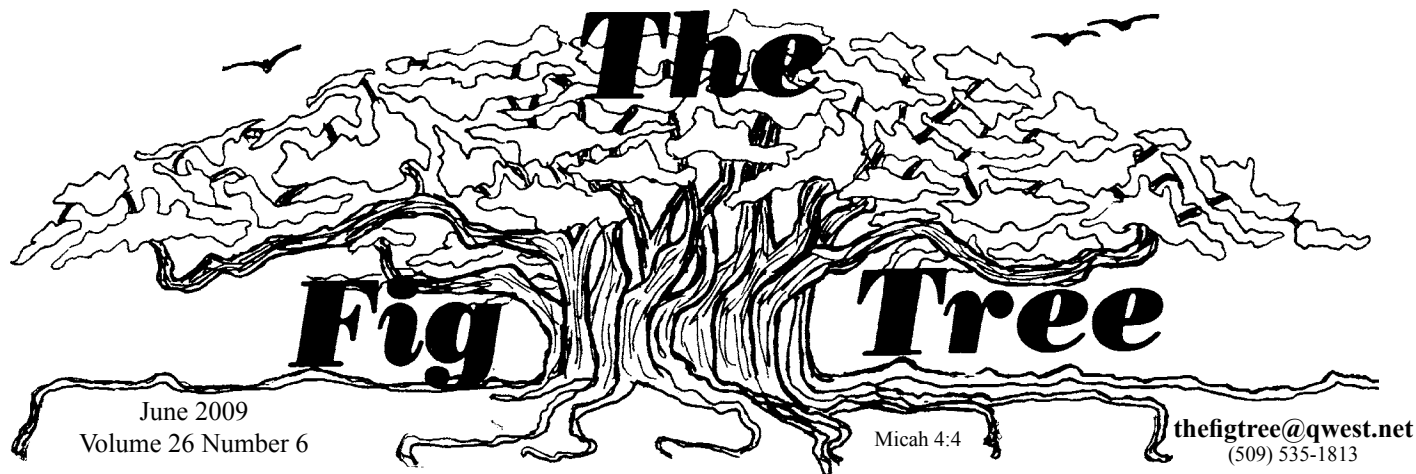
STORIES INSIDE

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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest
online in color at www.thefigtree.org

Couple counteract cultural losses

By Mary Stamp

Through weaving and education, fair trade and grant writing, one Spokane couple help counteract the effects of the loss of culture, values and land that conquered, indigenous cultures around the world face.

Simply by continuing her family tradition of Mayan back-strap weaving Maria Cuc preserves and passes on her cultural identity, heritage and values to her teenage daughters and two-year-old son, even though she now lives in Spokane.

Her husband, Felipe Gonzales, who grew up in a Mexican family in Texas, shares her commitment to maintaining and restoring indigenous traditions, languages and crafts through his fair trade enterprises and through writing grants for the Kalispel Tribe.

They met when he lived 16 years among the Mayan people in Guatemala. In 2001, he moved to Spokane where he has a brother. They married after she came in 2003.

Maria grew up in Solola, Guatemala. As the only one of her six siblings to finish high school, she worked seven years as an accountant for Mayan, grassroots



Maria Cuc uses backstrap loom to weave traditional cloth.

community development projects in rural communities around Lake Atitlan. She also studied economics two years at the University of San Carlos satellite campus in Solola.

Since moving to Spokane, Maria has taken up the Kakchiquel weaving she learned from her mother when she was 10. Through her business, Maya Color, she markets products with multicolored cloth woven by her and woven by Guatemalan family and friends.

Designs come from ancient patterns, representing fish, crabs, flowers, pine trees, birds and other plant and animal life in the area of Lake Atitlan. The jasje or ikat threads she uses come pre-dyed with the designs in them.

In Guatemala, the cloth might be used to wrap things, to carry a baby or to make a traditional blouse. For North America sales, however, it is prepared as table runners, as inlaid fabric in leather purses, as scarves, coin bags or other items.

“Weaving is integral to the daily life of Mayan women, considered one of the most important responsibilities to pass from generation to generation,” she said.

Maria’s sisters learned to weave
Continued on page 4

Power of camp experiences, camperships likely to overcome economic downturn

Even though the economic downturn and cultural trends slowed registrations for area church camps during May, most area managers and directors anticipate numbers will pick up and be near normal.

Camps are less costly than other vacation and child-care options, plus most congregations provide camperships—camp scholarships—to help cover the costs for children and youth.

“Camp scholarships are key to keeping up participation regardless of campers’ ability to pay,” said Bruce Christensen of Camp

MiVoden on Hayden Lake.

The national and regional Seventh-Day Adventist Church, he said, provide “strong support” because camp experiences are such “powerful tools” for drawing children and youth to commit to ongoing lives of faith, he said.

The support is similar for other churches.

Scholarships make it possible for low-income children to participate, so “funding should not prevent children from coming,” said Maureen Cosgrove, the new director at Camp Cross, the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane’s camp

on Lake Coeur d’Alene.

Brian White of Twinlow, the United Methodist Camp on Spirit Lake, said “families may be able to go to camp even if they can’t afford a vacation.”

Camps are life-changing

Beyond financial concern, “we pray for strong attendance because we are passionate about the impact a week at a Christian camp has in the lives of children and youth,” said Andy Sonneland, director of the Presbyterian Camp Spalding on Davis Lake. He expects numbers to approach the 2008 record of 1,608 campers.

Camp gives time away from “the culture’s noise” in God’s creation with “fun, young adult role models excited about their faith.” It gives campers time to consider what their lives would be like “if lived more closely with Jesus Christ,” he said.

Camps are geared to excite youth about church and connect campers to local churches.

Every inch holds memories

Randy Crowe, managing director at N-Sid-Sen on Lake Coeur
Continued on page 8

Mexican apple farmers learn at area orchard

Six small apple farmers from Chihuahua, Mexico, are visiting Eastern Washington June 13 to 19 as part of a cross-border apple project supported by Catholic Relief Services/Mexico (CRS) and the Broetje First Fruits of Washington Orchard near Prescott.

“It’s an example of supporting people’s ability to make a living in their own country so they don’t have to migrate,” said Scott Cooper, director of Parish Social Services with Catholic Charities in Spokane. “Farmers with CRS’s partner Frente Democratio Campesino de Chihuahua—Farmers’ Democratic Front—have gained technical support to grow apples more competitively.

“This partnership shines light on some of the root causes of migration. It is a positive, constructive solution that respects people, saves lives and keeps families together,” Scott said. “It appeals to people regardless of where they fall on the spectrum of opinion on immigration.”

Catholic Charities in Spokane is arranging two gatherings to learn about the project and migration issues. One is on Sunday, June 14, at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church in Walla Walla and another on Friday, June 19, at St. Joseph’s, 1503 W. Dean.

The project is part of Por un Mercado Justo (For a Just Market), said Chuck Barrett, economic development program coordinator for CRS/Mexico. It involves growers who have farmed hillsides in Chihuahua for generations. CRS/Mexico works with communities of Tarahumara—also known as the Rarámuri—indigenous people, many of whom work in apple harvests involved in the project.

Continued on page 5

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Eight WCC presidents offer Pentecost message

Noting that 2009 began with "grave concern about the catastrophic economic situation of the world of wealth," the eight presidents of the World Council of Churches spoke on the disastrous financial and economic difficulties that came to light in 2008 and called for recognition of wrongdoing, needed before repentance is possible.

"Many in charge in today's world have to recognize they have been insensitive in managing the resources of our planet: the rich always get a bit richer, to the detriment of the poor who live in acute poverty; the impoverished have no power, given their condition, to say no to what is imposed upon them," they said.

The situation on every continent is the same, and the most pressing question today is still, "What should we do?"

They call for repentance that involves:

- Corporate managers recognizing their errors, publicly confessing them and making reparation.
- Everyone responsible for degradation of the ecosystem mending their ways and reducing pollution.
- Those who instigate violence becoming gentle and tolerant.

"The repentance proclaimed by Christ and restated at Pentecost is a force for spiritual transformation, change and renewal. Human beings must seek to be reconciled with themselves, with one another, and with their environment, and churches too must seek reconciliation," said the presidents.

Signers are an Albanian Orthodox archbishop, a French Polynesian Protestant, a Benin Methodist, an Indonesian Batak Church leader, a Cuban Presbyterian-Reformed leader, an Ethiopian Orthodox patriarch, a U.S. United Church of Christ pastor and a Church of England leader.

Scottish church considers 'virtual ministers'

Edinburgh (ENI). To stem a nationwide shortage of full-time clergy, the Church of Scotland is considering the use of "virtual ministers" who would preach over a live video link to congregations that do not have a permanent minister. "Preaching by video link to vacant congregations is one of many radical changes being proposed by the Ministries Council in consultation with the Mission and Discipleship Council," Gordon Bell, media relations officer with the Church of Scotland told Ecumenical News International. There are 21 congregations in the Orkney presbytery on 10 islands. The minister will be physically present in a different island each week and virtually present in the others. There are an estimated 190 full-time vacancies for clergy in Scotland.

African church leader promotes human rights

Nairobi (ENI). The leader of Africa's largest grouping of churches is urging faith communities and civil society on the continent to unite in a campaign for human rights. "As churches we have often failed to speak with one voice for human rights and dignity in Africa," said the Rev. Andre Karamaga, the general secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches at a meeting of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in May in Gambia, Africa's smallest country. "There is need to unite towards the goal of confirming human rights for all people and holding our governments accountable to their commitment," stated Andre, who comes from the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda.

Zambian church uses theatre and radio

Geneva (ENI). The United Church of Zambia is using street theatre and broadcast media to encourage church members to get involved in efforts to influence negotiations between the European Union and their country on trade issues.

Protestant leader derides 'rescue packages'

Geneva (ENI). The top official of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches has condemned the disparity between the financial support offered to those responsible for the international financial crisis and the conditions in which many of the world's people live.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Fig Tree editor offers training in Seattle

Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp will offer a training session for people in Western Washington who want to contribute articles, videos and podcasts to a Western Washington section of thefigtree.org.

The training will be held from 5 to 7 p.m., Thursday, June 11, in Hunthausen Hall at Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry.

Mary will also meet with persons interested in developing The Fig Tree West website at 10 a.m.,

Friday, June 12, at University Christian Church, 4731 15th Ave. SE, in Seattle.

She will offer training in the model of solutions-oriented journalism, credible communication, and editorial guidelines that frame The Fig Tree's unique approach to covering religion news through faith-in-action stories.

Mary is available to speak with groups, preach, offer mission moments and do training sessions for groups on requests. She will also

train people who would like to be part of a speakers bureau to promote The Fig Tree and increase readership.

In May, she led two classes at St. Luke's Episcopal in Coeur d'Alene, and led an adult forum and gave a mission moment at Manito Presbyterian Church. She also gave a prayer for families as part of the 2009 Leadership Prayer Breakfast.

For information, call 535-1813 or 206-625-9790.

Directory updates may still be submitted

The 2009-2010 Directory of Congregations and Community Resources will be published in June by The Fig Tree.

The 200-page directory includes a comprehensive listing of 1,300 congregations, plus more than 2,600 ecumenical ministries, human services, justice resources, health care, seniors resources and youth/children support services in Eastern Washington.

This year, The Fig Tree is partnering with Community Colleges of Spokane HeadStart/ECEAP to include listings previously in that

directory, which has joined with The Fig Tree directory. The front page will reflect that collaboration.

The publication will include a full-color cover and color inside.

It is being updated, compiled, reviewed and edited by directory editor Malcolm Haworth, Career Path Services volunteer Elrina Morgan, Community Colleges of Spokane staff, editor

Mary Stamp, and volunteers. Each year data is updated by mailers, personal and phone contacts, and checking with websites.

Updates may still be submitted for the directory by checking the copy online at www.thefigtree.org/connections.html or connections-resources.html. Corrections can be sent by email to thedirectory@qwest.net or called in to 535-1813.

The Fig Tree's domain name email is not working. Please email thefigtree@qwest.net or thedirectory@qwest.net.

Unity in the Community will expand

Community-Minded Enterprises is hosting a fund raiser for Unity In the Community, from 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, June 4, at the Saranac Building, 25 W. Main.

The 15th annual Unity In the Community will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 15, at Riverfront Park in Spokane.

"The Inland Northwest's largest multicultural celebration has steadily grown from 50 attendees in 1994 to nearly 8,000 in 2008," said Ben Cabildo, Unity's chair and director of the AHANA business education and training program of Community-Minded Enterprises. "Our goal is to draw 10,000 in 2009."

The event began at Liberty Park, and growing attendance led it to move to a larger, central location. Activities will fill Riverfront Park, from the Clock Tower to the runner statues.

The free, family-oriented event includes music, dancers, demonstrations, and cultural villages with booths from 50 countries.

"We believe it is possible to connect the people of our region and celebrate their fascinating cultures," Ben said.

Business leaders, corporations, and city and county governments previously supported the event, but the economic downturn means some cannot contribute as much,

so organizers are raising funds.

The 2009 theme, "Mission Possible," is about promoting unity by showcasing diversity, encouraging community education and serving as a resource for youth, adults and families.

At Unity in the Community, career and education fair will assist job seekers by including vendors, businesses, universities and professionals offering information on how to be tech-savvy with electronics from social networks to cell phones; how to achieve success in higher education, and how to find employment during a recession.

For information, call 444-3088.

Rick Heitmann is new director at Martin Luther King Center

Rick Heitmann, the new director at the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center in Spokane, brings business skills to his role of developing the center's family and children's services.

Since starting in February, he has been focusing on policies,

procedures, fund raising, planning and promotion.

"Everyone dependent on government funding finds it shrinking or going away, and fewer can maintain their level of donations, said Rick, who worked from 1988 to 2000 with Inland Power and Light and has since consulted with other nonprofit electric utility cooperatives.

He lived 35 years in Davenport, where he attended the United

Methodist Church. After earning a bachelor's degree in math and physics in 1968 and a master's in counseling in 1971 at Washington State University, he taught at Davenport High and at Spokane Falls Community College.

He worked with the Lincoln Electric Cooperative and the Benton Rural Electric Association in Prosser, before coming to Inland Power and Light.

For information, call 455-8722.

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**Organization lists
child care resources**

Child Care Resource and Referral, a nonprofit operating in collaboration with Community-Minded Enterprises, has compiled an electronic childcare directory, listing options for the Spokane area.

Listings of about 500 licensed child-care centers and family care providers are sorted by city and zip code, said Jill Johnson of the Family Care Resources.

The information has been available at www.community-minded.org/family/ since May 28. It will be updated quarterly. For information, call 209-2652 or email jillj@community-minded.org.

**Church sets auction
of art in August**

Latah Valley Presbyterian Church will hold "The Art Auction at the Threshold" from 5 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 27, on its campus at 202 E. Meadowlane Rd., to raise funds for future art events.

Artists may donate or receive 50 percent of the auction amount for their art on the theme, "The Spiritual Journey into and out of the Institutional Church." The event includes music, a silent and live auctions, and dessert.

For information, call 481-8110 or email scott@latahvalley.org.

**Engaging Fatherhood
conference planned**

A group called the Dads' Network is sponsoring an "Engaging Fatherhood" Conference from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, June 25 at the Spokane Community College Lair.

Don Barlow, one of the organizers, said there will be workshops on grief and loss, single fathering, fathers and daughters, family law and child support, the importance of fathers in healthy child development and more.

The event is during the week of Fathers' Day, which is on Sunday, June 21, and it is being held in recognition that Fathers' Day started in Spokane in 1910.

For information, call 535-7466 or email dbarlow467@aol.com.

Fig Tree plans dialogue on 'The Search for Wisdom'

Given that modern society is overwhelmed with information and opinion, through traditional mass media and the internet, but often lacks the framework for understanding how to sort it out, The Fig Tree is planning a community dialogue on "The Search for Wisdom" at 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 21, at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th.

As part of its Faith in Action Dialogue, the program will invite congregations, community groups and media help recruit groups of eight and engage them in table discussions.

"In reporting on issues, modern mass media generally avoid seeking perspectives from faith communities in their coverage of issues," said organizer and moderator Steve Blewett.

Steve is a member of The Fig Tree Board and former head of the journalism department at Eastern Washington University.

"Media rely on an accumulation of secular points of view from sources such as politicians, educators, special interest groups, interested and affected individuals and professional commentators, except when special-interest faith communities have politicized their agendas or entered into the political or social arena," he said.

As the primary gatekeepers of the public discourse, newspapers, TV and radio have had the ability to manage those conversa-

tions, and they were the preferred source of information and opinion by most citizens despite their self-imposed limits on their approaches to reporting.

"That environment has changed significantly with the advent of the internet," Steve said. "Now, virtually any individual or group can become a 'media' and promote its own perspectives or even set up as a primary source."

"The fundamental problem is, if anything, worsened by this cacophony of voices," he suggested. "Whom among all those voices can the public trust and who is simply seeking their own advantage?"

The Fig Tree's Faith In Action Dialogue in October will address these issues. A panel of local leaders in traditional and emerging faith communities will lead discussion and seek dialogue among their constituents on a broad spectrum of questions:

- How can faith communities break through the barriers that prevent sharing the wisdom accumulated in their teachings, traditions and communities with other groups and society in general without opening old wounds or creating new ones?

- What barriers exist in the traditional and emerging media that prevent faith communities from sharing their wisdom more effectively with others?

- What is that wisdom?

- Whose responsibility is it to seek out the wisdom cached in our faith communities?

- Can we effectively be our own gatekeepers or do we need "expert" guides?

- How do social networks-Facebook, YouTube, My Space, Twitter and others-either help or hinder the process?

- How do traditional faith communities cope with the impacts of new media and the emerging points of view they both develop and communicate?

- How can people of faith from all communities use the internet to acquire and share wisdom more effectively?

- How can these processes be used constructively to direct public discourse and governance?

- Where do we find authentic voices?

The Fig Tree invites community groups to bring tables of participants who will consider the questions raised in the Faith in Action Dialogue, discuss those ideas and share perspective among attendees and beyond.

"We hope to start an extended dialogue among communities of faith in the Spokane region to help interested parties better understand how media shape our understanding of wisdom and public issues and what can be done to more effectively shape that process in authentic ways," Steve said.

For information, call 535-1813.

Hospice offers wellness walking club

The Wellness Walking Club, a program to encourage physical activity for those who are grieving and for others, is being organized by Hospice of Spokane, Fairmount Memorial Association and the Spokane Humane Society.

It starts on Wednesday, June 3 and runs from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays through August—in June at Fairmount Memorial Park,

in July at Riverside Memorial Park and in August at Greenwood Memorial Terrace.

Hospice of Spokane volunteers will lead walkers on paths through the cemeteries.

On the last Wednesdays, adoptable dogs from the Spokane Humane Society will join the group to provide pet therapy.

For information, call 747-4029.

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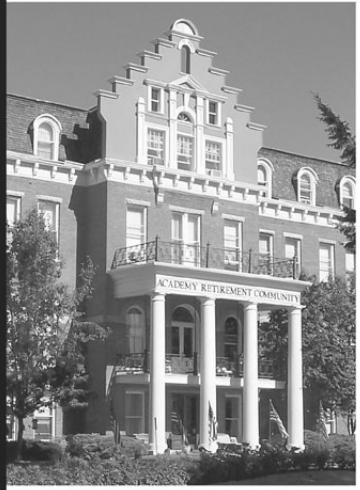
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RETIREMENT & ASSISTED LIVING

Weaving, fair trade, grants help preserve cultures

Continued from page 1
when they were six and Maria has taught her daughters, Ingrid, 18, and Lesly, 16. She teaches backstrap weaving at workshops, gives demonstrations, does digital slide presentations on the weaving, culture, languages, poverty and health concerns in Guatemala at community colleges.

One presentation tells, for example, that more than 37 percent of the people live on less than \$2 a day, and 76 percent of indigenous people are poor. About 50 percent of the agricultural land is controlled by 2.5 percent of the farmers. The adult literacy rate is 70 percent, but just 39 percent for indigenous women.

Maria said the loss of traditional weaving and culture in Guatemala stems from poverty, which is the result of the government limiting access to health care, education, food and opportunities.

"We're on our own," she said. The Maya have a long history of being self-sufficient, with men producing their own food and selling extra, and women making their own clothes to wear or sell.

"While some middle-aged and older women still wear traditional dress, most men stopped wearing it and stopped speaking Mayan language during the 30 years of civil war, because they were targeted and killed," Maria said, adding,

"Few children wear traditional clothes. Those who do, do not make their own," she said.

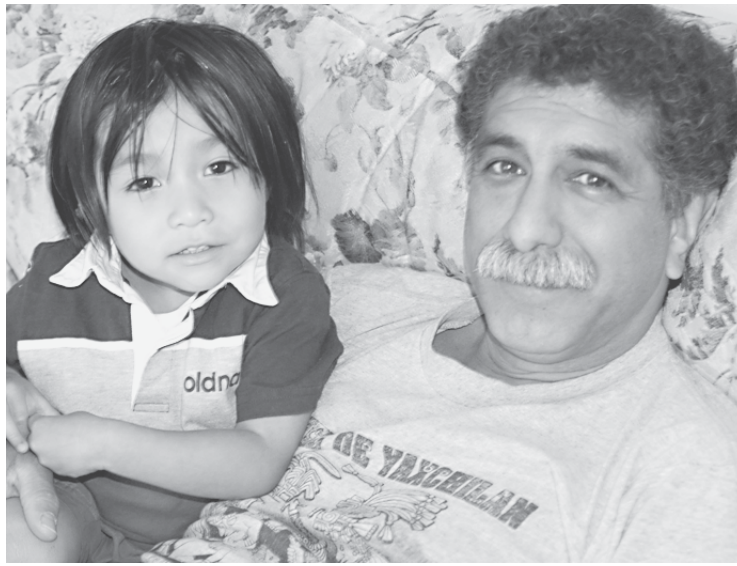
"With the loss of traditional dress, we have lost values," she explained. "Young people have to go to work to put food on the table and buy clothes."

"It's now hard to distinguish indigenous young people from Hispanic people," Maria said, as Felipe translated from Spanish to English. She also speaks Kakchiquel and is learning English. Spanish is the official language in Guatemala.

While her grandfather practiced Mayan spirituality, her parents raised her Catholic. In Spokane, she attends La Comunidad Catolica de San Jose, the Hispanic parish of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, at 1503 W. Dean.

Since the civil war ended in 1996, Maria said there have been some scattered efforts to revitalize the language and traditions.

Felipe, who is the grandson of Mexican immigrants, grew up in Texas. After college, he lived in Guatemala. Now along with working half time writing grants for the Kalispel Tribe, he runs two fair trade businesses, Moonflower Enterprises and



Felipe Gonzales with his son, Angel.

Maya Earth Coffee.

"The values of indigenous people include connection with the earth and natural surroundings, respect for life, recognition of dependency on the earth and decision-making that considers the effects for seven generations," he said. "It's about living in harmony with everyone and everything."

Felipe also sees the effects of the loss of language and culture among the Kalispel. Grants he writes help revitalize Kalispel traditions and improve conditions.

They fund such programs as traditional faith healing for victims of crime and rape, a transit system from North Spokane to the Kalispel reservation, several recreation and cultural programs, support for victims of domestic violence, better health equipment for clinics and improvements in the water system on the reservation.

"The Kalispel and Maya share a history of conquest, genocide and loss of religion, culture and land. The Maya were pushed to the least productive lands. Now they try to grow corn in rocky land on steep mountain sides," he said.

"The Kalispel use their traditional dress only for ceremonies, while many older women still wear traditional dress in Guatemala," Felipe said. "Only five or seven elders in the 406-member tribe speak the Kalispel language fluently, but more Maya speak their languages."

As the Kalispel Tribe interact with other tribes, they learn of their common struggles and efforts to restore their identities, rebuild their communities, develop their economic health, provide services and maintain their sovereignty, Felipe pointed out.

Through his fair-trade businesses, Felipe helps indigenous Guatemalans gain economic stability.

He recently created a label of organic, fair trade coffee, Maya Earth Coffee, and a program, Coffee with a Cause, to partner with nonprofit organizations to raise funds. The nonprofit receives 10 percent of the sales. For direct coffee sales, 10 percent goes to the Guatemalan Coffee Fund for the farmers.

For example, First Presbyterian Church serves and sells the coffee. The first Sunday they offered it, they sold 25 bags, he said.

He hopes other congregations will want to raise funds by selling coffee, while making a difference with their purchasing power.

"Co-marketing is a new concept in fair-trade marketing," he said.

Felipe buys coffee beans direct from farmer cooperatives in Guatemala. They ship 150-pound bags of green coffee beans, which are distributed to six roasters. Three are in Washington and the others are in New Mexico, Pennsylvania and New York.

He links the producers and consumers, eliminating brokers who profit in the middle.

"We are small scale, so the cost of the coffee supports the local economies of Guatemalan farmers and U.S. roasters," he said.

Maya Earth Coffee is part of Felipe's fair trade business, Moonflower Enterprises, which sells Mayan traditional weavings, handmade crafts, folk art, musical instruments, gifts and jewelry made by artisans in the western highlands of Guatemala.

Moonflower Enterprises pays producers a fair wage in their

local context, building on long-term relationships with dozens of families from several Mayan ethnic groups.

Having a U.S. market means families can maintain their traditional weaving and arts, while producing items marketable in the United States.

Along with selling crafts, Felipe promotes awareness of the culture, art, social life and political concerns of Mayan people, while helping them improve their lives.

For information, call 768-3193.

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Orchard implements servant leadership as its business practice

Taking their faith seriously, Ralph and Cheryl Broetje not only chose a biblical concept for their brand, First Fruits of Washington, but also apply biblical principles of servant leadership to their business operations.

Not only is their approach profitable but also they take faith another step by sharing the profits with people in their orchards, in their community, domestically and around the world.

Cheryl said their faith is ecumenical, working as partners with Catholic and Protestant efforts.

Ralph grew up on a chicken farm in Yakima, attending an Evangelical United Brethren Church, and Cheryl, on a dairy farm in Tieton, involved in a Presbyterian church. They now attend a community church in the Tri-Cities.

Several lessons in faith have moved them along their path.

Cheryl and Ralph bought their first cherry orchard in Benton City in 1968 after they married.

"The first three years, we lost the crops to frost, rain and fruit flies," Cheryl said.

The fourth year it produced and eventually they paid their bills and sold it, moving to planting apples along the Snake River.

Over the years, they added to their acres, and now own a 5,700-acre primarily apple enterprise, First Fruits of Washington, one of the largest orchards in the United States. About 4,700 acres are in a frost-free area along the Snake River near Prescott, 625 in



Ralph Broetje, left back, and Chuck Barrett, right, learn about leaf mold from Mexican farmers. Photo by Suzanne Broetje

Benton City and 550 organic acres in Wallula. During harvest, 900 temporary employees join about 900 year-round employees.

Their style of doing business grew in part from a dream Ralph had when he was 15. A missionary who visited his church in Yakima told of children suffering in India. Ralph wanted to have an apple orchard and use the money to help children in India.

The Broetjes first decided adopt children from Mexico, but found it was not possible. So they adopted six children from Calcutta and Bombay, India, which they have visited several times. With their three biological daughters, they have nine young adult children, ranging from 23 to 41. Most are involved in the orchard business.

On their first trip to Mexico in 1983, the Broetjes began to "see things in a different light," learn-

ing how hard it is for people "to dream about achieving anything" if there are no opportunities.

Realizing that their employees were economic refugees, they began turning their orchard business into their mission.

They created more jobs, building a packing plant and offices to give people more opportunities.

In the late 1980s, Ralph tried cherries again, planting 50 acres. When they did not produce for three years, he was ready to cut the trees down, but he decided to wait another year and dedicate them to ministry. The next year, the crop was bountiful. They donated proceeds to a Christian children's home in Oaxaca, Mexico.

The cherries have flourished since. They donate 100 percent of proceeds from the cherries to nonprofits. A committee of orchard and warehouse employees review

projects and allocate funds.

The Broetjes' philosophy of servant leadership means putting people first, connecting their business goals and spiritual values.

"Servant leadership means leading by serving, with Jesus as the prototype. It means that we serve our employees' needs, so they will do their best, reach their dreams, live in community and find meaning in life," said Cheryl. "Communities in which people respect each other, listen and have compassion, make life richer."

"We are a team on the farm. Everyone has a role. Everyone is important. No one is better," she said. "Too often the businesses in the corporate sector, where the power and money is, keeps their business and ministry separate."

Cheryl has taught servant leadership in such places as Kenya, Mexico, India, the Philippines and other countries through the Center for Sharing, a nonprofit she formed to help people discover their calling and create programs.

Recently in the Philippines, she learned of an Asian business conference that is part of "a growing movement of 'marketplace ministry,' understanding that our business is our ministry."

That's their approach. Their brand name, First Fruits of Washington, comes from the biblical call for people to offer the first and best of their harvests to God, out of gratitude for their blessings.

"Our profit is a byproduct of treating people with dignity, respect and mutuality, equals in every sense," said Cheryl. "Employees care about a business that cares for them."

So Broetje Orchards provides Hispanic workers in their orchards and packing plant with year-round jobs, affordable housing, child-care, a school and scholarships.

The community they developed in Prescott, called Vista Hermosa—meaning beautiful view—includes 125 affordable rental homes and apartments housing, where about 22 percent of the em-

ployees and their families live in a community of about 600 people, said Cheryl. Other employees live in nearby communities and drive to the orchards each day.

In 1990, Ralph and Cheryl formed Vista Hermosa Foundation to distribute about 75 percent of their profits to local, domestic and international programs.

They fund Vista Hermosa's child-care center for up to 90 children of employees, a Christian elementary school, a summer educational camp for grade school children, and scholarships for first-generation, low-income college students.

The international grants go for hunger alleviation, economic empowerment, education, leadership development and migration programs, such as the Catholic Relief Services/Mexico farmers project. When they decide to fund an international project, the Broetje's do more than write checks. For example, Cheryl volunteered at Mother Theresa's House of the Dying.

They often go abroad, meet people and become engaged in efforts, which include: providing plows and oxen for farmers; training Maasai women leaders; micro-lending; ending bonded labor and child servitude; sheltering street girls; reforesting land, and building Christian schools in Kenya, Uganda, India, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Central America and the United States.

For information, call 547-1711.

Exchange improves Mexican apple farms

Continued from page 1

Some Broetje employees and members of the Broetje family visited Chihuahua in 2007 and 2008 to teach pruning and thinning skills to grow larger, better quality apples; to set up demonstration acres to work with farmers on cultivation techniques; to teach about diseases, and to monitor market fluctuations in apple prices. Six farmers from Chihuahua visited the Broetje Orchards in 2006.

"The project has improved the quality of life for farmers," said Chuck, who grew up in the South and was drawn through the civil rights movement into organizing farm workers and eventually working with CRS.

In 2005, with funds from Warren Buffet's Foundation and the

Broetje's Vista Hermosa Foundation, Catholic Relief Services/Mexico began a revolving fund to help small farmers. With no credit, cooling systems or transportation, the farmers were forced to accept 18 cents a pound for their crops at harvest, when prices are lowest. The low price kept them in a cycle of poverty.

Starting by connecting farmers, and loaning a group of 20 an amount just over 18 cents a pound, families pooled their crops, pledged not to sell individually, and stored apples in a temperature-controlled space until the price cycle peaked in December. Then they could earn 51 cents a pound.

The farmers who were trained at the Broetje Orchards returned

and shared skills with other farmers. Now 200 farmers involved earn nearly 300 percent more than before, Chuck said.

The revolving credit fund supports marketing and the apple growers' school for farmer-to-farmer education.

"Solidarity among apple growers across the border is countering some of the negative effects of globalization on apple farmers of Chihuahua," said Chuck.

"CRS has pursued root causes of migration since the collapse of the rural economy in Mexico in 1994," he said. "We also have programs to help corn and bean farmers stay on their land, working with different indigenous groups in several areas."

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Youth leading vacation Bible school step out of their comfort zones

By Virginia de Leon

For a week in August, young people from throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane will share in Holy Trinity Episcopal Church's outreach to neighbors in West Central Spokane.

They are coming to teach a vacation Bible school (VBS) for children to experience faith, fun and fellowship.

While the focus is to involve West Central children, children from the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist will also attend.

The VBS will be an opportunity for high school students from Spokane, Walla Walla, Omak, Pullman and other cities to step out of their comfort zones. They will develop leadership skills and deepen their faith, while spending time with children and serving one of the poorest neighborhoods in the area, said Michelle Klippert, the officer of youth ministries for the diocese and the coordinator of children and youth ministries at the cathedral.

"Children and young adults gain much from the experience," she said. "They realize they have gifts to give and that helps with their self-esteem."

Organizers want to communicate to the children that God loves them and is with them at all times.

Every year, churches throughout the region offer VBS to children, not only for those who belong to their congregations but also for neighborhood children who may not go to church.

The tradition began in 1898, when Eliza Hawes rented a beer hall in New York City to teach poor children about the Bible. Now, an estimated 3 million children nationwide attend vacation Bible schools every year.

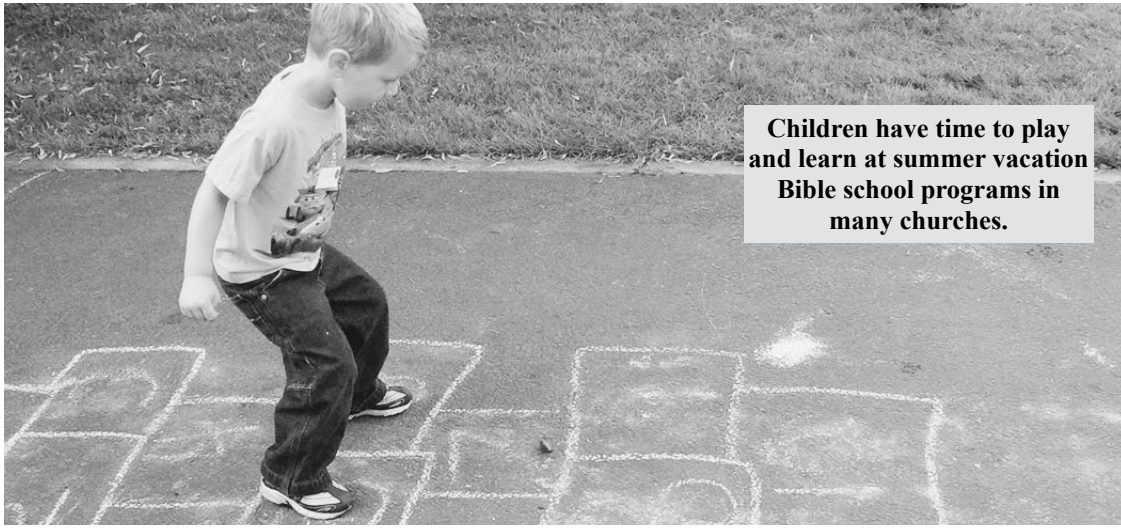
In the Inland Northwest, the programs are typically held for half days for four or five days, often in the morning, but sometimes in the evening after dinner.

Some area churches will offer a vacation Bible school in June, right after the school year ends. Others wait until after the July 4 holiday.

The VBS at Holy Trinity, at 1832 W. Dean, is a joint effort of several diocesan churches during the first week of August.

Although the 114-year-old church has offered vacation Bible schools in the past, this is the first time the effort will include young people from the diocese.

"It's a week of community service, engaging the young people with a reality that isn't their own," said the Rev. Paul Lebens-Englund, vicar of Holy Trinity since 2007. "Middle class assumptions about effective



Children have time to play and learn at summer vacation Bible school programs in many churches.

parenting may be set aside when survival is the priority."

"Parents and grandparents of many West Central children hold down two to three jobs to pay the bills and have limited time with them. It's hard to raise children in poverty," said Paul.

Most of the children don't attend Holy Trinity or any church. Only a few have a religious background.

In addition to talking about faith with these children, Paul, Michelle and others hope to show their faith through action. They want to make sure the neighborhood children are fed a healthful breakfast and later are accompanied to Holmes Elementary for the free lunch program.

They want to show the children someone cares about them by offering fun, educational activities and surrounding them with young adults who know the children's names and ask about their lives.

The high school students who will lead the VBS represent about 10 of the 41 churches in the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane.

During the week, they will stay at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist's youth center and community room, commuting to West Central each morning to work with preschoolers through third graders.

In the afternoons, the high school students will volunteer at a free art camp at the cathedral for children 10 years and older.

This VBS will serve as a model for future programs involving the Spokane Diocese and the Episcopal Mission Exchange, a nationwide program designed to match parishes and dioceses with mission opportunities.

Michelle hopes other teams from throughout the country eventually will travel to Spokane and do service work in West Central,

where many live below the poverty level.

Funding for the VBS at Holy Trinity comes from several cathedral guilds and individuals in the area. Julia Bertaut, a graduate of Swarthmore College, who served as an intern this year at the diocese, designed the curriculum.

"In terms of faith content, we focus on the big stories of who God is and who Jesus is and try to help the children connect their own experience of chaos and wonderment with the big story," said Paul. "We will consider such questions as, Who is Jesus for you? How have you been broken and healed? How have you been lost and found?"

In the past, about 25 to 40 children aged six to 10 years have attended VBS at Holy Trinity. This year, organizers expect more because of relationships developed between people at the church and its neighbors.

For the past year, Holy Trinity has reached out to people in West Central.

On Wednesday evenings since January, the church has hosted a gathering they call "Dinner Table," which provides a family-style meal for children and adults in the neighborhood.

Last fall, the church offered the meal every other Wednesday but decided to make it a weekly event this year.

About 75 to 100 people show up for fellowship and a free dinner, served by volunteers from Holy Trinity, St. Stephen's and St. David's Episcopal churches.

Some of the regular diners now plan to help with the community garden, which will provide some of the produce that will be served during the meals.

"We've reached a new level of trust," said Paul.

Holy Trinity's other community

building efforts include knocking on people's doors to invite them to movies at the church; plans to develop affordable housing; strengthening connections with organizations such as Feed Spokane, Project HOPE, Our Place and others in the area that serve the poor and marginalized.

This summer's vacation Bible school is an effort to help transform the neighborhood by sharing in the lives of its youth, helping

them learn and grow, said Michelle.

"The best thing about it is that children come into a group of people who show God's love," she said. "It means something to be cared for and to see people who are happy to see you."

For information, call 326-6471.

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Celebrating 50 Years

83-year-old spends five months living among buffalo herders in Kashmir

By Virginia de Leon

At the age of 83, Myrtle Kaul traveled in 2008 to India and lived briefly among migrant buffalo herders in a remote area of South Asia.

Aware of the needs of people there, desiring to serve them and still curious about the world, she decided there was no reason she couldn't go to help.

"I'm not on medication. I can walk. I can see. I can hear. I even have my own teeth," said Myrtle, who lives at Rockwood at Hawthorne, a retirement community in North Spokane.

Because her late husband, Lasa, was from South Asia, that area has a special place in her heart.

Now she shares her love of the country through presentations to community groups.

She shows images of snow-capped mountains and the rugged environment of South Asia, as well as photographs of the families and communities who live there.

She also tells a love story—how she served as a missionary in India for nearly 15 years and met the man of her dreams.

Then she tells how they had to wait more than 20 years to marry in 1976 when he was 67 and she was 51.

In 1998, they had spent a month in India visiting old friends.

In 2002, he died at the age of 93. Myrtle never thought she would return without him.

In 2007, she wrote to organizations with ties to India. The organization sends people to serve in business, community development and other services in that part of the world.

Myrtle spent five months living in a hut with a grass roof and dirt floors, without running water or electricity.

Although living conditions were difficult in the desolate region, she quickly adjusted to the physical and emotional challenges.

Because she was a missionary from 1949 to 1964, she knew living in another culture demands patience, flexibility and willingness to embrace the unknown.

The team she worked with had lived in South Asia several years, helping impoverished herders improve their standard of living by providing education and medical training.

When they learned about her, Myrtle said, they were delighted to have her stay with them.

Because she already spoke a language they understood, she was able to communicate with the nomadic herders.

She learned their customs, invited them to tea and spent hours visiting with families.

She earned the respect and



Myrtle Kaul holds photo of her with her late husband, Lasa.

affection of the herders, who started calling her "Nani," "grandmother" in their language.

Her presence brought down some barriers that often exist between visitors and the buffalo herders, who sometimes don't understand why foreigners come to live with them.

Myrtle said her goals were "to convey peace and respect to these impoverished people, learn about their lives and show solidarity."

While there, she prayed often and found motivation in Ecclesiastes: "Whatsoever your hands find to do, do it with all your might, with all your heart, and to the honor and glory of God."

Born in 1925 on a dairy farm on Five Mile Prairie, Myrtle was the second youngest of seven children and grew up helping care for cows, chickens and other animals.

Her father, Wilbur Barden, gave up the dairy for a few years to become a grocer. In 1935, he bought land on the outskirts of town and dozens of cows, and went back into the dairy business.

With the motto, "Quality you can taste: You can whip our cream, but you can't beat our milk!" the family became known for delivering fresh milk.

As a teen, Myrtle committed to Christianity during a youth rally at Grace Baptist Church.

While she and young people from Central Baptist spent a week in Dover, Idaho, leading a vacation Bible school, she realized she "wanted to do something for Jesus."

After graduating from North Central High School in 1943, she went to Northwestern Bible College in Minneapolis.

When her three brothers joined

the military in World War II, she returned to Spokane to help her father with the dairy.

She learned the former Central Baptist pastor, the Rev. Arthur Sanford, was in India as a missionary. He often sent letters to the church and stories of their new life.

Myrtle's brother, Phil Barden, also had worked north of Calcutta while in the Army.

Both described a country full of beauty and interesting sights. They told of the people's kindness and generosity, and about Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent struggle for justice.

In 1949, she applied to work in India with the Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) International. Myrtle had taught after-school Bible classes to Spokane children through local CEF.

"I committed my life to serve wherever God wanted me to go," said Myrtle, who was based in Pune, southeast of Bombay, and later in Allahabad, between Calcutta and New Delhi, working with Sunday school teachers.

She learned Hindi and a little Hindustani, a mixed language. She made many friends and quickly adapted to a new way of life.

In 1953, she met her future husband, Lasa Kaul, a Hindu who had converted to Christianity. He owned a farm called "Naga Boni," which means "place of the spring." There, with two missionaries from the United States and England, he cared for children left by their parents.

The group became known as "The Naga Boni Miracle Family," because they saved seven children from lives of destitution.

Myrtle and Lasa fell in love

and became engaged in 1961, but when she returned to the United States in 1964 because of health problems, Lasa couldn't leave his home and the children.

For 14 years, they corresponded. They saw each other only in 1972, when Lasa was granted a visa to visit her in Spokane for several months.

While he cared for the children, she started a new life, taking classes at Whitworth, buying a house and working at the Department of Social and Health Services. She found solace in his letters, prayer, and Bible verses she underlined and memorized.

"India was part of me," she said.

"Lasa was the only one for me, and the Lord gave me patience."

In December 1976, Lasa was granted permission to move to the United States. A week after his arrival, they married. The couple, who attended Central Baptist, became foster grandparents to several children who were adopted from India by American families.

On Lasa's 90th birthday, six of the seven children of Naga Boni visited. Myrtle has written, but not published, a book on "Memoirs of Lasa Kaul" and is working on another book about their life together, "The 'Twain Met.'"

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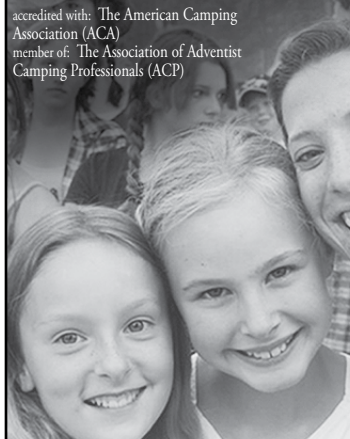
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Region's camps operate collaboratively, rather than as competitors

Continued from page 1

d'Alene, said he expects a good year for both United Church of Christ and other users.

"Camp is an extension of local church Christian education programs in a safe, nurturing environment," where "every inch of the camp holds memories for returning campers," he said. "They experience worship, learn and explore surprises in God's creation. It's hard *not* to be moved to faith in a place like this."

Camps develop a moral base

Jeff Potts said the Salvation Army's Camp Gifford on Deer Lake offers affordable weekly camp experiences for about 1,000 children—14 teens at a wilderness camp, and 120 seven- to 12-year-olds in the youth camp.

"We talk with children about creating a moral platform for making good choices in life and understand that the Creator has a purpose for their lives," he said. "We also help them understand the consequences of their choices."

When campers return as volunteers, staff mentor them to "a more profound faith," said Jeff, who has been director for 16 years. "In a recent survey, 80 percent of parents said the camp had a positive impact on their children's behavior."

Children love coming to camp

Marta Walker, administrative assistant at Ross Point Camp in Post Falls, Idaho, an American Baptist camp, is upbeat about the upcoming season, because "children love coming to camp, and the parents value that we provide a life-changing experience."

Like directors at other camps, she sees youth coming year after year and then stepping into leadership roles, returning because they have become "mission minded" and seek "to reach out to others with God's love."

When N-Sid-Sen recently dedicated a new lodge with a large meeting space, the Rev. Dee Eisenhauer, pastor of Eagle Harbor United Church of Christ in Bainbridge Island, spoke of the influence of multi-generational, life-long camping on her and her family. She and her husband, John, have been camping since they were children. Over the years, they brought their now grown children to family camps.

"Camp is a holy place where we connect with family and friends outside the rat race, share tender moments, connecting with them and with God," she said. "Even when I'm not at camp, it's a place I can go in my mind to restore my soul."

Camps collaborate

The region's church camps operate collaboratively, rather than as competing businesses.

Inland Northwest camp managers and directors keep connected out of solidarity for their common work. Because each camp has a unique niche, they share planning



Children and older youth interact at camps, building community.

Photo provided by Camp Cross

ideas and resources, even making referrals when space is full on a given date or if they know another camp can better accommodate a group.

"Our unity of purpose trumps any competitive issues of our operations as businesses, said Andy at Camp Spalding. "We genuinely wish to see each other's camp ministries flourish."

In February, he met in Portland with camp representatives from around the whole Northwest. At that gathering, they discussed some dynamics denominational camps face: 1) a declining pool of potential campers in aging congregations, 2) fewer parents sending children out of denominational loyalty and 3) a malaise among youth toward church.

While camps in some areas are closing, Inland Northwest churches continue their commitment to and investment in camping.

The trends are not definitive, as Marta at Ross Point observed: "Generally numbers have been fluctuating and declining as American Baptist members age and there are fewer youth, but recently some aging churches have reached out to their communities. They have more families with children coming to camp."

Camps expand programs

Each camp continues to build activities and adventures, while relying on the typical water and nature-based activities around which worship, crafts, campfires, small-group, and large gatherings build community.

"As people relax, recreate and worship in the camp setting, they rejuvenate and are energized by creative activities," said Brian at Twinlow, which will add a handbell camp.

Many camps have also broadened their scope to host camps, retreats and conferences for other community groups all year—inviting young people in churches with no camps and whose families do not attend church.

For 2009, Zephyr is offering two camps for children and youth related to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the area, but it reaches out regularly to fill its lodge and cabins with people in women's, men's and youth groups from other denominations.

From early spring through late fall, religious and civic organizations use the grounds for camping, retreats, camps, seminars, reunions, study groups, classes and other activities. Last year, every weekend from April to mid October was booked.

Camp Cross, which is open seasonally, plans a reunion for alumni and friends, retreats for other groups and family reunions.

Camps build for the future

MiVoden plans a 10-year building program to expand its capacity by 140 to 390, not just to accommodate large groups, but also to accommodate four to five mini camps, retreats or reunions simultaneously. It will build 12 duplex cabins for summer campers, upgrade dorms to family-style units, and build a new cafeteria and gym, said Bruce.

N-Sid-Sen recently finished phase two of a 14-year dream, dedicating a new lodge with a large meeting room, a welcome center, offices and a labyrinth painted on the floor.

Bob Baker, executive director at Lutherhaven Ministries, said Camp Lutherhaven is dedicating its newly remodeled Zoerb Chapel on Sunday, June 7. "The \$750,000 project doubles the size of the historic center for worship and gathering, winterizes the building and adds audio and visual enhancement for the next generation of campers," he said.

The same day, they are dedicating their new Shoshone Base Camp, purchased from the U.S. Forest Service, after seven years of negotiation. The \$705,000 purchase was made possible by major foundation grants of more than \$500,000 and donations from individuals and congregations.

Maintenance and remodeling of buildings is necessary to attract church campers, retreat groups and other users who keep revenues steady. Volunteer labor keep maintenance costs low.

To spruce up Camp Cross for 2009, Maureen said 250 students in Gonzaga University's April's Angels came there on the weekend of April 26. The students painted and repaired 40 cabins.

Nico McClellan, manager at Zephyr Conference Center on Liberty Lake, began the season

ing, watercolor, day hikes and a class on the impact of empires.

The Grunewald Guild near Leavenworth offers classes wool spinning, video production, weaving, ceramics, painting, stained glass, song writing, print making, fabric dyeing and sculpting. Some participants make art for their churches, said Dan Oberg, director, such as liturgical vestments, stoles, processional crosses, banners, stained glass, communion chalices or baptismal fonts.

Camps have websites

To facilitate promotion and registration, camps have websites appealing to those they seek to serve. Websites describe the programs, mission, dates, activities and registration details. They also provide photos and videos to excite potential campers about the setting, water sports, campfires, natural environment and relationships.

For information, visit thefigtree.org/connections-resources.html and click on "Camps and Retreats."

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Women's and Children's Free Restaurant offers hospitality, nutrition

By Janet Hunter

Dignity, nutrition, education and hospitality are cornerstones for the Women's and Children's Free Restaurant, which feeds both body and soul.

It serves three meals a week, using real plates and utensils, instead of plastic. Servers take meals to guests seated at tables as they would in a restaurant.

After serving meals, servers sit with guests and converse.

Since 1988, it has operated in the basement of St. Paul United Methodist Church, 1620 N. Monroe. About 70 to 100 come at 4:15 p.m., Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and about 140 to 200 come at 12:30 p.m., Fridays.

After the Friday meals, guests can pick up fresh fruits and vegetables at a fresh food market in an adjacent dining room. Volunteers accompanying "shoppers" offer cooking tips for foods selected.

In 2004, the Friday Take-Out Program began. It addresses hunger over weekends when the restaurant and most agencies are closed. Guests take prepared, packaged, frozen entrees home.

Restaurant manager Karen Orlando, who grew up in Montana,



Karen Torkelson, the chef, shows nutritious array of vegetables.
Photo provided by Karen Orlando

said her mother was widowed when she was pregnant with her ninth child. They moved to Spokane and had the support of family members. Most who come to the Women's and Children's Free Restaurant lack that support.

"Those of us involved in this organization understand anyone has the potential to be in the predicament of the guests we serve," said Karen who has a degree in

social work and whose 28 years as a mother and housewife gave her skills for this venture. She draws motivation from the Bible verse, "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you."

Patrons are on a fixed income and find it hard to make ends meet. Most are single and/or grew up with a single parent.

While the restaurant serves women and children, men help

as volunteers. In addition to Karen, there are two other full-time employees, Marlene Alford, executive director, and Karen Torkelson, the chef; two part-time staff and 150 volunteers.

Volunteers come from the community and congregations. Others are former guests.

"One who washes dishes said we helped his family when they came to us in the past. He now runs the dishwasher for us every week out of his gratitude," said Karen.

Marlene, who had years of experience catering, envisioned the meal site in its current location because of the economic situation in the neighborhood. Members of St. Paul's United Methodist began the program by providing a casserole meal one day a week.

In exchange for use of the basement, the restaurant pays two-thirds of utility expenses. Last year, the church provided a wheelchair ramp and an accessible restroom. In addition, Spokane Art School students painted a mural on the dining room wall.

To instill healthy habits among patrons, billboards and pamphlets on nutrition urge incorporating

fruit, vegetables, protein and dairy products into every meal.

To promote health, the restaurant invites nurse interns once a week from the Intercollegiate Nursing College. They do blood pressure and glucose blood tests, and let guests discuss medical questions.

Through the year, there are other programs, such as dental interns, who provide mouth wash and tooth brushing awareness.

Food comes through donations from Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest, Albertson's, the Davenport Hotel and others. Food drives and a federal grant also provide funds and food, along with home-grown vegetables from individuals' gardens.

There are three fund-raising events—a snowshoe race on Super Bowl weekend, the Spring Tea and Lunch in May and "A Little Night Music" in September

The community also comes together for special meals three times a year, serving more than 400 people each—a Christmas/Thanksgiving meal, an Easter meal and a summer barbecue.

For information, call 324-1995.

Hoopfest exemplifies servant leadership, as it promotes basketball

By Anna Marie Martin

Beyond being a major 3-on-3 basketball tournament that will draw 6,700 teams to Spokane June 27 and 28, and will contribute \$35 million to Spokane's financial wellbeing, Hoopfest exemplifies a philosophy of servant leadership and a commitment to give to charity.

Hoopfest provides a family-friendly, fitness-promoting weekend that generates funds to help build or rebuild basketball courts in the community, replace nets and support the Special Olympics and youth sports programs.

Rick Steltenpohl, executive director for 17 years and a member of St. Thomas More Parish in Spokane, said Jesus was an example of servant leadership, because he "led by kindness and was always reaching out to others.

"Kindness matters," said Rick, whose goal is "to give back more than I expect to receive."

With excellence in service one of his core values, he said, "a key component of any faith is the way we treat other people. We show people how to be sharing and compassionate by being humble and serving others, which inspires others to become better."

He describes himself as "a low-key, humble person," who "leads by example of how to do things in

a caring, compassionate style."

Although Hoopfest is a secular organization, he said, the values of caring and compassion come out in staff and volunteer relationships, and in Hoopfest's success as an organization.

The architects of Hoopfest started with a dual desire to be the best 3-on-3 basketball tournament and to raise money for the Special Olympics. Founders decided after much discussion they would focus on having an "excellent event" that would "let as many people play as wanted to." That way it would be sustainable.

That Hoopfest is the largest 3-on-3 tournament in the country and world—with more than five times more registrations than the next largest 3-on-3 tournament—and involves 3,000 volunteers is "a testimony to the community," Rick said.

Hoopfest has donated more than \$1 million to charitable organization in its 20 years. The main recipient of its charity is the Special Olympics. Other recipients include the YMCA and YWCA to fund sports programs, Spokane Parks and Recreation, the Chase Youth Commission, and the Libby Teen Center.

As part of its outreach to children, Hoopfest is associated with two nonprofit programs, Amateur

Athletic Union (AAU) Basketball for players in grades four to eight from November through February, and Midnight Basketball, a free program for sixth to eighth graders at local middle schools.

Volunteers do much of the work of organizing Hoopfest throughout the year. The committee of 27 volunteers organize the courts, recruit and train court monitors, and plan for safety, security, family events, registration and clean-up.

Throughout the year, Hoopfest renovates and maintains outdoor basketball courts in community parks and schools—building 20 since 1994.

Hoopfest's newest court will be built this summer in Cannon Park in West Central Spokane, as a way to have a positive impact on neighborhood families.

Once a year, staff and volunteer teams from Hoopfest go to courts

in community centers, neighborhoods and parks to replace the nets. On "Net Day," if they spot a basketball hoop in someone's yard, they knock on the door and ask, "Do you want a new net for your basketball hoop?"

Rick, who has lived in Spokane since 1987, except for a year in Phoenix in 2005, never imagined that this would become a job for him. Now he says it's the job of his dreams, especially with Hoopfest becoming so large and giving money to charities.

"People tell me all the time that their families get together twice a year – for Christmas and Hoopfest," he said.

He has a basketball hoop and several basketballs in his office to remind him to have some fun, and to keep him in shape to participate in the tournament every year.

For information, call 624-2414 or visit spokanehoopfest.net.

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Economic downturns can be spiritual upturns or downturns

Different developments in the economic downturn stir different expectations and volley us back and forth between hope and despair.

Catholic Charities faced cutting the overnight shelter at the House of Charity for people on the streets this summer, but its directors made other cuts and found support in the willingness of its directors to voluntarily accept a 10 percent salary cut.

They understand and care, because the people who suffer are not statistics, but people they know.

With private donations down and with city, state and county money going away, Rob McCann, executive director, said that the charity is tightening its belt by freezing hiring and expenses, and by canceling staff raises and travel, which are painful.

"Each program is looking at how it can provide the services in different ways to save money, because the need for the services is going up," he said.

Several nonprofits have reported declin-

ing revenues, but several also expect to hold their own. Regional camps were optimistic despite low registration numbers early in the season. People and congregations providing camp scholarships assure that camp numbers will not slip too far.

The state legislature's decision to opt for cuts in health care, education and human services as the state faced a \$9 billion shortfall disappointed faith community advocates, including Paul Benz with the Lutheran Public Policy Office, Alice Woldt of the Washington Association of Churches, and Scott Cooper of Parish Social Services with Catholic Charities.

They believe the state eventually needs to find new revenue sources. Cutting programs and services just transfers the pain and eventually costs more, said Paul. He points out that cuts to the Basic Health Plan by 50 percent will mean more emergency room visits and more costs.

While Scott said the legislature blunted the worst imaginable outcomes, the faith

community had advocated for decades to establish and keep programs to protect the most vulnerable people in the state. Once they are voted off the budget it means triple the efforts to reinstate them. "The programs are about real people with real stories," he said.

It doesn't seem to matter to some that the state tax structure is outdated, leaving the poorest paying the greatest portion of their income in taxes, Alice said. According to a recent study, the low-income folks pay a greater percent of their income to charity.

Poor, vulnerable, oppressed, suffering people understand what it is to have little, to be on the edge. Many are willing to share, even sacrifice, while those who have the most blessings too often share less.

"To whom much is given, much is required," Paul offered as a challenge from the faith community: "The question is what is in our self interest. Is it distrust of government or trust of government as a provider of services that benefits everyone?"

What kind of state do we want to live in: One that helps people be more self sufficient or one that keeps people in poverty? Do we want a state where people live healthy lives, are well educated and have a thriving economy?" he challenged.

It's always a blessing to share stories of people who take their faith seriously, living scriptural principles to make life better for people they know and don't know. We celebrate the connection of U.S. and Mexican farmers and orchardists' awareness that their business thrives when they care about the housing, health, children, education, opportunities and wellbeing of their employees. How refreshing it is to hear!

Often in this economic downturn, we know of personal and corporate downturns in human caring. Just as often, or more often, we hope, we hear the stories of people persevering through struggles, learning they can live on less, and discovering that less is more.

Mary Stamp - Editor

Even children's songs ask questions about how much is enough

"When will enough be enough? When will a lot be too much?" chime the words of a children's CD that comes with the book, "Baxter Barret Brown's Bass Fiddle" by Tim McKenzie.

Associating with young children exposes us to multiple repetitions of their favorite songs and stories. About 35 years ago, my family wore out a Muppets cassette that included the song, "We're on our way." I don't remember trying very hard to replace it. However, it has become a part of family lore.

The installation of tape decks and CD players in cars has increased the likelihood exponentially. On a recent trip, my young grandchildren acquired a copy of "Baxter Barret Brown's Bass Fiddle."

The CD includes a reading of the story with bass fiddle page turning cues and a number of separate songs. Every time we climbed into the car, a small assertive voice from way in the back requested channel 5.

Like many people, Baxter Barret Brown has trouble deciding when enough is enough: "I just want it all, and maybe a little bit more."

Baxter loves playing his bass fiddle, so he wants it with him at all times. He mounts parts of his bicycle, including "a big Ah-oo-Gah horn" on it, so that he has Baxter Barret Brown's bass fiddle bicycle.

As he rides about he finds more to add, and the name of this wonderful conveyance becomes increasingly complex:

"I don't want to have everything that I see. Just one of each should be plenty for me," he sings.

When he has added everything he thinks he needs, he is so happy he thinks some music is in order. However, his beloved bass fiddle is no longer playable, so he goes back to basics. Maybe.

The conversations about the story with an almost four-year-old are reminiscent of the girl in Peanuts who had read Goldilocks and could discuss it intelligently.

It's a funny little story and children enjoy the improbabilities, but it also makes sense on a symbolic level:

"When will we have enough stuff? When will we learn that we never can have too much love?" the song asks.

These are questions we adults and people of faith need to ponder as we respond to today's economic struggles or world conflicts growing out of greed.

Perhaps we need nagging, repetitive songs with messages we need to consider so that we embed them as the basis of healthy relationships and economics in our lives.

Who would expect that, as reported during May, people who are poor give a higher percentage of their income than those who are wealthy!

For those struggling financially, awareness of what it's like to live at the edges of "enough" may give a clearer concept of what is enough for their own survival and what others need for survival.

Nancy Minard - Editorial Team

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

If you want to do lasting good for the world, good that will not only leave a legacy in world history, but good that will last for an eternity, then help to dispel despair in the world. Become disciples of hope. Yes, continue the good works of service that you do, for others will recognize your authenticity in your love, but you will want to go beyond this. You will want to give people a chance to step out of their despair—the reason for most materialism, greed, malice, thoughtlessness, jealousy, arrogance, and even hatred—and live in the light of the eternal destiny for which we were created. You will want to lift the veil of darkness and emptiness to reveal the unconditional love that is ever present.

If you are going to be disciples of hope, it will be somewhat risky, for there are many people who have built their lives around keeping others in despair. Many worship the intelligent, particularly the witty, cynical intelligentsia.

The best way to mitigate the risks of being a disciple of hope is to know evidence to which you can point to help both friend and foe know that there is significant evidence to ground the belief in an unconditionally loving God. Indeed, there is so much evidence that it may be more naïve not to believe in the God of love.

Father Robert Spitzer
President Gonzaga University
Excerpts from "A Legacy of Hope"

Creston, our state, nation and the world are in the middle of a Spiritual Disaster Area. We can't say simply that the world needs to turn to Christ. Many of our current problems have been brought upon us by Christians, embarrassing as it is to admit.

These are epidemics of fear and hate, self-doubt and despair. It might be more helpful to say that Christians in these disaster areas need to turn to Christ, or at

least turn back to thinking and behaving the way Christ's earliest disciples thought and behaved.

The Roman empire suffered two horrible epidemics, one in 160 CE and another 90 years later—one may have been smallpox and the other, measles. These crises proved to be great times of Christian growth and changed attitudes within the empire. Why? Because most people abandoned their sick family and friends, but Christians stuck together, providing nursing care for each other and for the pagans around them.

Of course, huge numbers of Christians died as a result, because the nurses did not know how to protect themselves, but when medical experts didn't know how to deal with the epidemic, even the simplest nursing—providing food and water—made a difference in survival rates. People saw Christians behaving different from the society around them and saw that behavior making a difference. They wanted to make a difference themselves.

What we need now are people (Christians) who see the spiritual depression around them—as well as the obvious recessions, diseases and disasters—and want to make a difference.

When more Christians are willing to expose themselves with love to the germs of hatred, fear, despair, guilt and self-doubt that fill our world, then the disaster area will change into a garden area, and the world will be changed as the Roman empire was changed long ago.

The Rev. Don Hoffman
Creston Christian

All of a sudden, the ground beneath us has shaken, and we find ourselves in a different place.

Companies we have known all our lives are threatened. Who would have thought we would live to see the demise of Chrysler or General Motors? When I was a child,

banks, the big stone edifices on Main Street, were the cornerstones of the community.

The reality of our situation is trickling down with budget cuts in higher education at Eastern Washington University, reductions in funding for public school and municipal budgets hanging on by a shoestring.

It is a time that asks of us kindness and compassion. Our anxiety levels are high. Our fight-or-flight response is triggered. Many are looking for someone to blame. I see a constant stream of the neediest of the needy headed into Cheney Outreach with their hands full of documents and their desperation palpable.

All of us feel less secure, more concerned and increasingly anxious, but Jesus tells us over and over, "Be not afraid," and "Peace be with you." As the ground has shifted, some things have stayed the same. We have each other. We are not alone. In a time of seeming scarcity, there is still evidence of abundance.

It is a time to take a deep breath, to center ourselves in God's peace and look for ways to be kind. Acts of generosity and compassion are available to all of us, no matter what our financial situation. Our bank balance does not determine our worth. Our ability to make a difference is limited only by our imagination and our willingness to reach out. It is time to practice a prayer life, to sing a hymn, to take a walk, to breath and to cultivate kindness.

The Rev. Debi Hasdorff
Cheney United Church of Christ

Meaningful conversation with a friend can be one of the most satisfying experiences in life. That is quite different, however, from the drivel that passes for dialogue in much of our culture today. Those who are not everlastingly glued to their cell phones are emailing, texting or twittering. I have difficulty believing that

all this plethora of verbiage is either necessary or particularly enlightening.

Okay, so I may be behind the times, but I believe much of our conversational obsession swings from a pandemic fear of solitude. What to do with two minutes of silence or reflection seems to be an unthinkable dilemma for members of our society. People seem threatened by a few moments of quiet.

Whoever wrote Psalm 131 was not so afraid: "I have calmed and quieted my soul," he writes, "like a child quieted at its mother's breast; like a child that is quieted is my soul." He could write that, perhaps, because our electronic gadgetry had not been invented, or maybe he switched his cell phone to the "calm and quiet" mode.

The Rev. Wilbur Rees - Shalom
United Church of Christ - Richland

A song says, "They'll know we are Christians by our love." Why don't young people (critical of the church) know about the church's generosity, hospitality, willingness to forgive and reconcile, giving of time and talent, or peacemaking? These are supposed to be signs of the Spirit of Christ working in and through us.

In the recent study by the Barna Group researchers on church trends, the criticisms young people have about Christianity are about attitudes toward people and the wider community, not about worship styles.

What can you say or do that will show your family, friends and neighbors how the Spirit of Christ dwells richly in your church? Do you keep up with what your church's outreach committee is doing so you can witness to your church's generosity and service to the community? How can we all proclaim, by word and example, the Good News of God in Christ?

The Rev. Jan Griffin - All Saints
Episcopal - Richland

Congregation hosts Job Transitions Workshops

Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ decided to respond to the growing unemployment challenge facing people in Spokane by initiating a series of "Jobs Transition Workshops," at 7 p.m., second and fourth Sundays, beginning June 14 and continuing into the fall.

Workshops will include training and support for individuals currently unemployed, facing unemployment or underemployed, said Jon Louis, who is organizing the program.

The program will be divided into two segments.

- First, a speaker will cover topics such as writing resumes, being a successful job applicant and interviewee, discovering various employment sources and using the internet.

- Then participants will go into breakout groups where they can ask questions, provide mutual support and encourage others involved in the job search process.

"Statistics show that the average unemployed individual spends less than five hours per week looking for a job," said Jon. "These workshops are designed to put successful job hunting on the front burner."

Volunteers will facilitate discussion groups and assist with logistics.

Jon, who grew up in Seattle and first moved to Spokane in 1976 as an insurance agent, later lived in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts after his children graduated from high school here.

Cyclists pedal for food

Bicyclists will join in "Ride the Palouse" from June 13 to 20, an event sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane's Commission on Social Justice and Outreach Ministries to raise money for the Second Harvest network of food banks.

The ride through the region's countryside begins at 5 p.m., Saturday, June 13, and ends the following Saturday at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cheney and will visit several Eastern Washington communities, with stops in Ritzville, Moses Lake, Pasco, Walla Walla, Pomeroy and Pullman.

The average distance each day will be 58 miles. Participants will camp indoors at churches along the way.

For information, call 208-651-3267.

Twenty years ago in Massachusetts, he was laid off and participated in a similar program at a United Church of Christ there.

Now he works as a trainer in management skills and a motivational speaker. He has been back in Spokane for two years. He said he has done training for insurance companies throughout the United States and in 11 countries, helping managers learn to interview, retain and supervise people.

In addition to work he has done with insurance companies, he has his own company, Leadership Training International.

"People who have lost jobs lose their identity, self-esteem and self

confidence, which they need to have to sell themselves for another job," Jon said. "They need the caring and love of a church."

He hopes clergy of other churches and denominations will refer people to this program, which is geared to build sharing among participants for mutual encouragement.

Each time, the opening will offer different content. The breakout groups may discuss content of the opening or engage in sharing to support each other for the job searching process, Jon said.

For information, call 624-1366 extension 313 or email jblouis1@comcast.net.

Calendar of Events

- June 1-12 • **Habitat-Spokane Blitz Build**, 4502 E. Mt. Baldy Lane, 534-2552
- June 4 • **Fig Tree Board Annual Meeting**, 1 p.m., and **Volunteer Recognition and Launching "Stories Give Life"** by the late Sister Bernadine Casey, SNJM, Convent of the Holy Names, 2911 Ft. Wright Dr., 2 to 4 p.m., 535-1813
- **"Up on the Roof"** Unity in the Community Auction and benefit, Saranac Building, 25 W. Main, 6 to 8 p.m., 209-2858
- June 6 • **Town Hall Meeting with Roy Medley**, General Secretary, American Baptist Churches/USA, Spokane Valley Baptist Church, 1222 S. McDonald Rd., 6:30 p.m., 924-1234
- June 7-12 • **Finding the Pearl Purchasing the Field**, "A Franciscan Approach to God in the Contemporary World" retreat, St. Joseph Family Center, 1016 N. Superior St., 483-6495
- June 11-12 • **Fig Tree West Website Training**, Mary Stamp, School of Theology and Ministry, Thursday, 5-7 p.m.; University Christian Church, Friday, 10 a.m. to noon, 535-1813 or 206-625-9790
- June 12 • **Pax Christi** with Liz Moore, Catholic Charities Center, 12 E. 5th Ave., noon
- June 13 • **Race Unity Celebration**, featuring a Lakota Hoop Dancer, music and songs, Baha'is of Coeur d'Alene, Coeur d'Alene City Park, noon to 4 p.m., 208-773-2130
- June 13-20 • **"Ride the Palouse"** benefit Second Harvest, begins and ends at St. Paul Church, 625 C St., 235-6150.
- June 14 • **Mexican Farmers Apple Project**, St. Patrick's Catholic, Walla Walla, 7 p.m., 358-4273
- June 14, 28, July 12, 26, Aug 9, 23 • **Jobs Transitions Workshops**, Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, 7 p.m., 624-1366 ext. 313
- June 19 • **Tee Off for Transitions 2009 Golf Scramble** at Indian Canyon, 328-6702
- **Mexican Farmers Apple Project**, St. Joseph's Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, Spokane, 358-4273
- June 22-July 31 • **Multicultural Summer Academy** at Spokane Community College for students entering 8th, 9th, or 10th grade.
- June 24 • **Friend to Friend picnic**, Mission Park, 483-1600
- June 25 • **"Engaging Fatherhood"**, Spokane Community College Lair, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 535-7466
- **Rally for Real Police Accountability**, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, Riverfront Park across from City Hall, 5 p.m., 838-7870
- July 6-10 • **"Integration of Spirituality & Ecology"**, Institute for Ecology, Theology, Spirituality and Justice, Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry, 206-296-5330
- July 13-17 • **Whitworth Institute of Ministry**, Whitworth University, week of courses, worship, fellowship, 777-4345
- July 16 • **Spokane Valley Partners Annual Golf Tournament**, Meadow Wood Golf Course, 1 p.m., 927-1153
- July 17-19 • **Hutton Settlement Children's Home 90th Anniversary Reunion**, 9907 E. Wellesley Ave., 838-2789
- **"Introduction to Holistic Living"**, Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, 208-962-2000
- July 20-25 • **"Jubilate"** Ecumenical Festival & Retreat of Worship and the Arts, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, www.gbgm-umc.org/jubilate/
- July 20-24, 27-31 • **Healthy Organizations Seminars**, Center for Organizational Reform, Clare Center, 4624 E. Jamieson, 448-4887
- Aug 15 • **Unity in the Community**, Riverfront Park, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 838-1881
- Aug 27 • **Art Auction at the Threshold**, Latah Valley Presbyterian, 202 E. Meadowlark Rd, 5-8 p.m., 481-8110
- Aug 28-30 • **20th Annual Spokane Falls Northwest Encampment & Powwow**, Riverfront Park, 998-0184
- Sept 2 • **Fig Tree Distribution**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m.
- Sept 3 • **Fig Tree Board**, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.

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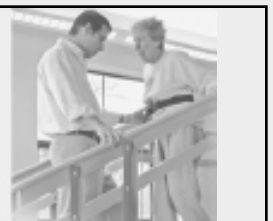


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Holy Land stirs call for Christians, Muslims, Jews to respect each other

The stories and struggles of people Bishop Martin Wells encountered on a recent visit to the Middle East convince him of the need to bring Christians, Jews and Muslims together to build mutual respect and counteract the impressions spread by a few adherents of hate.

His 12 days in January in the Holy Land with a group of 90, including 40 other North American Lutheran bishops, has stirred his need to learn more.

"We must talk with each other so the heart of the Abrahamic faiths' message of love will be in stark contrast to those who discredit the faiths by making it appear that people who believe in God are killing each other," said Martin, who is bishop of the Eastern Washington Idaho Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

He is still reflecting on mixed feelings stirred by a combination of his uncertainty about how to react at ancient pilgrimage-tourist sites, by his encounters with people caught in the current struggles, by his new awareness of grassroots peace initiatives and by his realization that he has much more to learn about the Holy Land.

Since returning, a recent incident of someone distributing Aryan Nations leaflets in Coeur d'Alene also reinforces his awareness that local work is needed.

"If we are concerned about where relations are headed in the Middle East, we also need to improve relations here," he said, expressing hope for more inter-faith dialogue.

"We have amazing opportunities associated with globalization," Martin said. "There's only one way forward: the world needs to knit itself together in new ways."

The eight-congregation Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land invited the 65 U.S. and Canadian bishops. Hosting them were Bishop Munib Younan and the Israeli government.



Bishop Martin Wells reflects on trip's implications here.

When bombs fell on Gaza in late December, 15 bishops dropped out. With the bishops, 50 spouses and others traveled from Jan. 5 to 17. Martin's wife, Pastor Susan Briehl, led several of the daily worship services for the delegation.

The goals of their three days in Jerusalem, six days in Bethlehem and two days on the Sea of Galilee were pilgrimage, accompaniment and advocacy for peace.

At some holy sites, Martin felt uncertain how to respond, seeing the site of Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection in the large, dark, domed Church of the Holy Sepulchre. People wept and wailed in different languages as they touched a rock beneath an ornate Orthodox altar—said to be the top of Golgotha where Jesus was crucified—or touched a marble slab where Jesus' body was said to have been prepared for burial. At another spot, people walked down a few steps to a spot that was said to be Jesus' tomb.

The delegation accepted an invitation by the Franciscans, who administer the church's Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, to return to celebrate holy communion. Bishop Younan's sermon called people "on behalf of Jesus to love one another."

As a first-time visitor to the Holy Land, Martin was discon-

certed that three different sites in Bethlehem claim to be the crypt where Jesus was born.

At the Mosque of the Patriarchs in Hebron, a site shared by Jews and Muslims because it holds the tombs of Abraham and Sarah, there were bullet holes in the walls from a 1994 shooting of 34 Muslim worshipers.

In Jerusalem, they visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum and met with the two chief rabbis of Judaism. The rabbis told of Israelis suffering from rockets fired from Gaza and concern that Hamas seeks to destroy Israel.

"There are serious issues on both sides," Martin said. "We also knew civilians in Gaza were being killed."

One day, the bishops encountered several manifestations of the tensions:

- Israeli government leaders gave them pens and certificates saying, "Advocates for Israel."
- On the old city's narrow streets, Israeli security guards and Muslim clerics advised them it would not be safe to go to the Dome of the Rock, the second most holy site for Muslims.
- At the Western Wall, a site for

all three religions, an Israeli flag was planted.

In predominantly Muslim Bethlehem, seven miles outside Jerusalem, Martin saw how the Israeli security wall divides West Bank communities and families.

He learned that Israeli settlements are on just two percent of the land, but 48 percent is under Israeli security control and 25 percent is uninhabitable, leaving Palestinians with 25 percent of the land, broken up by the wall.

"Israelis built the wall to keep suicide bombers out of Jerusalem," he said, "and bombings have dropped dramatically."

Martin saw rubble of a Palestinian family's home. He learned that as children grow and marry, Palestinians add another story to their homes without required building permits that they cannot obtain.

The families may live in the homes for years, never knowing when the government will bulldoze their houses for the permit violations, he said.

Balancing stories of Israelis and Palestinians stirred new thoughts for Martin.

"We overlook that there's more than a story of God saving faithful people," he said. "For example, Joshua's entry into the Promised Land was at the cost of the people who lived there. History comes through the perspective of conquerors."

Martin also saw alternative views in protest art that jarred his thinking.

Graffiti on the wall depicted a Palestinian girl patting down an Israeli soldier, represented to him "children trying to call adults to behave themselves."

Amid the seeming irreconcilable discord, he also heard encouraging, but rarely reported, examples of grassroots efforts for peace:

- In Bethlehem, Palestinians and Israelis work together in the Parents Circle to stop the destruction of houses.

- A pastor built the International Center Bethlehem (ICB) training facility beside Christmas Lutheran Church as a contribution to the local tourist economy and as a source of employment. With 100 employees, the ICB is the third largest employer in Bethlehem.

- The World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel promotes efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a just peace.

- Six Lutheran young women are spending a year in the Middle East with the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission Program, promoting peace and justice.

Martin sees hope not only in the U.S. government opening dialogue around the world but also in his two daughters' international experiences:

- Mary Emily had been to Tanzania, Thailand, Ireland and Bosnia before she was 25 and will spend next year in Bolivia, and

- Magdalena spent four months in the Middle East on a college study tour through the region.

"Our children will be our teachers," he said. "We do not need to be afraid. The world will come together if we move out of the way."

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