

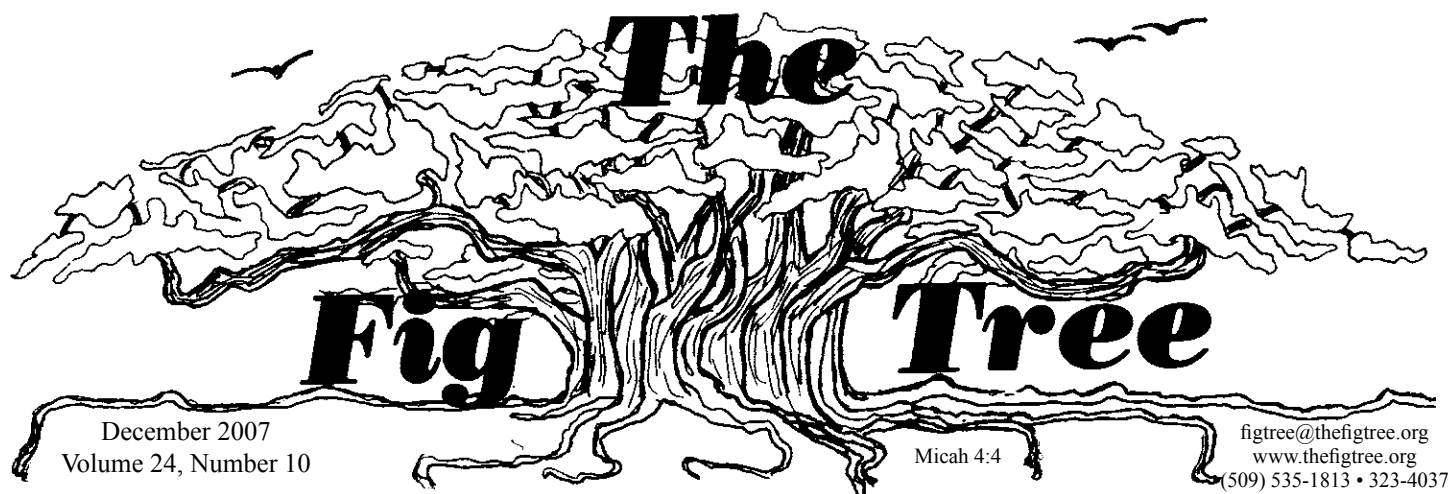
## STORIES INSIDE

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*Monthly newspaper covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest*

# Dean challenges spiral of violence

**By Mary Stamp**

The new dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John in Spokane, the Rev. Bill Ellis, regularly challenges his congregation to dare to imagine a future fulfillment that is not the product of human endeavor, but is a gift of God received gratefully.

“Most of us can imagine a reasonably peaceful future for ourselves and those we love, but we are also keenly aware that the future we imagine is lived against the backdrop of an increasing spiral of human violence,” he said.

He is thankful that the scriptural imagination dares to envision “a world whose end is not apocalyptic violence, but delivered from that end by unconditional forgiveness that breaks the cycle of reciprocal violence and so founds a new heaven and a new earth.”

Each era with its challenges intersects with the ongoing vision and hope faith gives.

Once the cruciform Gothic cathedral on the South Hill was an ecumenical spiritual center, a center for art, music and social life, and the place where the movers and shakers of Spokane’s political and financial power structures worshipped.



**The Rev. Bill Ellis, dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John**

While the cathedral still serves as an important center of religious and cultural life, he said that in today’s “none zone” culture—most Northwest people polled claim no religious affiliation—the cathedral, like most Inland Northwest churches, no longer has the significance it once had. Today, most of the cathedral’s 600 members are ordinary, middle-class people, he said.

“Now in a wilderness period, we are still about what the church has always been about, proclaiming the Gospel and living it out,” he asserted.

As the cathedral reflects on its purpose, the spiritual formation needed today and the type of life members will share with each other and the community, Bill preaches and teaches the gospel messages of providing for people who do not share in the blessings of life and of challenging today’s climate of violence.

He brings insights from studying history at the University of Oregon in Eugene. He set aside plans to study law in order to study theology at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, Calif.

Since graduating in 1982, he

*Continued on page 4*

## Heart to Heart Art develops resilience

### *Guided art method makes children artists*

The Heart to Heart Art program at the YWCA’s after-school and summer programs for homeless youth inspires basic artistic skills of at-risk children as one way to help build their resilience to overcome obstacles they face.

Jerri Shepard and Deborah Booth, associate professors in Gonzaga University’s School of Education, and Monica Walters, director of the Spokane YWCA, not only have shared the program with Spokane children, but also brought it to AIDS orphans at St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School in Kibera, Kenya, in August.

Jerri, who teaches in the master of arts in teaching at-risk students, and Deborah, chair of the teacher

education department, developed the program four years ago.

After school and in the summer, children participate in guided art processes. Classes can range from three to 20 students.

Jerri and Deborah often begin a class by asking how many children think they are artists. Few do, but they find they are.

Using a guided art method that assumes anyone can create art, the children are introduced step-by-step to five universal shapes—straight line, curved line, angle line, circle and dot. Drawing with prisma-color markers, they produce “quick, attractive results,” said Jerri.

Her concern about at-risk children started while working as

a school psychologist and with children at the juvenile court in Phoenix. Jerri, who came to Gonzaga 17 years ago from Visalia, Calif., is director of the Institute for Action Against Hate.

Deborah’s background includes literacy and curriculum development with children considered at risk for academic failure.

After the child creates a drawing, the teacher makes a copy and gives the original back to the child. They use the copies to make tote bags, bookmarks, calendars and greeting cards, which have sold at the YWCA Women of Achievement Luncheon, the Gonzaga Bookstore and in the community.

“It’s amazing the art the children have produced,” Jerri said. “The items sold produce revenue to further develop the Heart to Heart Art program.”

Creating art in itself fosters a sense of belonging, success and creativity, she said.

Deborah and her service learning students also lead an activity that teaches children to act out

*Continued on page 5*

## Fig Tree’s directory is now online, expanded

The Fig Tree’s 2008 Directory of Congregations and Community Resources is now online with more entries than were included in the print version, available since June.

Malcolm Haworth, AmeriCorps community outreach coordinator with The Fig Tree, has been updating the data since publication, adding congregations in Central Washington, Southeast Washington and North Central Idaho, doubling the number included.

In addition, he has added more agencies in the Palouse and Panhandle.

He has included new sections on programs for the homeless and on arts and culture. He expanded the sections on veterans, housing assistance and family resources, along with a few additions in each section, in order to be more comprehensive.

The information is in pdf files for each section—denominations and resource categories. Entries include emails and links to websites that can be clicked to connect with the congregation or resource to learn more information.

“It’s a way to access the world,” he said. “While most entries are in this region, we connect to the regional and national offices, plus some international ecumenical and faith organizations.

“We hope that the congregations, ministries and non-profits will link their websites to ours as a way to build ‘traffic’ on all our websites,” he said.

Malcolm encourages people to visit the website to check that entries are current and accurate, and then email that information to [directory@thefigtree.org](mailto:directory@thefigtree.org) or call 323-4037.

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Global Christian Forum opens ties

**By Fredrick Nzwili of Ecumenical News International**

Leaders meeting at the Global Christian Forum in early November in Kenya pledged to convene international, local and regional meetings to deepen reconciliation and understanding.

“Recognizing that unity is God’s gift, our commitment is to press on, promoting greater understanding and cooperation among Christians, while respecting the diversity of our identities, traditions and gifts,” leaders said in a statement they issued. They want to continue the global forum as a space for Christians from different traditions to work together in areas of common interest.

**The forum was proposed** in the mid-1990s by the Rev. Konrad Raiser, a German theologian then general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), to include churches not among its 347 member churches—Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox.

**While Hubert Van Beek, who organized** the forum, felt there were proposals for proceeding into the future, he acknowledged areas where more discussion is needed, especially criticism of some Pentecostal and Evangelical Christians by other Christians.

**The forum process will continue** with a small structure—not to replace existing ecumenical structures—as a place where members of different traditions can engage in dialogue to promote understanding, said Lutheran World Federation general secretary the Rev. Ishmael Noko.

**The Rev. Setri Nyomi of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches,** said dialogue requires local and regional follow-up.

“When you share your journey and discover how other people have traveled and find similarities in the journey, that helps us travel together,” said the **Rev. Richard Howell of the Evangelical Fellowship of India.**

“A new form of ecumenism is needed that embraces the challenges of world-wide Christianity,” said **Pentecostal theologian and scholar Cheryl Bridges-Johns,** professor at the Theological Seminary of the Church of God in Cleveland, Tenn. She quoted a 1961 WCC New Delhi assembly statement that “the achievement of unity will involve nothing less than a death and rebirth of many forms of church life as we have known them.”

Bridges-Johns said any new form of ecumenism will involve new faces, world views and voices of non-western, indigenous Christianity: “Western conservatives look to the South for support, but fail to understand the world view of Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere.” For Western Christianity, conversion means examining its sense that it represents “the pinnacle of evolutionary development in its scientific reason.” For churches from the South and East, “conversion would mean not being so quick to label Western Christianity as ‘apostate’ or ‘post-Christian,’” as well as to “avoid the temptation of judgment,” she said.

Pentecostal leader **the Rev. Peter Slegbos of the Assemblies of God in the Netherlands** warned about use of the term “ecumenism,” associated with WCC since its foundation in 1948. His constituencies “are allergic to that word,” he said, noting that “forum,” “dialogue” or “exploring unity” are easier to explain.

**WCC general secretary the Rev. Samuel Kobia** welcomed the involvement of Pentecostal and Evangelical leaders, and said it helped overcome prejudices. In the past, he said, Evangelicals had been wary of the “social gospel,” the commitment to changing society. In recent years, Pentecostals and Evangelicals have become active in campaigns, such as those warning of the dangers of climate change, he noted. “Only by lowering barriers, coming fully into each other’s presence and confronting our prejudices can we understand each other better,” he said.

**The Rev. Ndaba Mazabane, a South African cleric and chair of the World Evangelical Alliance,** suggested starting “to deliberate on issues that are more common to us than on those issues that divide us.”

“We should not dismiss too quickly and easily the ecumenical movement and the instruments it has created,” said **Bishop Brian Farrell, from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.** Affirming the value and role of the Global Christian Forum, he said the Forum owes its existence to those instruments. “Although over 100 years old, the ecumenical movement is still in its beginnings. The cause of Christian unity takes patience and a continued effort. “When Christians are divided, preaching the gospel suffers,” he said. “Everything that leads to rediscovering our unity in Christ is good,” said Farrell, impressed that participants engaged each other honestly.

Support came also from **the Rev. Geoff Tunnicliffe, director of the World Evangelical Alliance,** a network of international organizations and churches in 128 nations. He said, “We believe this table brings greater understanding and breaks stereotypes.”

**The Rev. Cecil Robeck, an Assemblies of God minister** in the United States and professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, likened the gathering to “a new Pentecost.” He said Pentecostalism, a Christian renewal movement dating from the early 20th century, takes its name from Pentecost and the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus’ followers, allowing them to understand each other. It is now one of the fastest growing Christian movements, particularly in the Southern hemisphere. Few have been involved in the WCC.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Pastors organize Legislative Advocacy Day

In cooperation with the state-wide Religious Coalition for the Common Good (RCCG), Spokane’s new Coalition for Progressive Pastors is planning a Legislative Advocacy Event at 5:30 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 13, at Spokane Friends, 1612 W. Dalke, said the Rev. Nick Block, pastor.

“We see the church in a prophetic way relating to peace and justice concerns,” he said.

They will hold the event early in January so they can meet with state legislators before the short 2008 session in Olympia.

The RCCG uses resources from the Washington Association of Churches and the Lutheran Public Policy Office. They plan to have local speakers and to share with legislators the values they hold from their faith.

Two RCCG meetings with legislators and the faith community in early November in Spokane to challenge participants to turn words into action.

“We want to represent the common values of Washington State’s ecumenical community,” said Darel Grothaus, interim director of the Washington Association of Churches and sponsor of RCCG. “We cannot do that without hearing from our partners and allies from across the state.”

Concerns raised in the Spokane meetings were consistent with those identified by RCCG partners. They include affordable and accessible housing and health care, reducing poverty, creation care, public safety and restorative justice, tax fairness and compassionate immigration reform.

Their priorities also included criminal justice reform, the environment—especially water issues—and reduction of barriers that perpetuate poverty.

In discussing restorative justice, Nick asked, “What blocks redemption? This is a theological issue our churches should be addressing.”

Concerns about the condition of the Spokane River and effects of global warming on water distribution are issues that “are not addressed on the West side of the State,” said one participant.

There was general agreement that coordinating priorities and action would yield better results than individual organizations trying to effect change in state legislation, said Alice Woldt of the RCCG.

RCCG partners include: Associated Ministries of Tacoma and Pierce County, Church Council of Greater Seattle, Earth Ministry, Friends Committee on Washington Public Policy, Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center, Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State and Washington Association of Churches.

Each organization has its own legislative agenda, but arrives at a consensus about what the RCCG will support as its priorities.

For information, call 844-5666.

Community celebrates Human Rights Day

A community celebration of United Nations Human Rights Day will be held in Spokane in conjunction with the annual United Nations Association ((UNA) celebration. This year begins the 60th year since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on Dec. 10, 1948.

The declaration set a standard for defending and promoting human rights throughout the world.

The Community Celebration begins at 6:30 p.m., Monday, Dec. 10, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr. with Yvonne Lopez-Morton, chair of the Washington State Human

Rights Commission, moderating testimonies of Spokane human rights activists about human rights defenders who inspire them.

The UNA-Spokane meeting follows at 7 p.m., featuring Robert Sauders, assistant professor of history, geography and anthropology at Eastern Washington University, speaking on “60 Years of Searching for Peace: The United Nations’ Role in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.”

Through his work in Israel and Palestine, Robert has worked with various United Nations agencies, which he says have improved the lives of men, women and children

subjected to the endless conflict and which highlight some specific programs that bring relief.

In 2007, he earned his doctoral degree from American University with a dissertation examining the politics of Palestinian identity narratives through archaeological and cultural heritage research.

His current research explores how the politics are communicated through narratives of tour guides and tourism publications. He teaches about the modern Middle East, Islamic and Judaic history and culture, museum studies, tourism and human rights.

For information, call 456-2382.

Voices in the Wilderness leader to speak

Kathy Kelly, coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence in Chicago, will speak on Friday, Jan. 25, in Spokane, sponsored by the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane.

Kathy helped initiate Voices in the Wilderness, a campaign to end the United Nations’ and United States’ sanctions against Iraq in 1996.

For bringing medicine and toys to Iraq in open violation of the sanctions, she and other campaign members were notified of a possible \$163,000 penalty for the organization, threatened with

12 years in prison and eventually fined \$20,000, which they have refused to pay.

Voices in the Wilderness organized 70 delegations to Iraq from 1996 to the beginning of “Operation Shock and Awe” warfare in March 2003.

Kathy has been to Iraq 24 times since January 1996. In October 2002, she joined Iraq Peace Team members in Baghdad where the team maintained a presence throughout the bombardment and invasion. She left on April 19, 2003, and has returned three times, most recently in May 2006

to Northern Iraq.

A teacher by profession, she has done prison time for planting corn at a nuclear missile silo site and “crossing the line” at Fort Benning to resist the School of the Americas (SOA), renamed the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation because its challengers dubbed it the “School of Assassins.”

She has been a nominee three times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

For information, call 838-7870.

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## Despite downsizing, ecumenist finds these times exciting for unity

Despite the downsizing and transition in local, national and global ecumenical organizations, Robert Welsh, general secretary of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), finds these times of challenges and difficulties one of the most creative, exciting periods he has experienced in more than 30 years of involvement in the ecumenical movement.

Robert is an ecumenical colleague of Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp. He studied with her at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches in 1969 and 1970, and worked with her again when she edited the Friends of Bossey newsletter.

Two of his reasons for optimism are the Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) commitment to racial justice and reconciliation and the Global Christian Forum he attended in early November in Limuru near Nairobi, Kenya.

Robert expects that when the CUIC holds its second Plenary meeting in Jan. 11 to 14 in St. Louis, the 10 member com-

munities will re-affirm their commitment to become "God's Beloved Community" with the mandate to pursue racial justice and reconciliation.

At its meeting in October in Baltimore, the Coordinating Council for the CUIC, Ron Cunningham, bishop in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and vice president of CUIC, said: "We now must embrace this calling to live out ways and means of eradicating racism and making racial reconciliation CUIC's fundamental approach to prophetic witness."

Convener of CUIC's Racial Justice Task Force Bentley De Bardeleben, who is minister of Racial Reconciliation for the United Church of Christ, said that "a new trust among representatives of historically black churches and the mainline churches, sorely lacking at times in

the past, is a hallmark of the renewed ties binding these churches together in a stronger relationship."

Robert participated in the Global Christian Forum, describing it as an unprecedented gathering of 240 Christian leaders from 72 nations on five continents, "representing the most widely diverse range of churches, confessions and organizations ever."

African Instituted churches, Anglicans, Catholic (Roman and Old), Baptists, Orthodox, Evangelicals, Disciples, Friends, Holiness Lutherans, Mennonites, Methodists, Moravians, Orthodox (Eastern and Oriental), Pentecostals, Reformed, Salvation Army, Seventh-Day Adventists, United and Uniting churches, "the sweep of the global Christian community, came together to explore the gift of our unity

in Christ," Robert said. "One statistician observed that 95 percent of the world's Christian population was represented in this event, coming together to share witness to the theme, 'Our Journeys with Jesus Christ, the Reconciler.'"

In addition to these Christian traditions or "families," a number of Christian organizations were also represented: regional ecumenical organizations, youth and student international movements, YMCA and YWCA, United Bible Societies, World Vision International, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, the World Evangelical Alliance, the World Council of Churches and a number of forum-type organizations.

Participants began by sharing personal testimonies of their encounters with Christ, expressing their faith out of their confessional traditions and reflecting on what it might mean to walk together in obedience to Christ, despite differing views on substantive issues such as ecclesiology.

**'Now is the most exciting period in 30 years of ecumenical involvement.'**

*At Global Christian Forum in Kenya*

## Korean examines some tough issues dividing Christian community

**Juan Michel - World Council of Churches media relations**

At the Global Christian Forum in November in Kenya, Korean missiologist Wonsuk Ma likened church unity to riding a bicycle: "We fall unless we go forward."

Ma analyzed Christian developments in unity and mission in the last century. He affirmed that in Christian mission, the seemingly contradictory emphases on "life before death" and on "life after death," which separated "mainline" and "evangelical" Christians for decades, are actually complementary and in need of each other.

Ma, a Pentecostal theologian and head of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in the United Kingdom, based his reflection on his personal journey. He described himself as a second generation Christian, growing up in an environment hostile to his faith.

While the "life before death" camp focuses on creating a just society, Ma said, the "life after death" camp emphasizes "soul saving."

For the former camp, issues that

hinder justice are mission topics, and sympathy with victims in society leads to involvement in their struggles.

For the latter camp, evangelism and church planting are the key topics.

However, Ma affirmed, "these approaches are complementary" because the gospel "includes the earthly and the heavenly."

Clifton Kirkpatrick, stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, described Ma's comments as "a caricature," noting that those in both camps are "discovering the wholeness of the gospel and need each other."

The Rev. Geoff Tunnicliffe, director of the World Evangelical Alliance, agrees with Ma "in general, but only for the early 20th century for evangelicals. Before that, he said, they were engaged in societal issues like the abolition of slavery. After the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, evangelicals had "permission to engage in issues pertaining to 'life before death.'"

The "evangelical" camp, said Ma has spent "energy converting everyone to our form of Christianity, including other Christians as well as non-believers," which some consider "sheep-stealing," and focus on who is "in" and "out."

Ma said the "ecumenical" camp created an environment that made it "impossible for some churches to approach the network," also creating those "in" and "out."

Ma compared the story of the relationships between the two "life camps" to a tale of two siblings who never met each other. Until today, when a long process of "self-critical reflection and growing awareness of each other" has led the two "much closer to each other than was possible decades ago."

"There has been a growing convergence as both 'camps' have rediscovered the gospel call to personal salvation and to social justice," Kirkpatrick said.

Tunnicliffe said there are helpful "conversations at some levels, but the grassroots has a long way to go. In both camps stereotypes

and significant divides around core issues remain."

However, Ma believes that occasions like the Global Christian Forum have the potential to foster an "authentic ecumenicity by combining open koinonia, Spirit-filled worship and diligent learning to discern what the Lord is doing in different Christian communions."

"I hope we will risk working together," and forge "new relations among ourselves and between our churches" so that "Christian unity may be strengthened, quite apart from the self-interest of any one institution," Kobia said.

"There is already much cooperation across boundaries at the grassroots level, be it on advocacy issues, fighting HIV and AIDS or other contemporary challenges," affirmed the Rev. Judy Mbugua, team leader of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa.

Regional consultations have taken place in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America. The methodology used in those encounters encouraged participants to share their faith journeys and stories of

their faith communities.

In "Proposals for the Future," participants recommended that:

- the focus continue to be on relationships and conversations,
- the process continue based on "committed participation" rather than forming a "membership organization,"
- the circle of participation be broadened with attention to underrepresented groups—women, youth, indigenous peoples and the physically challenged,
- the forum process also be pursued at regional national and local levels,
- a small secretariat staffed with a half-time person ensure follow-up with funding from participating bodies.



### Spokane Multifaith AIDS CareTeams Volunteer Orientation & Training

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# Dean of cathedral shares hopeful signs in path toward peace

*Continued from page 1*  
has served Episcopal churches in Coos Bay and Reedsport, Ore., followed by eight years in Forest Grove and 10 years in Bend. He came to the cathedral in September 2006.

**Through the eyes of history,** Scripture and human nature, his sermons call worshipers to live in and reflect on today's realities.

"We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, invited to share our lives in ministries of outreach like Habitat for Humanity, providing a way for people to enter the economy," he said, sharing that outreach from the cathedral is both individual and institutional.

"Much of the Old Testament is about economic justice that people didn't practice. Jubilee was established so land would revert periodically to the original owners," Bill said.

**Then he shared reflections** from two recent sermons on overcoming violence.

Bill's commitment to non-violence means he does not limit preaching or teaching about peace to the season of the birth of the Prince of Peace. It is a year-round theme, because it permeates the Scriptures.

On Veterans' Day, for example, he connected the messages of three Scripture lessons—from Job, II Thessalonians and Luke—that speak of a future, in which "all is fulfilled and redemption is at last accomplished."

Bill is concerned that the American approach to violence destroys the values on which the nation was built.

"We're escalating the cycle of violence. The stakes are higher than 100 or 1,000 years ago. Humans need to realize that use of violence to end violence does not work," he asserted.

"Once governments had a monopoly on violence and might temporarily end violence but, with new communication tools and technology, no one has a monopoly on violence," Bill said.

"People can form small, international cells, communicating their ideological designs through new technologies. Through other new technologies, they can invent more sophisticated means of killing than disgruntled groups in the past.

**"We can't use violence** to end violence," he said.

For him, the naïve people are those who say violence will end violence.

Bill calls people to use their capacity to forgive, reconcile and fit in.

"We have to, or the world will not survive," he said. "We will

create global, cataclysmic destruction from which it will take centuries to recover."

**Bill finds hope** in unexpected places, such as the way leaders today justify violence.

"We can no longer justify violence simply for glory or imperial expansion," he said, noting that the President recently appealed to empathy for victims to continue to "sell" U.S. violence, saying, "We have to liberate victims of an oppressive regime."

"The Jewish-Christian tradition of empathy is about our common humanity and God's requirement that we not victimize other people," Bill said. "The President's justification for the invasion demonstrates that this tradition of empathy for victims has seeped deeply into our consciousness even without our realizing it."

**He also sees hope** in the increasing numbers of people "sick about what we have done in Iraq and believing little has been accomplished."

Having been to Nicaragua three times—2004, 2005 and 2006—he saw the destruction U.S. involvement in the 1980s Contra war caused. Today, much destruction remains. The economy has not recovered. Of the population of 5 million, 50,000 or 1 percent were killed. He saw injured people, amputees everywhere.

"The war accomplished nothing. Daniel Ortega was president then with a moderately socialist government, and he is president now with a moderately socialist government," Bill said.

Similarly, he said the Vietnam War accomplished nothing: "In 1955, Vietnam could have been reunited under a moderately communist regime, as it has now. What is true of our relationship with Vietnam today could have been true without the war."

Those who believe in violence are the naïve ones, he repeated.

"Yes, the extremism of terrorists is dangerous. We need to say 'no' to it, but we do not say 'no' to it by becoming like the terrorists. That shows agreement with their tactics, implying killing and hating accomplish something."

Bill pointed out that recent enemies once received U.S. arms and training: Osama bin Laden to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein to fight Iran, which was once a conduit for the illegal transfer of U.S. weapons to Contras in Nicaragua.

**Another hopeful sign,** Bill said, is the extent people oppose violence.

He sees an evolution in thinking, like the story of the 100th

monkey—the number that would tip the tide of thinking in the world to change the world from dependence on violence.

The destruction nuclear weapons can cause is so horrible that people realize motives don't matter.

"Whether humanity has a future and what that future is are the prevailing questions," Bill said. "Albert Einstein said he did not know the technology the third world war would use, but knew the weapons of the fourth world war would be sticks and rocks."

"When pragmatists win, violence declines," he said.

**Bill experiences hope** when people change their thinking, slowly developing understanding and new ways of looking at divisive issues.

For example, since the election of Gene Robinson, a partnered gay man, as bishop of New Hampshire in 2003, there has been a dialogue in the national Episcopal Church about participation of gays and lesbians.

While there has been some attrition from it, most people are conversing, wrestling with it, have come to terms with it and are supportive, said Bill.

"I believe we need the full participation of all people in the life of the church," he said. "Any organization may do or be things we do not like. We can critique what disturbs us about our church or country without loving our church or country less."

**"I engage people** to be committed to the church, despite its mistakes and its fallibility," he said. "We need to be faithful to each other, correct what is wrong and allow ourselves to be changed. Too often we think unity means uniformity. Organizations are weaker if all members think alike."

The story of Jesus is about his choice to suffer and die rather than cause suffering or death, Bill said.

"If in the collective experience

of humanity we can become transformed by forgiveness, which has been there from the foundation of the world, then indeed our children and their children may just see that day when the swords are beaten into plowshares and the spears into pruning hooks," he said.

**For the psychic and spiritual** situation today, Bill said the Scriptures call for endurance as the way for people to gain and retain their souls.

"Gaining your soul is about staying true to the God of love, justice and mercy in the midst of a world in which those values seem increasingly expendable," Bill said.

That means being "profoundly counter-cultural" by "refusing to demonize or hate those who demonize or hate you," he explained. "To gain our souls is to resist the temptation to become like those we oppose."

He quoted Martin Luther King,

Jr., on nonviolent direct action: "We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will, and we will still love you."

Bill challenges people to endurance in love, in compassion and in the quest for justice for all, "not just for our own sake, but for the sake of the world."

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# Homeless children in after-school and summer programs create art

*Continued from page 1*  
 fairy tales with nonviolent endings.

For the service-learning students from Gonzaga University, it's an opportunity to translate theory they learn in the classroom into practice.

Courses prepare them to understand that when a child has a meltdown over something, like someone taking his or her marker, it may be about more than the missing marker. It may be about something that happened at home the night before. So the Gonzaga students debrief after a class.

"We need to meet a child with openness, rather than reacting to a child's misbehavior," she said.

"We have a passion for programs that uplift children," Jerri said. "Everyone benefits when we improve the lives of children."

Speaking recently at the United Nations Association-Spokane, she summarized the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which has not yet been ratified by the United States. Rights include protection from discrimination; developing in a healthy, normal manner—physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially; adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services; a harmonious family with affection and material security; an education; opportunity for play and recreation; protection against neglect, cruelty, exploitation and trafficking, and protection from being forced to work.

"We like to think in the United States that all children have those rights, but many children we work with do not have those rights," Jerri said.

She and Deborah find that children are resilient and can overcome "significant obstacles if sufficient protective factors are in place."

Those protective factors alter or reverse potential negative outcomes to life stressors.

Heart to Heart Art began as Heart to Art after Father Robert Spitzer, Gonzaga president, sent Deborah and Jerri to a Dialogue for Democracy Conference and challenged them to develop a program that connects the university to the community to meet the needs of youth. As president of the YWCA board, Deborah is aware of needs of children in the community.

The YWCA now offers after-school and summer programs as an add-on to the existing after-



Jerri Shepherd displays children's art on her office wall.

school and summer programs for homeless youth. The YWCA found that children did best if they stayed in their regular school and were brought by bus to the after-school program.

At first the program had few art resources for the summer program, but Jerri and Deborah provided supplies they already had on hand and have volunteered their time to this program.

"Art is a good place to start working with at-risk youth. It's our first language," she said. "We think in images and symbols first. Some ways to teach art, however, discourage artistic skills."

"The after-school program provides an anchor and consistency in the lives of homeless children," Jerri said, noting that it fits in with the resilience theory about increasing protective factors by looking at what is going right for children rather than what is wrong and what needs to be "fixed."

Factors key to resilience are positive relationships, meaningful learning activities and high

velop healthful relationships that supplement family support.

"Some children have horrible stories. Healing for them does not come from talking about their trauma in isolation, but from being in a structured community that enables them to have healthy relationships and develop a sense of accomplishment by creating something beautiful," Jerri said.

"The arts provide a stable place in life. We don't analyze anyone's work. Although art therapy can help heal children, this is not a therapeutic program, but can have therapeutic results," she said.

In August, Jerri, Deborah, Monica and Sima Thorpe, director of the Center for Community Action at Gonzaga, presented the Heart to Heart Art program at the First International Teacher Education Conference on Service Learning in Brussels.

Then they joined Monica at the World Congress of the YWCA in Nairobi for three days. Near there, they visited the Kibera slum and went through the process of teaching art at St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School for students who have lost one or two

parents to AIDS. Their curriculum does not include arts.

Next summer, Jerri and Deborah hope to return with an art curriculum for their summer program.

"When we think of U.S. children at risk, we have no idea of the conditions in which so many children live. Few have the rights and privileges of even the most deprived U.S. children," Jerri said.

She and Deborah are developing an arts curriculum to include in an existing after-school program or as an intensive summer program to meet needs of students in this community or globally.

For information, call 323-3471 or 323-3663.

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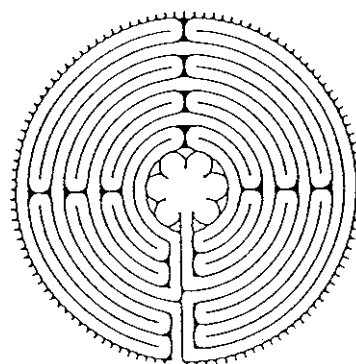
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# Spokane Alliance listens to 1,000 stories of pressures people face

The Spokane Alliance member institutions are in the process of engaging in 1,000 conversations to build relational power among people in member institutions by eliciting pressures people face.

“Building relationships in the long haul is about more than complaining about problems and seeking solutions. It’s about holding ourselves accountable to each other so we can hold our decision makers accountable,” said Lanney Martin of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church.

For example, the Spokane Transit Authority had committed to the Spokane Alliance a few years ago to hold meetings in the evening so working people who use the STA could attend. As time went on, they considered shifting back to daytime meetings, until the alliance came to their board meeting and reminded them to keep their commitment, he said.

“Every organization may lose members and leaders, so relational power helps us persist and remember,” said the Rev. Andy CastroLang, pastor of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, who shared the emcee role with Lanney. “Relational power stands for the whole in a rich mix of our institutions in the community.”

At the Fall Assembly in October at the Spokane Convention Center, more than 500 participants heard stories from the first 200 of the 1,000 conversations being held by the Spokane Alliance, an organization of faith, labor, education and nonprofit organizations working together for the common good and to strengthen leadership in their organizations.

Thirteen of the 29 member institutions are churches.

“Our power begins in one-to-one conversations, awakening our energy to change more,” said Andy. “Shared stories link lives so we can go into action.”

Dee Lorenz, also of St. Mark’s Lutheran, described the 1,000 conversations, which began in June as a way to look at pressures on families involved in the member institutions. She invited several participants to share their own experiences that illustrate the issues of common concern.

• Julie Rector of the Unitarian Universalist Church told how she struggles running a small business downtown with three part-time employees, unable to afford to provide them with health insurance.

• Carl Fischer of Salem Congregation talked of the expense of finding a house for a family of



Francesca DePaolo of St. Aloysius Catholic Church and the Spokane Education Association (SEA) and Brenda Milla-Mai also of the SEA conversed at the Spokane Alliance Assembly.

five, who have been living in a two-bedroom apartment in West Central Spokane.

• Christine Halbert of Westminster Congregational UCC is concerned that preschool teachers do not make a living wage, but still make sacrifices so they can have the resources they need to teach children. Many are over-tired. She asked: “How can we provide quality child care when staff earns so little and many move on to higher paying jobs?”

• Gary Dyer of Central United Methodist said his son started college this year. The cost of his education will be \$17,000 a year. For a middle-class family, a student who has no scholarships will leave undergraduate studies with a \$40,000 debt. Gary wonders if he should borrow from his home equity. If his son goes to graduate school, the cost per year is about \$30,000. His second son will be ready to go to college in two years. Many parents are pushed into staggering debt to assure higher education for their children.

• Jeremy Hohnstein of the Sheet Metal Workers #66 was grateful for the sustainable job opportunities offered by the union. After eight years in the Marines and then entering the Army National Guard, the only experience he had was military. Out of the military, he bounced from job to dead-end job. Through the Sheet Metal Union, he has found a career and benefits, not just a job.

• Lisa Brown, State Senate majority leader from the 3rd district, then shared pressures she faces in her role.

“What you are doing strengthens our form of government,” she said. “I have been in the legislature for 15 years, and the biggest pressure is balancing my family responsibilities as a single parent with my job, because my family is dispersed around the nation.”

When she started and her son was a year old, she had him in child care, but now he stays in Spokane with his father when the legislature is in session.

“I hear similar stories about balancing work and home across the state as I work on policy issues,” she said.

Lanney then pointed out that the role of the Spokane Alliance is to weave together common interests.

Several speakers then shared examples of “relational power in action” through SustainableWorks and WellnessWorks projects.

Jerry White of the Unitarian

Universalist Church said that SustainableWorks overcomes inertia that blocks change by organizing and training workers, and by providing incentives. Working with Avista, SustainableWorks trains people to do energy audits and to do energy retrofits.

SustainableWorks expands job opportunities along with providing a sustainable environment through “green” building.

The Spokane Alliance worked with a member of St. Augustine’s Catholic Church who has had a floor covering business for 30 years, to improve the energy efficiency of her small business so she can save expenses and pay more to her workers. They helped her find a loan to make the retrofit possible.

WellnessWorks addresses health care and drug costs, said Ron Dashiell of Covenant United Methodist Church.

Empire Health, which recently sold operations of several local hospitals and health care facilities to Community Health, had made a commitment to the Spokane Alliance to provide preventative health screenings.

It had provided more than 200 screenings at three churches.

Those screened were waiting for Empire to do six-month re-screenings.

Gary Cooper of St. Aloysius Catholic Church said five more institutions were promised the chance for screenings and six-month re-screenings after that.

The alliance wrote and delivered more than 300 postcards to indicate the broad base of community support for fulfilling their commitment.

Progress is also underway to develop the Sound Alliance in several Puget Sound counties.

The plan is for the two groups to collaborate on a statewide basis to bring proposals and challenges to state entities, the governor and the legislature.

The Sound Alliance will hold its Founding Assembly on June 1, with the goal of bringing a groundswell of concern about issues to the 2009 state legislature.

Austin de Paolo of St. Aloysius Catholic Church explained that the goal is to gain state-wide power to build new relational power with the state legislature, with alliance members in 50 percent of the state’s legislative districts.

“The 1,000 conversations tap into the interests of members, from a need for a traffic light to state-wide issues,” said Austin.

Lisa said she was interested in hearing about the pressures and was committed to being at and inviting the Governor to join her at the Founding Assembly for the Sound Alliance. Curtis Fackler, chair of the Spokane County Republican Party also agreed to meet with Spokane Alliance leaders and foster participation in the call for state policies that foster the common good.

For information, call 532-1688.

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# The number of hungry people in Inland NW equals Bloomsday numbers

Cyndi Cook would be glad if her job wasn't needed. It would mean there was no hunger.

Cyndi, who is special events manager for Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest, spoke at the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service Nov. 22 at the Cathedral of St. John, co-sponsored by the Interfaith Council, sharing results of the agency's 2007 client survey.

To help people picture the 48,000 people who came to food banks from the Cascades to North Idaho last week, she suggested thinking of Bloomsday, which drew about 48,000 walkers and runners to Spokane last May.

"The people who come are like you and me, seniors, children, working mothers, stay-at-home fathers and seniors," she said.

Some come to food banks for food, so they can buy a tank of gas or because food stamps ran out before the end of the month when they would receive more, said Cyndi, who worked at St. Vincent de Paul's food bank before coming to Second Harvest.

Even though the hungry tend to be hidden, she said, the caring became visible before Thanksgiving when people helped provide 8,000 bags with turkeys and Thanksgiving meal fixings for four people—enough for 32,000 people.

Reviewing the issues reported in the 2007 survey of 700 Second Harvest clients at the 21 emergency food outlets in Spokane County, Jason Clark, executive director, said their stories "give meaning to our work."

Rising energy and gas prices make it a challenge to provide hunger relief services in the region, but many statistics are similar to previous years, with almost half of those receiving assistance being children, he said.

"Each time we talk with a hungry person helps us rediscover the purpose of our charity, why we need the food safety program and why refrigerated trucks matter," he said.

All help feed hungry people.

The shift in grocery stores from rows of canned goods to selling more cold, refrigerated food has changed the supply of donated food, has required Second Harvest to expand its cold storage with trucks and massive coolers and freezers to handle donated food at the proper temperature with



Joe Urlacher of the Interfaith Council and Cyndi Cook load food after the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service.

the proper transportation to assure food safety.

"Fresh cucumbers from a local garden can make as much difference as a truckload of potatoes from a Central Washington farm in helping the sons and daughters, moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas who need help," he said. "No matter where the food comes from, we need to be ready to move it where it's most needed."

Second Harvest connects community resources to feed people through empowerment, education and partnerships. Last year it distributed 3.7 million pounds of food to its Spokane County food outlets, which serve 15,000 each month.

It provides 3 million pounds of food to 130 other charities in Spokane and 13.3 million pounds to more than 300 neighborhood food banks and meal centers that feed 48,000 people each week throughout the Inland Northwest.

The survey found that 65 percent of parents go without food so their children can eat, and 45 percent said it happens daily or weekly. About 60 percent of adults without children skip meals when they run low on food, and for more than half of them it happens daily or weekly.

About 90 percent of households were able to pick up food from their neighborhood food bank within 24 hours of their need and nearly 64 percent said the food lasted a week or more.

About 65 percent of households surveyed receive food stamps.

Of the clients, 11 percent are seniors 55 or older.

More than 55 percent of client households have children and a quarter are headed by single parents—83 percent of these by single mothers.

Three fourths of client households earn income below the federal poverty level and 94 percent, less than half Spokane County's median family income. More than 40 percent have at least one member working full or part time and one-third of adults cannot work because of a disability.

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About 21 percent receive financial assistance for housing, 34 percent of adults and 12 percent of children have no health insurance, and 48 percent have unpaid medical or health bills.

The Spokane County emergency food bank network includes Airway Heights Baptist Church, American Indian Center, Better Living Center, Caritas, City Gate, East SNAP, Northeast Pantry, Our Place, the Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, Spokane Valley Partners and the Cheney, Deer Park, Mead, Medical Lake, North County, Northwest Ecumenical, Otis Orchards, Southside, Spangle and Westminster Presbyterian food banks.

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# Rwandan refugees reunite, committed to help others in Spokane

**By Deidre Jacobson**

Feeling blessed to have educations, to have survived the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and to be reunited with family since August, Evariste and Christine Mulindangwe dedicate their lives to helping others.

Evariste, an engineer, works for the City of Spokane with the Water District. Christine, a nurse, is employed at Alderwood Manor and has a licensed Adult Family Home.

“We try to give back now,” said Evariste, who volunteers with World Relief. “We are helping 42 refugees from Burundi by providing translation and rides, help with shopping or anything we can. We feel we have a debt and so we want to serve people in need. They seem to find comfort in our support. They face so many challenges.”

They can assist with cultural adjustment and translation, because Burundi, which is next to Rwanda, has Hutus and Tutsis and has also experienced civil war.

Less than two years after they came to Spokane in August 2000 as refugees, Evariste and Christine helped form and coordinate activities, assistance and social gatherings for the Africa Support Group, to welcome Africans who are in the area as students, faculty, immigrants and refugees.

When they first came to Spokane, they thought that Christine’s three younger sisters had died in the chaos and slaughter after the genocide in a refugee camp in the Congo.

In 2002, they learned from Voice of America that her family members, Julianne and Marianne—who are twins—and Catherine, were still alive.

In April 1994, the long smoldering struggle for power between Hutu and Tutsi extremists, ethnic groups within Rwanda, escalated into chaos and violence.

Evariste, Christine and their two children were forced to flee. Christine and her four younger sisters came together at a refugee camp in the Congo. Evariste helped another family escape.

“Christine and her sisters were at great risk,” explained Evariste, “because their mother was Tutsi and their father Hutu.”

Evariste and Christine gave some background on the conflict and told of their experiences during the genocide and as refugees.

“The Hutu, the majority of the population, and the Tutsi, the minority and holders of power, had been in conflict since 1953 when the Hutu gained power by elec-



Kalili, Evelyn, Evariste, David, Christine and Josiane Mulindangwe, and Marianne Mukamana.

tion,” he said. “The Tutsi leadership fled but continued to attack from neighboring countries.

“The attacks stopped in 1963 with a period of relative peace,” Evariste continued, “but the fighting wasn’t over. The rebels organized the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RFP) and invaded from the north from Uganda in 1990.”

In 1993, a peace agreement was signed, setting up power sharing between the Hutu government and the RFP.

“In spite of the agreement, the RFP were arming themselves within the capital. The country was in a state of fear,” said Evariste, “because trucks filled with guns were entering the country from the North, at the bidding of the RFP to a protected ‘safe zone,’ within the capital, a provision of the peace agreement.

“In response, Hutu extremists were gathering weapons. Even ordinary citizens were arming themselves, afraid that the RFP would attack.

“When Hutu president, Juvenal Habyarimana’s plane was shot down on his return to Rwanda from the signing of a peace agreement, the violence began.”

Extremist Hutu began killing Tutsi and moderate Hutu. In about 100 days of genocide, about 937,000 people died, according to Reuters.

Christine, her two children and her four sisters fled to a refugee camp in northern Congo.

“So many were injured, people were sick and dying, bodies stacked in the streets, to be picked up by garbage trucks,” she said. “Because I was a nurse, I tried to help people. We stayed with friends until international relief organizations began to hire nurses.”

Christine and Evariste were separated the day they fled. Learning

he was alive and searching for them, Christine, her children and her sister, Jeanne, joined him in southeastern Congo, which was safer.

“I was afraid for my sisters in the northern refugee camp because the RFP followed people to the camps, searching for militia, but killing citizens,” said Christine.

Hearing there was work in Zambia, Evariste moved there. Christine, Jeanne and the children followed, but didn’t have enough money to bring Catherine, who was then eight, or the nine-year-old twins. They hoped to find a home and bring them to Zambia.

Before the Mulindangwes could make arrangements, the northern camp was attacked and everyone fled to the jungle.

The sisters were separated, staying with different groups of refugees. They walked for days.

“People were sick and dying of malaria. It was terrifying,” said Marianne.

In Zambia, Christine worked at a Catholic mission hospital and became certified as a registered nurse. She was offered a job with the Ministry of Health. There she met Maxine Keogh, a lay missionary from Spokane.

Maxine helped the family apply for resettlement in the United States. The process began in 1997 and in 2000 they were resettled in Spokane, moving into a home owned by Maxine’s daughter.

After they heard the sisters were alive, they learned Marianne had been captured and forced to go back to Rwanda and work on a farm.

She had injured her leg fleeing. When it became infected, she had surgery in Rwanda and was sent to a camp in Kenya for more surgery. Christine sent money for the operation.

Julienne and Catherine were together, first in a camp in Tanzania and then in Kenya.

In Kenya, the three sisters were united and found help through Mapendo International, a relief organization with a mission to identify and help individuals and communities in extreme danger, especially widows, orphans, rape victims, torture survivors and genocide targets.

Mapendo provided Julianne, Marianne and Catherine food, medical care and schooling. They were instrumental in locating Christine and Evariste and began the process of bringing the girls to the United States.

The sisters arrived in Spokane in July and August 2007.

Marianne is staying with Evariste and Christine, who are in St. Patrick’s Catholic parish.

Julienne and Catherine are in New Hampshire with their sister, Jeanne. All three are attending

school and learning English to earn a GED and attend college.

“We have kept the faith, through it all,” said Christine. “If anything, it has made our faith stronger. We don’t understand why we survived when so many have died.

“We still suffer with nightmares and feelings of fear, even when we know we are safe,” she said, “but it is not our way to talk about what happened.

“So many survivors of the genocide have physical health problems, especially headaches. You never get over it, you never forget,” she said.


“Marianne was found amidst a pile of dead bodies in a church. She doesn’t speak of it. She will tell us things that happened, but wouldn’t open up to others. It is the way we were raised.”

“We are grateful to have the girls with us,” said Evariste. “There are still people living in the jungle, hiding, because they are afraid to be found.”

“Even though there is relative peace in Rwanda, people live in fear. They are still afraid of their neighbors, and anyone can be accused of participating in the genocide and be arrested,” he said.

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## Multifaith AIDS CareTeam training resumes outreach in region

Catholic Charities and the Spokane AIDS Network (SAN) are sponsoring volunteer training for Spokane Multifaith AIDS CareTeams from 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 12, at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, 503 N. Walnut, Spokane Valley.

The program is for persons interested in becoming volunteers as members of faith-based AIDS CareTeams to express compassion and values through practical, emotional and spiritual support for an individual or a family living with HIV/AIDS.

Teams of seven to 15 persons meet monthly to plan their service to their care partner(s) living with HIV/AIDS and to do things friends might do.

The session is for members of all faith traditions or no congregational affiliation and people living with HIV/AIDS.

The Spokane Multifaith AIDS CareTeams began in the Catholic community in response to families who had lost a family member to AIDS, said Scott Cooper, director of Parish Social Services for Catholic Charities in Spokane.

"In the mid 1990s, they experienced

ostracism from their church communities," he said. "In one case, a son who died of AIDS was refused a Catholic burial. That spurred the development of the program."

At first, the goal was to offer a pastoral response to families, not those who were HIV positive," Scott said. "We met with pastors in healing ministries and did outreach to hospitals, medical professionals and individuals whose family members had died or were HIV positive."

Those meetings developed into a ministry for those who were living with HIV and AIDS, because there was a shift in church culture that decreased ostracism of families.

"The real need was to address the isolation of those with HIV and AIDS," he said.

When the father, mother and two children in one family were infected and eventually all died, the community helped change stereotypes about people who have HIV. It gave the community permission to talk about HIV.

In 1999, Trudy James, who started Beginning AIDS Spirituality and Multifaith Works in Seattle, led the first training in

Spokane. Her organization is on the web at [multifaith.org](http://multifaith.org).

She will lead the training in January in Spokane along with local speakers on such issues as living with HIV; causes, prevention and control with bio-medicine; psycho-social issues; isolation, and the policies and procedures for CareTeams.

Currently, there is one active care team with about four members, formed five years ago along with three other teams.

They meet as a team to support each other as a faith sharing community.

When a team's partner dies, they sometimes disband. Other teams ended when people moved.

The teams were formed when, because of the dynamic of the disease, they were with a partner through hospice care.

Now it has more of a volunteer chore services look as more people live longer with AIDS. The teams provide transportation to the doctor and have social interaction, such as over dinner, "doing things friends might do," Scott said.

"The process is intentionally interfaith in its genesis and process," he explained.

"We invite people of different faiths to serve on each care team, so there are not all Catholic, all Protestant, all Jewish or all Islam teams.

"Often the care partner has not had a positive experience with organized religion," he continued, "so we expose them to people of different faith communities, working together and praying together. They pray with the care partner only if that person asks.

"There is no verbal proselytizing. There is compassionate response to people, which is at the core of all faiths."

When some lost their partners, sometimes two in a row, some teams experienced burnout.

Other trainings have been held every other year as teams waxed and waned, Scott said.

The care team left also lost contact with the SAN and the Regional Health District to request referrals of people with AIDS.

Scott met with the SAN in the spring and decided to revive the program, because SAN has six people they felt would benefit from the program.

For information, call 358-4273.

## NCC head says trusting relationships are needed to deal with conflicts

New York - The Rev. Michael Kinnamon, a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pastor, longtime educator and ecumenical leader, was installed Thursday, Nov. 8, as the ninth General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

Michael was elected at the recent NCC General Assembly meeting in Woodbridge, N.J.

Also installed at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York was the newly elected NCC president, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), and other NCC officers.

Michael succeeds the Rev. Bob Edgar who resigned August 31 to become president of Common Cause. The new general secretary will begin after Jan. 1, 2008.

Addressing the assembly before his election, he said the church of Jesus Christ is "already one."

"Unity is not synonymous with agreement," he explained. "We understand we have deep disagreements and try to address them. This is a consequence of being in Christ. We can fight like cats and dogs, and sit at the same table."

He challenged people to look

for the Spirit when they gather and to trust the Spirit has claimed the others.

"Getting to know one another builds that trust is how we deal with ongoing conflicts, not as a political caucus, but as sisters and brothers," Michael said, stressing that a council of churches isn't just an agency in New York or Washington. "It's a community of the churches themselves."

The day after the two NCC leaders were installed, they met with representatives of churches, the United Nations and human rights organizations at the Interchurch Center in New York City, on an alliance to abolish genocide.

Michael pledged his commitment to make this a "living concern." Participants heard that as religions shape their identities they may become a source of conflicts, particularly when perverted into a political identity.

Within two weeks after his installation, Michael and other NCC

leaders wrote to President Bush, reaffirming long-standing support of "goals and principles central to a lasting peace in the Middle East: an end to the occupation, a two-state solution, a renunciation of violence, an affirmation of rights and security concerns of both Israelis and Palestinians, and a shared Jerusalem that can one day be a symbol of the peace that is central to the faith of Christians, Jews and Muslims."

They prayed for the success of the peace conference.

From 1999 to 2002, Michael was general secretary of the Consultation on Church Union, which became Churches Uniting in Christ. He was executive secretary of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Commission on Faith and Order from 1980 to 1983. He has taught mission, peace and ecumenical studies at Eden Theological Seminary since 2000 and at Lexington Theological Seminary, Christian Theological Seminary in

Indianapolis and the South Asian Theological Institute in India. He has been on the NCC's governing board and its Justice and Advocacy Commission.

His degrees are from the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1980 and Brown University in 1971. Ordained in 1976, Michael has written several books on the ecumenical movement.

The NCC's new president,

Archbishop Aykazian is the third Orthodox NCC president. Born in 1951 in Turkey, he studied theology at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem and was ordained in 1971. He served on the World Council of Churches' Mission and Evangelism Unit, the Orthodox Task Force and the Central Committee.

For information, call 212-870-2228.

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# Volunteers exhibit generosity as they assist home-bound seniors, disabled

When a new volunteer who was doing light housework for a Volunteers Chore Services low-income senior asked for another client, Judy Marte, program manager, wondered if there was a problem with the person or the situation.

The problem was no problem. The volunteer found that the work was much easier than she expected, so she was asking to be assigned to help an additional client.

This summer, another volunteer announced to Judy that he had just mowed his 3,000th lawn.

A young, working mother signed up recently, realizing she could do some housework to help someone else.

A new driver, who is in his late 60s, is able to drive even though he has been disabled since birth.

"The people who sign up to help are amazing," Judy said.

Volunteer Chore Services (VCS), a program of Catholic Charities' Senior Services, connects volunteers with low-income seniors and disabled adults, assisting them so they can continue to live independently in their own homes.

This program helps neighbors help neighbors by stepping in to assist with housework, yard work, rides to medical appointments or grocery shopping and other chores.

Judy became program manager six months ago. She has been with the Senior Services program for two years.

After earning an undergraduate degree in natural resources conservation in 1978 at the University of Connecticut and a master's degree in wildlife management in 1981 at Louisiana State University, she worked for a while with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries—work that included helping catch alligators.

"I thought I wanted to work outdoors with wildlife, but as I grew older, I realized I wanted to work with people," she said.

She moved with her former husband to the Northwest—Idaho Falls, Missoula, Mont., and Genesee, Idaho. Life changed when she had two small children and she chose to stay at home. The moves and time she took out to rear her children made it hard for her to go back to work.

She moved to Spokane 11 years ago, working part time and volunteering at schools and children's theatre. She worked in retail, but eventually began looking for "a real job" that would mean something, a career where she could



Judy Marte

make a difference.

She credits growing up in a Methodist church as a child in White Plains, N.Y., with helping form her values and commitment to give back to the community. She also credits the example of her mother, 80, and father, 78, who in retirement do volunteer chore work in Arizona.

"The goal of Volunteer Chore Services is to help low-income seniors and disabled people who do not have family living in the area to assist them," Judy said.

"Volunteers become like substitute family, providing transportation to medical appointments or the grocery store, or helping in the home with light housework, yard work, minor home repairs or building a wheel chair ramp," she said. "We also help people move from one independent living facility to another independent living facility."

She estimates volunteers provide 15 to 20 rides a day.

There is constant demand for housework such as vacuuming, cleaning the bathtub, mopping the floor or doing laundry.

Most volunteers help the same person twice a month.

From January to September 2007, a total of 1,025 volunteers helped more than 1,300 clients in Spokane County. Through offices in Colville, Wilbur and Walla Walla, in addition to Spokane, they serve the 13 counties of Eastern Washington, reaching out through more than 1,600 volunteers to help more than 2,000 clients.

The volunteer numbers include

individual, ongoing volunteers and members of groups who help at one or more events.

Volunteer Chore Services partners with En Christo, a group at Whitworth that sends students to spend three hours Saturdays visiting with residents of the Delaney apartments. They help with housework, bring food or just spend time.

VCS works with other church, school and business groups.

The greatest need is for more people to join the approximately 150 active, regular individual volunteers, especially to do light housework.

"We have people needing light housework on a waiting list," said Judy, whose work involves finding creative ways to advertise for volunteers in fliers and media.

"Tasks that are easy for able-bodied people are difficult for disabled and elderly people," she said. "It's often little things we take for granted."

For example, one volunteer noticed that her client was frail and not eating. She had frozen meals provided, but was unable to open them to eat the food.

Many volunteers quietly and consistently work, not wanting recognition.

One man drives hundreds of miles every month. Volunteer Chore Services reimburses volunteers for their mileage. He refused to be reimbursed, preferring to donate both his time and the cost of gas.

Another man drives residents of the O'Malley, Fahy and Cathedral

Plaza housing complexes to the grocery store every week. He often picks up a carload and, if more want to go, he comes back and makes another trip.

Once a month, in conjunction with Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest, Volunteer Chore drivers deliver food to home-bound people through the Brown Bag and the Commodities programs.

About 20 volunteers deliver bags or boxes of food. Some bags are delivered to houses and some to apartment buildings that house many home-bound people. This helps people who do not have the transportation to go to a food bank.

More than 500 clients receive food through this program each month.

In the overall program, some volunteers offer a little help once a month, and some want to do something every day," Judy said.

"Most volunteers just say they like to help people. It makes them feel good," she said. "One young mother involves her children so they will learn to care. One older volunteer says he volunteers to give back because he is thankful for his continuing years of health."

Some Whitworth University, Gonzaga University and Community College students volunteer as part of service learning for a class or club, and others do it because they just want to help.

"Most volunteers believe they gain more than the clients do," she said.

"I see that both sides gain," Judy pointed out.

"Many clients are lonely and isolated. They just enjoy having someone come to their home to converse with them. Whether

volunteers drive or do light housework, there's always plenty of talking going on."

One client said it had been three weeks since she had talked to anyone. She told the volunteer of her ex-husband and other concerns. She apologized for talking so much.

"I encourage volunteers to talk and listen. Many clients tell wonderful stories of their lives," she said.

VCS staff members do home visits before sending a volunteer, in order to see the person's situation.

Volunteer Chore Services also offers training, does background checks, checks references, does an orientation and provides ongoing support.

"We want clients to know we are sending persons they can trust," Judy said.

Sometimes Volunteer Chore sends a group to clean apartment units sponsored by Catholic Charities. If a client's yard is out of control, they may also send a group.

During the winter, some volunteers shovel snow. In the summer, volunteers mow lawns. In the fall, they rake leaves.

Volunteer Chore Services started in 1981 with funding from the State of Washington, administered through Catholic Charities.

For information, call 328-8400.

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# Yakima church plants thoughts, prayers with planting a peace pole

To plant thoughts of peace in Yakima, Englewood Christian Church planted a peace pole this fall beside its front entrance.

Putting up the pole was the easy part. The challenge is for the congregation and community to start thinking about and living the message of peace, letting it impact their lives, shape their programs and ministry.

**Peace is the core** of “who we are called to be as people of faith living in relationship with God, ourselves, our families, our communities and our world,” said the pastor, the Rev. David Helseth. “We are all children of God, called to love each other despite different views theologically.”

“That message is counter-cultural,” he said. “The Gospel calls us to live in the world in a different way, to live boldly and tell the community what we believe.”

He hopes it will be a reminder to pray for peace, a visible teaching tool to the community and a reminder to the congregation that they are followers of the Prince of Peace, not just at Christmas, but all year.

**Six of 11 languages** on a 10-foot peace pole tell people of the nationalities and cultures in the Yakima Valley that this congregation seeks to promote peace.

Those languages are Sahaptin of the Yakama people, Japanese, Tagalog (Philippines), Korean, Spanish and English.

Three languages—Hebrew, Greek and Arabic—communicate the need for Jews, Christians, Muslims and all faiths to join them in standing for peace. Two of the languages are those spoken in countries where missionaries from the congregation once served—Lingala, spoken in the Congo, and Thai.

The message in all the languages attached to the pole on plaques is the same: “May peace prevail on earth.”

**David heard about peace poles** 15 years ago while attending a doctor of ministry program at Claremont.

After Sept. 11, the Yakima Association of Churches began talking about putting a large pole downtown, but nothing was happening, he said.

Following the 2006 camp curriculum, he helped junior campers at Zephyr Camp and Conference Center prepare and plant a 10-foot peace pole near the lodge. They used Hebrew, Greek and English, leaving space for other camps to add other languages. The camp board approved the pole, because it would bear witness that the camp is a place to pray



Church and community members gather to dedicate Englewood Christian Church’s peace pole.

for peace.

**Just over a year ago**, an elder at Englewood Christian Church became interested.

Members Matt and Holli Christensen offered to cut a 70-year-old western red cedar tree on their property in North Idaho to make the pole.

They cut a tree last winter and let it dry naturally outdoors. They cut it into a 14-foot log, which they transported with a pickup truck and long trailer to Yakima, where they stripped the bark.

The church’s elders ordered plaques with the languages online from the Peace Pole Project in Michigan at [peacepoles.org](http://peacepoles.org). They spent \$350 for the project.

On Saturday, Oct. 22, Englewood Christian members planted the pole four feet deep in the ground with 10 feet above ground. At noon on Sunday, they and 30 members of the community dedicated it.

Community representatives from the Yakima Interfaith Coalition, Temple Shalom, the Islamic center and the Hispanic community came and shared in a litany.

**Speaking on the purpose** of the peace pole at the dedication, Alaya Sowder, a member, said, “Each pole is a statement to counter the terrible violence that hurts and destroys lives whether in war or within our own families.”

“This pole is a statement that we envision a world without war, ethnic cleansing and terrorism. It is a statement that we wish to promote and pursue non-violent solutions to conflict—marital, racial or international.

“The peace pole is also a statement that as a Christian congregation, we believe that Jesus came as the Prince of Peace, and to follow Jesus’ teaching will lead us to live in peaceful relationships with all sisters and brothers,” she said, recognizing that the road to peace is difficult.

“The prayer for peace on earth transcends all nationalities, religions, faith expressions and cultures. We are united by our being created in the image of the one God and by our living on this one planet.”

“In years to come, we hope it will spur conversation and education,” said David, who has served at Englewood for 21 years.

**The Peace Pole Project** was started in 1955 through the World Peace Prayer Society, a nonprofit, non-denominational organization. The goal was to “uplift humankind toward harmony rather than conflict,” based on the belief that “war begins with thoughts of war” and “peace begins with thoughts of peace.”

Since then about 200,000 peace poles have been set up in more than 180 countries on every continent as an ongoing visual reminder for people to pray for and gather to talk about peace.

He said that people often order four-by-four-inch posts with four or eight languages on them.

Englewood also gave children two-by-two-inch, two-foot wood poles to write “may peace prevail on earth” in four languages to take home.

**To educate people**, David has preached about the peace pole and the call for people to live together in the diverse world in different faith traditions by listening to and understanding each other.

“Jesus as the Prince of Peace calls us to live in peace,” he said. “That leads us to ask about what our witness is in relationship to the war in Iraq.

“We love our country, but we are also concerned about peace for all people,” he said.

David hopes the church’s peace pole will be the first of other peace poles in Yakima. The Yakima

ways that will lead to peace.

“It’s possible only with God’s help. To live a faithful journey is not easy,” David said.

“We have to confront power. It can be costly to live and think in ways that are different from our society, media and national pride,” he said. “Our human tendency to protect and defend ourselves is counterproductive to peace.”

To have pride in country and try to do what God calls us to do “may mean we live in tension,” he continued. “If we take Christian faith seriously, we will raise questions.”

**As tangible ways** to promote peace and foster understanding, David seeks to increase dialogue with the Jewish and Islamic communities in Yakima.

He believes it is important to break down enemy images that imply all Muslims are out to destroy the United States.

David cautions that it is important to realize that media focus on the extremists rather than those who seek dialogue and communication.

He also encourages dialogue and communication to address racism against Hispanics in the area, to dispel fears arising from partial information.

A few voices make immigration a hot-button issue rather than understanding why they come and how they add to the U.S. economy, he commented.

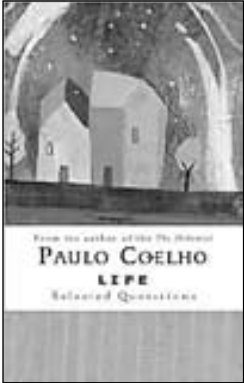
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# St. Maries pastor and church chose intentional long-term ministry

Twenty-six years ago, the Rev. Gary Foster and the Community Presbyterian Church of St. Maries, Idaho, chose to begin a long-term ministry together.

In the community of 2,600 with new housing developments on the outskirts, he is the pastor with the most longevity among the Catholic, Nazarene, Four Square, Lutheran, Baptist, Assembly of God, Latter-Day Saints, Jehovah's Witness, Church of Christ and a variety of home churches there.

When Gary came in 1981, the church was active in community outreach to meet social needs, so that approach framed his first 10 years.

The Presbyterian and Lutheran churches, and other organizations, purchased Valley Vista Convalescent Center as a community convalescent center. Eventually, apartments, an assisted living complex with nursing care, an Alzheimer's unit and a locked psychiatric unit were added.

With the community, Gary and the church, which dates back unofficially to 1907, also helped start a day care, a hospice, a food bank and a clothes bank.

In the early 1990s, Gary was also involved in the Human Rights Task Force for Benewah County, concerned that when the Aryan Nations people were squeezed out of the Hayden area they might come to Benewah County.

He also joined the Sheriff's posse, helping with some searches on horseback.

Gary meets monthly with several other pastors in the Ministerial Association for breakfast, prayer and business. They share their lives, support each other, meet community needs and give transients meals, gas and motel lodging.

Over the years, they have also done Christmas and Easter cantatas with community choirs, Thanksgiving eve services, Advent and Lent services.

Ministerial association activities rise and wane depending on pastors' interests and time. However, he said there has been a consistent Christian witness to those passing through town and needing help.

A third-generation Presbyterian, Gary lived near Fresno, Calif., until he was 27. He graduated from Fresno State in 1973. Working with a youth group in his church and meeting with other youth pastors led him to studies at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena. After graduating in 1976, he was associate pastor for five years in Fairfield in the San Francisco area, before coming to St. Maries.

"Miriam and I came here looking for a small, self-contained town where our children could



The Rev. Gary Foster has been in St. Maries 26 years.

grow up in fresh air," Gary said. "We wanted to be somewhere with mountains and rivers.

"St. Maries was like a picture postcard coming to life for us," he said. "We found a home and have stayed long, feeling it has been God's call and God's will. Miriam also found a career here teaching AP English at St. Maries High School."

The importance of sports and outdoor recreation to the Fosters and people in St. Maries bonds them. School sports—football, basketball, volleyball and soccer—are big, and he's often at games.

"My sermons often use illustrations from golf, skiing and biking," said Gary, who also played basketball and softball.

"In a small town, relationships are important. When I first set up a checking account, I asked the clerk in the grocery store if she would accept a counter check. 'Of course,' she said, 'I know who you are.'"

People knew about the new Presbyterian pastor before he came, so the first person he met instantly trusted him.

A small-town pastor has multiple relationships, he said, knowing people in the church, people he does business with, and people he works with in the community and other churches.

"People work, play, hunt, fish and golf together. Wherever we go, we have friends," he said.

Now that small towns have been discovered, he's concerned some trust may be lost. Growth outside town now makes a daily traffic jam after school at the four-way stop where the only two roads in and out of town cross.

When Gary came in 1981, there was a population explosion in Community Presbyterian, filling the Sunday school and youth group with children and youth.

Those children went to college, married and now have careers.

"A few came back, and they are the roots of the next population explosion. One of the blessings of a long-term pastorate is performing weddings for babies I baptized, children I confirmed and youth whose graduation parties I have attended," he said.

Now the congregation of 140 members is aging, he said, and with it, the energy level is waning. Even so, he encourages members to be proactive to anticipate growth that is coming.

Gary is the only pastor some have known.

That's positive, he said, because it provides a sense of consistency and faithfulness. However, it may limit people from hearing different perspectives, said Gary.

Reflecting on dynamics of an intentional long-term ministry, he noted, "Some long-term pastorates, are accidental because the pastor could not find another church after five or six years, so had a series of 're-up' years.

"The challenge of an intentional long-term pastoral relationship is to remain fresh and vital, not only in preaching but also in counseling and community activities," he said.

Both he and the Community Presbyterian session were intentional about their long-term commitment.

One value is that the pastor becomes part of the community—knowing how people's pasts have helped shape them and having a depth of relationship to deal with their lives.

"If a child acts out, we know about an accident, a divorce or abuse that affects them and their family," he said.

In the ministerial association, longevity has brought a respect for different theologies and points of view as pastors ask each other

about their different worship styles and traditions.

"We learn how each is an appropriate way to express love of God," he said.

That mutual respect carries over as they preach to and teach people in their congregations.

Gary realizes there are some disadvantages to long-term ministry. Some long-term ministers fall into a rut, comfortable in a routine. To avoid that, Gary intentionally redefined his ministry every 10 years.

The first decade, he focused on the community action.

The second decade, he became active in denominational activities with the Synod of Alaska Northwest.

Now in the third decade, Gary has a more personal approach, visiting people more often, keeping in touch with what is happening in their lives.

As hospice chaplain, he and the caregiver coordinator have developed a service of memories for caregivers to help them deal with their grief.

He has also shifted his sermon style to a more conversational, interactive style, preaching without notes.

Looking back, Gary said in his first years of ministry, he wanted everyone to experience an encounter with the living Jesus that affected their whole being.

He said he was not subtle or gentle in challenging people to change.

While more gentle and subtle today, he knows that people too often let their politics shape their theology rather than letting their theology shape their politics.

"Many assume that being American means God and country are mixed together, as if American politics can't be sinful or against God's will," he said.

He wonders if when people say, "God bless America," they are being inclusive or exclusive.

"Do we want God to bless only us, or to bless both us and the world?" he asked, suggesting, "We also need to pray for the presidents of Iran and Pakistan."

Gary believes if political issues are viewed in light of biblical standards, people will allow their theology to shape their politics. For example, once Presbyterians supported slavery, but eventually realized it was against scriptural teachings.

"On any issue, we need to be open to coming to new understandings based on scripture," he said.

For self nurture and to nurture others in faith, Gary does daily personal Bible study, along with preparation for sermons, a Bible study for a Lunch Bunch and a Saturday morning men's group.

"I'm in continual Bible study, reading scripture in the context of the community, sharing what we think it means and what we think God is telling us," he said.

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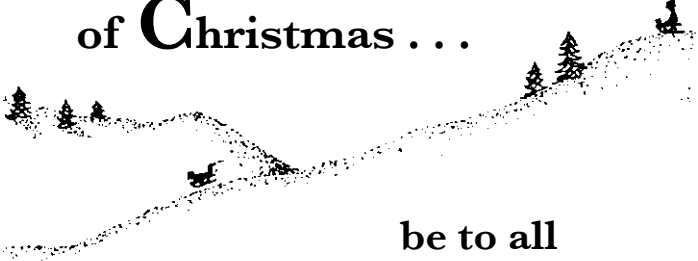
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# Alternative giving opportunities remind us of alternative economies

As we approach Christmas, families wander homeless and hopeless. Individuals and congregations want to help. There are many ways to connect them.

Locally, the Christmas Fund is geared to raise \$485,000 to provide gifts and food for 32,000 individuals. It's an annual tradition promoted through The Spokesman-Review in partnership with Volunteers of America and Catholic Charities.

In area malls, Trees of Sharing with tags for gifts await shoppers who will purchase a gift for someone in need. Individual churches also offer such opportunities.

We have seen the season of holiday bazaars of varied names and approaches, with more congregations offering fair trade items or fair trade festivals, introducing products and education.

Thanksgiving weekend offered an alternative to the "Black Friday" day-after-Thanksgiving frenzy to put retailers in the "black" with an increase in profits—shopping and education at the annual Fair Trade

Festival at the Community Building. It is an opportunity to support the entrepreneurial micro-enterprises of skilled weavers and handcraft makers, providing a fair income for quality products.

Partners International in Spokane offers an opportunity to give a gift of hope through its Harvest of Hope catalogue.

Through Church World Service (CWS), people can also give alternative gifts—blankets, school kits, shares in a well or an item from its online gift catalogue, like chicks or a water buffalo, to provide disaster relief or development assistance around the world.

Recent disasters have had brief attention in news but leave families homeless. Rather than responding to each one, congregations might take an offering in December for all who have suffered in those disasters: Cyclone Sidr hit Bangladesh Nov. 15. Southern California's Native American community was hard hit by recent wildfires, burning homes and power lines. Heavy

rains in October flooded Western Nicaragua, destroying crops and homes.

Perhaps the gift might be to help resettle a refugee family through World Relief in Spokane, to host an international student, to volunteer time to help through any of the many ministries and agencies listed in The Fig Tree's Directory of Congregations and Community Resources.

There are many alternatives to the materialistic shopping frenzy that feeds the coffers of retailers, corporations and investors. In an economy of superfluity for some and struggle for the rest, scriptures remind us of alternative economies.

The manna economy requires patience and trust that God will provide enough for our sustenance. Jubilee is a tool for self-correction from greed that shifts land and wealth into the hands of a few. Jubilee restores the land to the original owners.

Stewardship calls us to take care of and share the gifts God gives us with our brothers and sisters, and all of creation, so

there is enough for everyone to have an abundant life.

Pass-it-on giving follows gratitude for gifts of time, food, water and caring we receive in times of need. We give to others, "the least." Tithes are given from the first fruits, not what's left over. It's part of faithful living, trusting we will have enough.

In Micah 4, shalom includes lions lying with lambs, everyone living under their own vine and fig tree in peace and unafraid, able to harvest what they plant.

Peace and justice are interwoven. Peace is more than nonviolent living. It comes from living in just economic relationships, caring and power-sharing relationships.

Each alternative gift-giving option provides us with opportunities to see how poverty, excess wealth and ecological degradation are linked. So our year-round call is to transform institutions and individuals that perpetuate injustices, to be in solidarity with those who struggle and suffer.

Mary Stamp - Editor

# Family holiday gatherings change with deaths and rifts

"We always" may be the beginning of more sentences at this time of year than at any other.

At their best, our family holiday celebrations have an unchangeable quality about them. Settling into the pleasantly predictable is reassuring.

Our family holiday gatherings aren't unchanging, of course. The passage of time alone makes sure of that, and like any other community, our family holiday community is continually being re-formed.

Some time-wrought changes are gradual enough to let us delude ourselves, however. Consider recipes.

A friend's family tradition demands that they always have a certain turkey stuffing, conscientiously prepared according to Great-Grandma's recipe—or receipt—for Potatoe Stuffing. (Great-Grandma was from Indiana, so there was an "e" at the

end of potato on her copy.)

There is only one person present at today's gatherings who has even a vague memory of his Great-Grandma, and he insists that is it exactly the same as it was when he was a child. But is it? When Great-Grandma went to the root cellar to get potatoes and onions, she didn't have six varieties of each to choose from. Her bread crumbs certainly didn't come from a box. Was the cream sweet or sour when she churned the butter?

Great-Grandma might like the stuffing as it is prepared today, but it's likely she wouldn't recognize it as having been made from her recipe. The changes have been so gradual that they haven't been noticed—or admitted.

One change we do notice acutely is a death in our family just before a holiday. A death, or a divorce or other permanent rift,

changes the holiday in a jarring manner and continues its affect in more subtle ways in future years.

This has little or nothing to do with beliefs about an afterlife. It has to do with community, what we expect of ourselves and others, what we tell ourselves about how we observe the special occasions of our lives.

If Aunt Jane has "always" brought the candied yams for Thanksgiving dinner but she dies two weeks before, the chances that there will be candied yams that year are pretty slim.

There hasn't been time to process the change. We are grieving at a time when the rest of the world seems to be busy and cheerful. They are celebrating bounty while we are feeling deprived.

Anyone who tries to fill the void by doing some extra cooking faces what seems

to be a monumental decision: use Aunt Jane's recipe and face comparisons or try something different and risk disappointing those who think yams are always supposed to taste the way she fixed them.

At that point, the void can't be filled and the dinner can't be made to be "the way we've always done it," but healing and family folklore can be enhanced.

Pass the empty bowl and give everyone a chance to help fill it with memories of Aunt Jane and earlier gatherings.

In a few years, someone will ask, "Remember the Thanksgiving when we filled a bowl with memories?"

By that time, someone else will always cook the yams, and everyone will know that memories held in common are a part of eternal life.

Nancy Minard  
Editorial Team

Letter to the Editor

## Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

**A holiday-sized "thank you"** is due for nearly 20 volunteers who helped serve about 200 guests at the annual Thanksgiving Day dinner at Central United Methodist Church in Spokane. The event is co-sponsored by Rockwood Retirement Communities, which provided turkeys and other items. Members of Simpson United Methodist Church also came from Pullman to prepare and distribute sack lunches, winter clothing and blankets.

Guests stayed to watch a movie, play games or help with clean-up. The event began with a day of cooking and decorating under head cook, Helen Cathcart.

Because some volunteers brought their children to help, the event was also educational, helping ensure this kind of community service will continue into the future.

**The Rev. Phil Harrington**  
Central United Methodist

**The gift is time**, just in time, as I begin my sabbatical. Sweetness is an open calendar, pages that don't have to be filled, time as a gift. I've done more household tasks than in the rest of the year. In such "gifted time," these tasks are less chores than recognition of change in the seasons, the natural passage of time—time to enjoy.

There's time to breathe, too. The part of the lung at the very bottom that is almost never inflated is slowly opening for use.

In ordinary time, my focus is on a lack of time. Time isn't good. It's something that is absent. The culture and economy are demanding our time, pressing it from us, demanding our "productive" time. It can seem that time is an enemy to be sliced and diced in our disjointed lives.

Just in time, Jesus comes to redeem time itself, restore its gift. Jesus comes "in time." His real life lived among us, in the flesh, sharing our time. To be "in time" with Jesus is to take on a different cadence than the martial beat that drives our day-to-day lives.

**Bishop Martin Wells**  
Eastern Washington Idaho Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Who of us in the contemporary** church have not spent some measure of time, money and energy in trying to make our mission work and have found that we have run out of gas or of spirit? Gone is the zeal, enthusiasm, zip in our steps and spark in our voice and heart.

Is it possible that institutional exhaustion eats away at our hearts and deadens our enthusiasm because we engage in our own efforts with an inaccurate perspective? The more we maintain a work pace and schedule based on this inaccurate assumption, the more we are destined to be in the throes of exhaustion—the total expenditure of our selves to the point we discover that we have not so much given of ourselves in loving service to the needs of the world, but we have given *up* ourselves.

We have been consumed in the frenzy of activity in trying to solve the world's problems and thinking we had to be the source of its salvation.

Our Christian faith offers us perspective on life and our daily responsibilities. If we have no faith in a God who first loves us and who has reached into human history for the sake of our salvation, then indeed we will burn our proverbial candles until there

is nothing left. The world is saved by the passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus, and not by our calendared activities. God is the source of salvation, we need to remind ourselves—not the work of our hands and the busy-ness of our lives. Most wonderfully, the risen Jesus has filled the world with the promised Spirit of God's salvation precisely so that we can be agents of salvation, but not its controlling source.

**Fr. Michael Savelesky**  
Inland Register

**In reading the book of Acts** together, we have been reflecting on how we recognize God's call. The creator of the universe is not prone to cell phone or email conversation, and only rarely resorts to inscribing things on stone tablets or giving grand visions where everything is laid out, and none of these things seem to be happening to us. So how are we supposed to know what God has in mind for us as a community or as individual people?

We've seen that there are three things the disciples keep doing in Acts and one could almost write a self-help book on three principles: pray, tell the story and listen for the Holy Spirit. Just do these three simple steps, and you'll know for sure where God is calling you.

Most of the time, however, I'm pretty convinced the disciples in Acts had no idea what was going on. They were fumbling around just like we do. Paul was knocked off his horse and spend several days blind before some gracious soul came to tell him what the heck was going on. Peter was released from prison by an angel, but thought he was dreaming until he found

himself standing outside. Again and again the disciples of Jesus bumble around until they find the place that the message will take hold—trying and failing again and again until God gives a resounding, "You're onto something!" and it works out. Think it might work for us too?

**Rev. Erik Samuelson**  
Bethlehem Lutheran

**When the Bible speaks of "wonder,"** it is a mixed blessing. There is amazement and fear, there is awe and shock, trembling and blessing. In the Bible, "wonder" is not just idle thinking—hmmm, I wonder what we're going to have for dinner tonight. "Wonder" has to do with genuine puzzlement about, and the general state of wondering leaves one filled with curiosity.

Wonder is an essential component of our spiritual growth. In an era in which we easily become overwhelmed, overloaded, in which we are easily led to cynicism and despair by the state of our world, a regular experience of wonder is truly "soul food"—manna from Heaven that feeds the weary spirit. Of course, we can't make it happen. Wonder, after all, is a gift. We can exercise our God-given gift of curiosity that opens us to wonder, and we can pay attention and give the blessing of astonishment room in our minds and hearts. We can be open to wonder, not just as an interesting moment in our day, but as a language through which the Sacred might speak to us, a moment that invites mystery of God to be the guest of our spirit, even for a brief time.

**Rev. Kristine Zakarison-Community**  
Congregational United Church of  
Christ - Pullman



*Sisters lead  
Advent workshop*

Sisters Roberta Lamanna and Rosemary Thielman of Wisdom-works will present “Wonder-Full Advent Stories,” an afternoon Advent retreat from 12:30 to 5 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 6, at Convent of Holy Names, 2911 W. Fort Wright Dr. There will be presentations, prayer, reflections and Mass.

For information, call 328-7470, ext. 121 or email [sjohnston@snjmwa.org](mailto:sjohnston@snjmwa.org).

**Church offers  
journey in time**

The South Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church is presenting “A Journey to Bethlehem,” inviting people to travel back in time to experience the people, places and circumstances at the time of Jesus’ birth.

The event is held outdoors from 6 to 9 p.m., Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 7, 8 and 9, at the church, 5607 S. Freya.

Those who come may wait indoors where musical entertainment will be provided.

For information, call 448-6425

*Creche exhibit set*

The fifth annual Christmas Crèche Exhibit, “A Spokane Christmas Family Tradition,” will be held from Dec. 1 to 8 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1620 E. 29th Ave.

More than 500 nativity sets from around the world will be on public display from 4 to 9 p.m., weekday evenings, and from noon to 9 p.m., weekends.

The event includes nightly concerts by Spokane-area choirs and musicians. Groups may set tours.

For information, call 951-7288.

**CROP Walk set**

The Spokane CROP Hunger Walk Committee meets at 2 p.m., first Sundays, at the Interfaith Hospitality Network, 2515 E. Sprague, to plan the annual walk, scheduled for April 27, 2008.

Lynn Magnuson, regional director for Church World Service/CROP, will offer resources for church recruiters at 7 p.m., Monday, Feb. 4, at Mission Community Presbyterian Church, 2103 E. Mission Ave.

For information, call 891-1045.

**Cathedral hosts Eucharist**

“Celebrating the Eucharist for the Life of the World: Daily Bread, Holy Meal” is the theme of a workshop led by Samuel Torvend of Pacific Lutheran University’s religion department, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 12, at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E 12th Ave.

Samuel is associate professor of the history of Christianity and chair of the religion department.

His master’s degree in the-

ology and liturgical studies is from Aquinas Institute and his doctoral degree is from St. Louis University. He has served several Episcopal parishes in Western Washington as a preacher and adult education leader.

The workshop focuses on three themes: 1) eating and drinking with Jesus, 2) sharing the body and blood of Christ and 3) Eucharist ethics in a hungry world.

For information, call 838-4277.

*Constance Rice is King Day speaker*

Constance Rice, wife of Seattle’s first African-American mayor Norman Rice, will be the featured speaker for the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Community Celebration at 4 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 20, at Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, 806 W. Indiana.

In 1985, *Seattle Weekly* named her one of the 25 most powerful

women in Seattle. She continues to be a leader in bringing families together for nutritious meals and promoting global peace.

In 1992, she founded the Northwest News Council, a forum to examine bias in media. In 2000, she founded the Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation.

For information, call 455-8722.

**Calendar of Events**

**To Dec 11** • **Tree of Sharing**, Northtown, Riverpark Square and Valley Malls, Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ - 624-1366

**Dec 1-8** • **Christmas Creche Exhibit**, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1620 E. 29th Ave. - 533-0613

**Dec 6** • **Wonder-Full Advent Stories**, Convent of the Holy Names, 2911 W Ft. Wright Dr., 12:30 -5 p.m. - 328-7470 ext 121

**Dec 7, 8** • **“Journey to Bethlehem,”** Whitworth University Christmas Festival Concert, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar St., Dec. 7, at 8 p.m., Dec. 8, at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. - 777-3280

**Dec 8** • **2008 Environmental Legislation Kickoff**, Statewide Climate Campaign, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - [kitty@futurewise.org](mailto:kitty@futurewise.org) to RSVP

**Dec 7-9** • **“Journey to Bethlehem,”** Outdoor walk-through reenactment, South Hill Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 5607 South Freya Street, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.- 448-6425

**Dec 9** • **German Christmas Service**, St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, 24th & Grand, 3 p.m. - 928-2595

**Dec 10** • **Human Rights Day Community Celebration** and United Nations Association-Spokane speaker, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr., 6:30 p.m. - 456-2382

**Dec 13, 14** • **Singing Nuns**, Bing Crosby Theatre, 3 and 7:30 p.m.

**Dec 16** • **Messiah Community Sing-along Concert**, First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar St., 4 p.m. Community singers rehearsal, 6 p.m. concert - 747-1058

**Dec 21** • **“A Musical Solstice Celebration,”** Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr., 7 p.m. - 536-6294

**Dec 31** • **First Night Spokane**, visual and performing arts, downtown Spokane, 4 p.m. - midnight - 252-5027

• **Ring in the New Year**, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 12th Ave., 6-10:30 p.m., open labyrinth walk, 11 p.m., service of healing and holy communion, labyrinth available Jan. 1, 1-4 p.m.

**Jan 2** • **Fig Tree distribution**, St. Mark’s Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m.

**Jan 3** • **Fig Tree Board**, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.

**Jan 6** • **Spokane CROP Hunger Walk** Planning Committee, Interfaith Hospitality Network, 2515 E. Sprague, 2 p.m. - 891-1045

**Weds-Sat** • **Habitat-Spokane** work days - call 534-2552

**Thursdays** • **PJALS street vigil against the Iraq War**, Riverside and Monroe 4:30 p.m. - 838-7870.

**Fridays** • **Colville Peace Vigil** - 675-4554

**1st Sat** • **Ministers’ Fellowship Union and Minister’s Wives/ Widows Fellowship**, 806 W. Indiana - 624-0522

**3rd Mons** • **NAACP** - 467-9793

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# Catholic Relief Services urges dialogue, provides humanitarian aid

Building the separation wall in the West Bank reinforces the negative perceptions Palestinians and Israelis have of each other, Burcu Munyas reported in a recent presentation in Spokane as part of her one-week educational tour in the area for Catholic Relief Service.

In the crossfire of the daily violence on both sides, many civilians and children are injured and killed, creating another generation with bad memories on both sides, she said.

Burcu attended a global peacemakers retreat for youth in the Archdiocese of Seattle, focused on peacebuilding, solidarity and empathy with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The 26-year-old Muslim woman from Turkey, who works with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to build solidarity between people in the United States and people in the Holy Land, spoke with Catholic and community leaders. Her focus is on peacebuilding among the Palestinian factions, so they end violence against each other.

As CRS project officer for Partnership and Strategic Alignment in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, she designs youth development and education projects for Palestinian youth and explores new strategic partnerships between CRS and Palestinian and Israeli civil society.

CRS has been in the Middle East for 50 years, engaged in humanitarian relief, emergency aid, educational programs and advocacy efforts. Their overall goal is for Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding and dialogue, in which the Christian minority plays a unique role, said Scott Cooper, director of parish social services with Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Spokane.

He added that the CRS focus is on humanitarian aid for the Palestinians whose lives are disrupted.

“Without a political resolution, there will be no change in the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories,” said Burcu, telling the “story on the ground” through a slide presentation of maps and people.

On maps, she showed the Palestinian areas and Israeli settlements, the barrier wall and



Burcu Munyas

checkpoints, the trenches across and gates blocking roads, earth mounds, blockades and other impediments in the West Bank, where 2.5 million Palestinians live. About 1.5 million live in Gaza.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in international relations from Bilkent University in Ankara, she completed a master’s in international peace studies at the Joan Kroc Institute of the University of Notre Dame in 2006. As part of her studies, she spent a semester with Catholic Relief Services in Cambodia to do research on her thesis on “the transmission of the memory of genocide to second and third-generation Cambodian youth.”

Memory, as well as current realities, plays a role in the Middle East, too.

“One of today’s biggest challenges in the Holy Land, is from the unresolved refugee situation. About 800,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes in 1948,” she said. “Now 4.5 million refugees live in 60 refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Some still have keys to their grandparents’ homes and want the right to return. Others just want to live in dignity.”

Burcu showed photos of the wall some Palestinians call the “apartheid wall,” the “annexation wall” and part of the Israeli “closure regime.” She said Israel began building the wall in 2002 to prevent suicide bombings. In some places, it is made of 25-foot-high concrete blocks. In other places, it is an electrical fence.

She reports that many Israelis are unaware of the separation wall and its impact on the daily lives of Palestinians.

While the wall is designed to protect Israelis, it “snakes around Palestinian neighborhoods, cutting children off from their schools, people from their jobs, farmers from their farms and markets, and families and friends from each other,” Burcu said.

While she said there is fear on both sides, young Palestinians see that the wall, curfews, closures and violence block their future.

Citing the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Israeli Peace Now’s Settlement Watch, she showed locations of 161 Israeli settlements, 96 outposts and 27 military bases. About 500,000 settlers live in the West Bank in what Palestinians consider their territory, dating back to the Ottoman Empire, she said.

Burcu reported that about 100 Palestinian homes are demolished each year by the Israeli Defense Forces, because they are built without permits, which are hard to obtain from Israeli authorities. Meanwhile, new Israeli settlements, which she said are illegal under international law, continue to be built.

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions reports that Palestinians account for 20 percent of illegal construction but 75 percent of house demolitions.

With the collapse of the peace process in the late 1990s, the deterioration of the economy, fighting between Hamas and Fatah, and concern the

November summit may force another “unviable solution,” she said, “hope has eroded, yet the Palestinians remain resilient.” For information, email [bmunyas@eme.crs.org](mailto:bmunyas@eme.crs.org).

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