

**STORIES INSIDE**

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*Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest  
online in color at [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org)*

# Thousands stretch skills at camps

**By Virginia de Leon**

Every summer, thousands of children and young people from throughout the region gather in the outdoors to pray, play and immerse themselves in faith, fun and fellowship.

“We hear all the time from people, that summer camp is like a year’s worth of Sunday school,” said Bob Baker, executive director of Lutherhaven Ministries, which is in its 60th year. “It takes them away from television, computer games, the Internet, cell phone and other distractions, and puts them in a faith community where they grow in relationship with other campers as well as adults and mentors who help their journeys.”

Many youth who experience church camp say it’s the best experience of their summer, he said. Busy with swimming, hiking, playing games, canoeing and doing numerous activities with other young people, they forget about technology at home that may prevent them from being in relationship with others.

Faith-based camps can be transforming for youth, said Bob and other camp directors, but the challenge is drawing them to camp.



**Cooperative activities like a sunken canoe race build community.**

*Photo provided by Camp Cross*

Summer camp was once a tradition for many faith communities. Of baby boomers—born from 1946 to 1964—40 percent regularly attended church camps, according to the Christian Camp and Conference Association (CCCA).

That percentage, however, goes down significantly for Generation Xers. Only 20 percent of those born from 1965 to 1980 attended summer church camps, according to the CCCA. That’s likely why they haven’t encouraged their elementary- and high-school-age children to be part of a decades-old tradition.

“Church camp is not part of their vocabulary or in their realm of awareness,” said Bob, who has worked at Lutherhaven for 15 years.

That’s why summer camps seek to reach out to everyone: families who regularly attend church and young people who are not in a congregation.

Of the more than 4,000 youth who attended Camp Lutherhaven on Lake Coeur d’Alene last year, about one-third were responding to word of mouth, Bob said. Another third were members of Lutheran

*Continued on page 6*

## Mission visitors find God and hope amid pain and daily struggles of Anuak people

**By Mary Stamp**

Karlene Arguinchona experienced God’s presence in Africa as she relished a clear starlit evening and a celebration of dancing and song that conveyed hope despite the day-to-day struggles of people, especially those widowed and orphaned by HIV/AIDS and the 2003 genocide of Anuak community and church leaders in Gambella, Ethiopia.

Karlene, an emergency room doctor at Sacred Heart Medical Center traveled with Mary Beth Baker, who retired as technical director of virology at Pathology Medical Associates Laboratory (PAML) in 2006.

In February, these two women with medical background joined

Joann Dibble, a registered nurse at Deaconess Medical Center, and Sue Mushlitz and Alock Nyigow, who are leaders in the Anuak Meer (Love) Ministry of First Presbyterian Church in Spokane.

Karlene and Mary Beth shared their experiences as part of this group in a recent interview with The Fig Tree.

While they could have sent checks to add to the funds First Presbyterian sent last year to help widows start a business and to assist with relief after floods wiped out crops, they returned convinced that relationships are as important as money for both participants in this ministry.

“For the cost of the trip, we could have fed and cared for

more orphans, but I’m convinced we also need to build and nurture our relationships by meeting in person,” said Mary Beth.

“We could send a check, but there’s nothing like establishing relationships, hearing their stories, seeing their homes, sharing meals with them,” Karlene said.

Although both are medical professionals, the two women brought different perspectives to their visit.

Growing up in Toronto, the daughter of a Catholic-reared father from India and a Presbyterian- background mother from Scotland, Karlene had little involvement in church life. After graduating from the University of Washington Medical School in 1985, she came to Sacred Heart. She and her husband, Henry, an infectious disease specialist, attended First Presbyterian Church for a while, and now have settled at St. Aloysius Catholic Church.

“Coming into the organized church, I find a power in the community and in the rhythm of the liturgy we follow for worship. We

*Continued on page 4*

## Project funds training for new Fig Tree writers

The Fig Tree’s new Encouragement Project has received grants of \$4,000 so far in 2008, enabling it to begin an effort to support paying more writers and editors for publishing more articles online.

Editor Mary Stamp has scheduled a training session for writers—both those currently writing articles and new writers—to introduce people to the Fig Tree editorial approach and styles.

The first training is at 7 p.m., Wednesday, June 4, at Unity House, 709 E. DeSmet at Gonzaga University.

In addition to the training, several writers will receive mentoring by Mary, writers Deidre Jacobson and Virginia de Leon, and others.

Funding for initiating this project has been provided by three sources:

- The Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ recently granted \$1,000 for the Encouragement Project, \$1,000 for the Rural-Urban Connections Project and \$1,000 for the Interactive Website Project.

- The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) approved a grant of \$2,500 and sent the funds in May. The CCHD has been active in the United States since 1976 addressing the causes of poverty and supporting programs that work for institutional change and social justice. The Catholic Diocese of Spokane provides local funding for anti-poverty efforts.

- The Catholic Foundation of Spokane granted \$500 for the Encouragement Project and \$750 for the Rural-Urban

*Continued on page 3*

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Irish bishops call for cluster bomb ban

Dublin (ENI). The Irish Catholic Bishops' Commission for Justice and Social Affairs, and Trócaire, the overseas development agency of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, called for a total ban on cluster bombs. "Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or extensive areas, along with their population, is a crime against God," the organizations said in a statement coinciding with the May 19 opening of an international conference on the use of cluster munitions.

The bishops and the agency quoted Catholic social teaching on proportionality, the obligation to protect civilians, and key moral and humanitarian issues as they encouraged delegates to recommend a total ban on the use of cluster bombs. These weapons contain multiple small sub-munitions that, when released, spread over an area of hundreds of square meters. The use of such weapons in populated areas virtually guarantees civilian casualties.

On May 28, 110 governments—not major producers: China, Russia and the United States—agreed to ban cluster bombs.

South African calls for stand against tyranny

Cape Town (ENI). The Rev. Allan Boesak, a South African anti-apartheid activist and former president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, has appealed to churches in Zimbabwe to speak with one voice against tyranny. "One of the deepest sources of pain for Zimbabweans must be the trauma of seeing a liberation movement become an undemocratic, oppressive, unjust regime," Allan wrote in a May letter to Zimbabwean church leaders. "I know tyranny when I see it, and it is in Zimbabwe as surely as it was in South Africa," he said.

He visited Zimbabwe in April as part of a church delegation. "I have left your country shaken to the core, and with a sense of the righteous anger that I felt during apartheid," said Allan, now research director of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Zimbabweans will hold a runoff presidential election June 27 after President Robert Mugabe's opponent, Morgan Tsvangirai reportedly received 48 percent of vote to Mugabe's 43 percent.

Priest denounces selling sacraments

Warsaw (ENI). A senior Polish priest has warned his country's Roman Catholic clergy against "selling sacraments" or denying them to people who fail to pay enough, after media criticism of the church's finance system that pays priests inadequately. "The great majority of priests do not decide from above about rates for sacraments. They behave sensibly and wisely. I am not saying, however, that there aren't some objectionable cases," said the Rev. Andrzej Luter, a lecturer in ecumenical theology at Warsaw's Catholic university. "If a priest refuses a sacrament on the grounds that the offering was small or non-existent because of the believer's material poverty, the bishop should intervene. Such conduct not only violates the law and damages the church's reputation but, above all, also contradicts the Gospel."

Pay at meters puts poor at risk

Maseru (ENI). In Lesotho, South Africa, and other African countries, devices that restrict consumers to use only water they have paid for in advance are promoted as a way to fund water infrastructure. Church water experts warn, however, this approach endangers access of the poor to this necessity of life. With pre-paid water meters, people buy a card with a credit for certain amount of water. When the card is inserted in a machine—either a house water meter or a public point—water can be tapped until the card is empty. "Pre-paid water meters are problematic," said Michael Windfuhr, human rights director of the German Protestant agency Bread for the World, and a member of the Ecumenical Water Network steering group. "If you run out of money, and the card is empty, you cannot afford water for basic needs. This is a violation of the human right to water."

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Unity in Community will be August 16

The 2008 Unity in the Community plans are underway for the multi-ethnic and cultural awareness event from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 16, in Riverfront Park.

"Connecting Communities" is the 2008 program, now in its 14th year. Last year, Unity in the Community drew 6,500 people from the Spokane area's diverse population and about 160 vendors.

"The objective is to connect people and celebrate cultures in the greater Spokane area," said

Ben Cabildo, event chair and director of AHANA, the African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American business education and training program of Community-Minded Enterprises. "Participation of our communities demonstrates that Unity in the Community represents what Spokane is."

He said the event educates children while they're having fun. Beyond giving out school supplies and bike helmets and the educational component, Unity in

the Community also enlists corporate, individual and university sponsors to fund scholarships for local Native American, Hispanic and African American college-bound students at the college or university they choose.

"It's part of awareness of the importance of working together," Ben said of the event that includes entertainment, a cultural village, games, art, food, a career fair, health screening and other activities for children and adults.

For information, call 209-2634.

Construction volunteers and funds needed

Emmanuel Family Life Center is gearing up for a September dedication after a summer with volunteers and construction workers completing the interior.

The Rev. Lonnie Mitchell, pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, said that they need volunteers to help with hammering nails, putting up dry wall, painting walls and completing

other finishing touches.

They met the goal of matching a Gates grant with a mortgage, but need only \$60,000 more to enter the building mortgage free.

"We have filled the space with the agencies that will help this center serve the community needs," he said. "The goal is to be mortgage free so the nonprofits can afford rental that will cover

just the cost of utilities and maintenance."

Builders also welcome donations and volunteers to help with landscaping and pouring curbs, sidewalks and the parking lot.

The Fig Tree is among several agencies that will use space in the center to expand its office space to accommodate its programs.

For information, call 534-3007.

YWCA holds Domestic Violence Summit

The YWCA is sponsoring a Domestic Violence Summit from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday, June 13, in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

Spokane County Superior Court Judge Linda Tompkins, District Court Judge Sara Derr, YWCA-Spokane director Monica Walters

and 30 other community members have called this summit to form a coordinated community response to domestic violence.

Patty Wheeler, director of the YWCA's Alternatives to Domestic Violence Programs, said there will be morning presentations on domestic violence and the crimi-

nal justice system, the workplace, and medical response.

Afternoon small groups propose ideas for action. Then all the participants will meet to decide on priorities.

For information, call 326-1190, ext. 145, or visit www.spokanedv.com.

Abuse Recovery Ministry plans speaker

The Abuse Recovery Ministry and Service is planning to hold a dessert and educational discussion from 1 to 2 p.m., Saturday, June 14, at Hillyard Baptist Church, 2121 E. Wabash Ave.

Pastor Rich Schaus, who is the resource director at Anna Ogden Hall and director of the Union Gospel Mission's new Crisis Shelter, will speak on the theme "Breaking Through: Embracing

the Truth about Abuse."

He said that truth includes that women and men in the community are hurting and dying in what look like perfect families.

For information, call 484-0600.

Encampment and Powwow raising funds

As plans are underway for the 19th annual Spokane Falls Northwest Encampment and Powwow August 22 to 24 at Riverfront Park, organizers announce the need to raise \$40,000 to cover costs for the event.

The location dates back to the history of the falls when it was the ancestral fishing and trading grounds where different tribes

gathered to harvest salmon during their annual spawning runs.

In recent decades tribes have again gathered to celebrate their culture and intertribal relationships, and to educate non-tribal attendees with drumming, singing,

dancing and traditional regalia.

David Williams, chair of the Powwow Committee, recently sent out a letter appealing for assistance from the community in preserving the tradition.

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The Fig Tree is published 10 months each year, September through June.

Deadlines:

COPY - 3rd Fridays ADS - 4th Tuesdays  
It is published by The Fig Tree,  
1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202, a  
non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization.

Editorial Team

Editor/Publisher/Photos - Mary Stamp  
Sr. Rose Theresa Costello, Mary Mackay,  
Nancy Minard, Sara Weaver

Coordinators & Contract

Malcolm Haworth - Community Outreach  
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Email: [figtree@thefigtree.org](mailto:figtree@thefigtree.org)



# Communication intern updates media literacy training resources

In her summer internship with the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media (NW-ARM), Caitlin Chaffee, a communication major at Gonzaga University, will update presentations on how media influence culture and train speakers to give them.

The alliance, which monitors media influence on society, has six presentations to educate people in schools, churches and other community organizations.

"I want to do something about what I see in media. In learning communication theory and concepts, I see ways to affect change by telling how media, TV, movies and newspapers portray race, gender, ethnicity and religion," said Caitlin, who grew up in Catholic schools in Federal Way and came to her father's hometown, Spokane, to attend Gonzaga.

With her Catholic upbringing, she has often been involved in community volunteering.

Having observed concern about the human impact on the environment during a spring semester class on global environmental politics with students from political science, journalism, biology, communication, engineering and other majors, she plans to create a presentation on media responsibility related to the environment.

"In that class, we talked about



Caitlin Chaffee prepares presentation on media.

the need to be environmentally responsible to change the world," Caitlin said.

"Now many corporations say they are going green. Maybe it's true," she noted. "Messages in advertising, in store displays and on shopping bags talk about being environmentally friendly."

Caitlin wonders if ads may convince the public to go green, even if some advertisers actually are still "polluters with horrible impact on the environment."

In communication studies, the GU junior has also observed the impact of a dynamic of media

coverage—presenting two "sides" or two perspectives to issues and news—intended to assure objective and balanced coverage.

However, rather than telling what someone is doing as a solution to a problem, the practice of showing two perspectives or opinions—as if in an argument—may subtly undermine the readers' ability to focus on the positive solution, she commented.

Her NW-ARM presentation on environment will address that dynamic and how it influences discussions.

"We who have resources need

to change our consumption and help others have technologies for a cleaner environment," she suggests, noting growing anti-pollution efforts among churches.

NW-ARM's other resources on media responsibility and media literacy include digital slide presentations on body image, violence in media and advertising.

She will insert new statistics and change the overall look to make the presentations more visually attractive and relevant to today's technology.

The Center for Media Literacy also has presentations on parenting in a media world, tobacco and alcohol in media, and violence and video games. The one on video games was created this spring by recent GU graduate Ryan Davenport.

Caitlin, who recently presented the video violence program to a class on recreation and leisure at Eastern Washington University, notes that video games have changed from Pacman and Atari 20 years ago to more realistic and interactive games that involve people in moving their bodies as if boxing, rather than just moving sticks with thumbs.

"The presentation raises questions about the impact of video games on youth, the culture and violence. They present unrealistic

understandings of interactions, many extremely violent."

Caitlin will also present these programs at schools, churches, universities, nonprofits and other settings, to encourage wider use of NW-ARM presentations.

She will provide CDs with three presentations for people trained as presenters. The presentations, which are in Powerpoint, include handouts.

She recently sent letters to Boy Scouts, after-school programs, day cares, youth centers and youth ministries to promote use at vacation Bible schools, summer programs and camps.

"How we are portrayed in media and advertising affects what we think of ourselves," she said.

The Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media also works with professionals to promote responsible journalistic practices. During the summer, its offices will be moving to Fuller Hall on campus.

The alliance board plans to continue its series of videos at the Magic Lantern with a program on democracy, elections and media on Sept. 25, consumption and media on Nov. 13, race and media on Feb. 5 and pharmaceutical big business and media, April 16.

For information, call 313-3578 or email [nw-arm@gonzaga.edu](mailto:nw-arm@gonzaga.edu).

## Grants expand capacity of The Fig Tree to report more faith in action

*Continued from page 1*  
Connections Project at its May 22 luncheon.

"The Fig Tree for 25 years has addressed issues of poverty and social justice. We began as a micro-enterprise, a witness of the tenacity of a small group willing to work for less to make the publication possible," said Mary.

The encouragement project recognizes that a primary area of common action of faith communities is to overcome poverty—addressing root causes and varied efforts to create a solution.

"We recognize the power of fostering communication among faith and nonprofit groups to increase understanding, inspire people and give voice to people often excluded from or misrepresented in media," Mary said.

So The Fig Tree seeks to increase the number of freelance writers and editors—diverse people, including low-income people—on its editorial team.

By providing training and mentoring, The Fig Tree seeks to nurture writing with The Fig Tree approach, in which writers do not need to compromise the voice of low-income people.

To address the income needs—

along with being open to the generosity of those who volunteer to write for The Fig Tree—the nonprofit is raising its payment rates for articles with photos. It will also need to support added time for editing.

"Now we will publish some articles online only to draw more interest in the website and update content more often," Mary said. "Grants help make that possible."

"With increased visits to our website at [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org), we hope soon to add ad support to make the website independently sustainable, as the newspaper is," she added.

"Information has power to change minds, assumptions, practices and systems," she continued. "Our media are effective tools for connecting people and increasing the pool of concerned, hopeful and active people."

Mary added that she is in ongoing dialogue with people in Western Washington to expand the website to include more content from that area as a means to improve communication among a wider geographic range of the faith and nonprofit communities in the Northwest. She has been consulting with those redevelop-

ing the Washington Association of Churches about expanding this model of communication. She is also recruiting people to submit content.

Lorna Kropp will assist The Fig Tree in the fall, updating the archive of pages to the current format and helping with input for the expanded content, as well as providing overall advice on web-

site design and development.

Lorna was on the committee that helped develop the Interactive Website Project, and was Mary's primary teacher as Mary learned to develop and design The Fig Tree website.

"We seek to invite grants from the other denominations and faiths so we can fully fund these projects," Mary said. "Expanding

our base of support will assure we can move ahead effectively developing these projects to reach and serve more people."

The Fig Tree continues to build circulation and coverage of issues in rural and small urban communities of the region, addressing justice, sustainability, congregational life and other issues.

For information, call 535-1813.

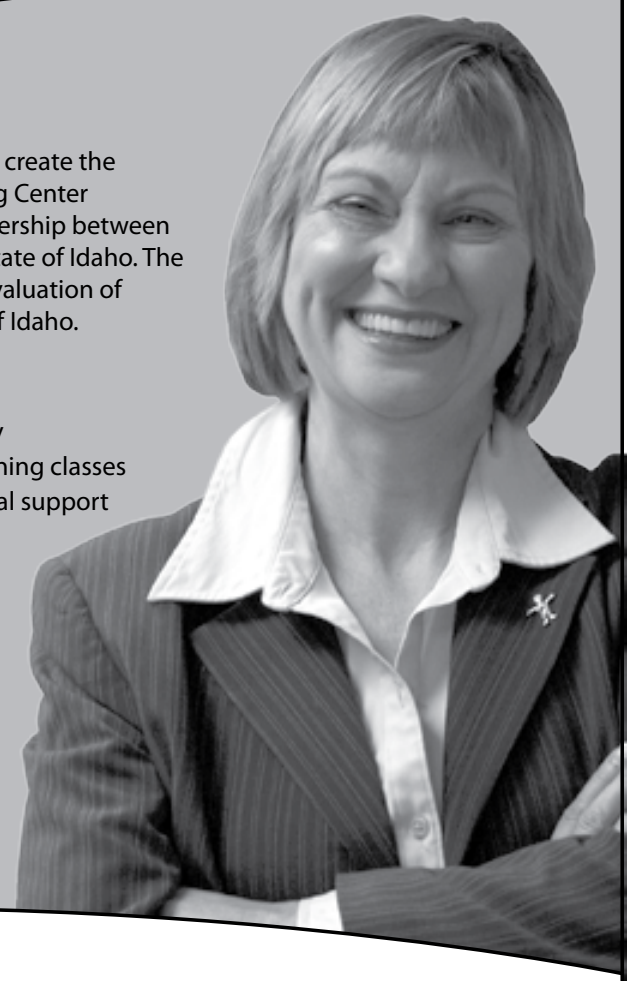
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# Mission team from Spokane re-establishes ties with Anuak in Gambella

*Continued from page 1*  
have responsibility for each other as human beings.”

Mary Beth’s grandparents came to Montana at the turn of the century and as a third-generation Montanan, she grew up rooted in the American West.

She grew up in the Presbyterian Church in Whitefish, continuing in the Presbyterian Church through her struggles with questions of faith.

In 1962, she graduated from the University of Montana in Missoula in microbiology. She met her husband, Dick, in a quantitative chemistry class.

She said that Dick’s 1974 sabbatical in Gothenburg, Sweden, taught them to value community and friendships more than material things. It also widened their world view.

In 1979, he took a job with Hollister-Stier Laboratories and they moved to Spokane, where Mary Beth supervised the microbiology department in the Sacred Heart Laboratory until 1987. When Sacred Heart bought PAML, she left their microbiology department to establish a virology laboratory at PAML, where she worked until she retired in 2006.

She and Dick have been members of First Presbyterian since they first came to Spokane. Mary Beth said she has explored her continuing questions of faith within the context of one denomination.

Both Karlene and Mary Beth have had an interest in Africa.

“I’ve been drawn to Africa since childhood from reading National Geographic in my grandmother’s attic. I’ve also been drawn to other cultures and wanted to find a way to serve,” she said. “It took 60 years for me to go to Africa.”

Karlene was involved with First Presbyterian when the church welcomed its first Anuak refugees.

About 10 years ago, they were among members who talked with those refugees about how to help the Anuak people in Gambella, Ethiopia.

In 2006, Mary Beth first went to Atlanta, Ga., for a workshop on rapid diagnosis of HIV, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control. In 2007, she went to Kampala, Uganda, for a CDC workshop on TB diagnosis. She hopes to return to Africa to use this training. She has also participated in First Presbyterian’s mission activities in Tijuana, Mexico, in Costa Rica and after Hurricane Katrina in Bay St. Louis, Miss.

Karlene’s global personal and professional life has taken her on vacations in Mexico and Europe,



Mary Beth Baker and Karlene Arguinchona reflect on experiences in Gambella, Ethiopia.

and to serve at clinics in Mexico and with a micro-enterprise program in Honduras. Last November, she interviewed Iraqi refugees through a United Nations’ program in Syria.

Mary Beth has many years worked with the Anuak Meer Ministry, which is focusing on Anuak widows and orphans in Gambella. Leaders of that ministry hope that peace initiatives underway in the Gambella region will encourage the Anuak, Nuer, Highlanders and government officials to move beyond tribal rivalries and work together for the good of all the people in Gambella.

The mission of the trip were to 1) learn how the funds First Presbyterian sent to start a restaurant and provide relief when floods wiped out crops had been used; 2) provide medical care for widows and orphans; 3) learn first-hand about the Minnesota-based Partners in Africa community-based child-sponsorship program, and 4) build relationships with the leaders of the East Gambella Bethel Synod.

“We thought all the funds for the micro-enterprise went for relief, but when we arrived church leaders took us to see they had used some of the money to put up a pole building with blue tarp walls for the restaurant micro-enterprise.

“We were the first paying guests,” Mary Beth said.

“In Gambella, I saw benefits of micro-enterprise programs for widows from the genocide and from AIDS,” said Karlene, who did medical screening at a temporary clinic set up in the shade provided by a shelter attached to the church.

With help from the whole team,

Karlene and Joann provided basic health screening, wound care and hygiene education.

“I saw diseases, like polio, that should have been eradicated,” she said.

In addition to the orphans, many women and children came and waited patiently to see the doctor.

“It was like treating people in the ER here, where people come desperate and afraid, wanting to be fixed. Some suffer post-traumatic stress disorder from losing family in the massacre or to a disease. It’s not diagnosed. It’s part of life,” she said.

“As a physician, I could only put a band-aid on, but I saw healing in a figurative and literal sense,” said Karlene.

In evaluating the orphan-sponsorship program, they found that the term, “orphan,” includes children who have lost one parent or live with extended family or another villager.

Karlene and Mary Beth said trust and relationships are important as they grow into the future of their mission partnership.

“We found we can’t just work with the Anuak but need to be open to all the hurting and needy people there,” Mary Beth said.

While Karlene and Joann established relationships with women and children who came to the clinic, Mary Beth and Sue visited homes of the community-based orphans and met with some of the widows to hear their plans for the future.

Alock helped them all with translation of the language and culture, along with visiting her family.

Mary Beth saw how hard people there work to exist and saw the

erty and have so little in material goods, but they have greater focus on relationships. Here in the United States our things can stand in the way of our relationships,” she said.

For information, call 599-6396 or visit [www.spokaneipc.org](http://www.spokaneipc.org), select Mission and Anuak Meer Ministry.

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# Martin Luther King Center serves children, surveys needs

With bricks and mortar shaping programs and capacity at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center, the new Spokane director, Joe O'Neil, is helping the center review its neighborhood, needs, programs and building.

Soon after he began last October, he saw that there was not adequate shade for children to play or do other activities outside.

With the support of First Presbyterian Church, Kiwanis and other donors, the center built a 30-by-24-foot pole building with a roof that provides shade and shelter from rain so classes can be outdoors in the fresh air, especially for the summer program.

That structure is an example of how a simple change can make a difference in the shape of programs.

## Inside, Joe sees another need.

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) has 18 slots in the morning and 18 in the afternoon, providing three-and-a-half hours of structured curriculum for preschoolers.

The child-care area is smaller, with a capacity for 10 to 12, so parents of six to eight children have to pick up their children or deliver them midday.

"We want to enable parents to work all day so they gain the job skills and behaviors they need to move up economically. It's hard when they have to leave at noon, pick up their children and take them to another child care program," Joe said. "We would like the shape of the building to allow us to keep them in our quality care through the day."

Since it moved into the former fire station—in its present location at 845 S. Sherman—in the 1980s, the center has leased the building for a dollar a year from the City of Spokane. It also has use of the adjacent house for its Family Services and Administrative offices.



Murjoni Brown, Cailen Clark and Amari Trout play with Joe O'Neil.

Programs are structured around the building.

Joe is leading the center's staff and board in an assessment of what it is currently doing, whom it serves and how well, what other children's programs are in the neighborhood, who benefits from their services, who else they might serve and what facilities they would need to offer the target population a quality program.

He said the center will explore many options, from partnerships that would involve sharing facilities to exploring rebuilding the facility to fit needs.

Joe joined the Air Force out of high school in Binghamton, NY, and served 20 years in para-rescue special forces working to save lives, so his life has been committed to helping others.

He served in the Philippines, Cheyenne, Wyo.; Albuquerque, N.M.; Ogden, Utah; Iceland; Cocoa Beach, Fla.; England, Okinawa and Tacoma.

Over the years, he helped in humanitarian work ranging from

search-and-rescue looking for lost Boy Scouts, hunters, glacier explorers, fishermen and women at sea and astronauts. He also brought aid to Kurdish refugees.

He retired from the Air Force in 1999 after earning a bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University in workforce education, and in 2002, he completed a master's degree in organizational leadership from Chapman University.

Joe's first civilian job was as director of health and emergency services with the American Red Cross and then as director of state and federal campaigns with United Way in Tacoma. He led Red Cross staff and volunteers in responding to an earthquake, flooding and house fires, and taught first aid and CPR classes. For five years with United Way, he raised more than \$6 million for charities from state and federal employees.

Last summer, he and his wife came to Spokane and she introduced him to her home town.

They decided to move here, so he applied for the opening at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center.

He is impressed with the capability of the staff there to provide more than day care. The center has master's level department directors and bachelor's level program managers who help children identify and apply appropriate emotional, social and educational skills, he said.

"We look for teachable moments, to help children resolve conflicts, gain the ability to ask for help and come to identify their own strengths and weaknesses," he said, telling of one child who used to walk up to him and punch him as a greeting.

Joe simply told the child: "We don't punch, but we do high fives." Now that's how the child greets him.

"Little things that seem insignificant can be big," he said.

About a third of the 60 children who come to the center each day need special attention.

"For me, this work is about believing in something greater than self. As I think of my life and Jesus' life, I realize he taught by demonstration. He acted to others with sincerity and out of a desire to see them become better than they thought they could be," said Joe.

In the military, he also found a call to service above self, to work as a team and put the team above oneself.

"It's not about doing for people to be in the limelight, but to do little things," he said. "People watch attitudes and behavior. Faith needs to be demonstrated. It's not always easy."

He knows that people argued and fought in biblical times as they do today.

"If faith means anything, it means we need hourly to do things to affect the lives of other people positively," said Joe, a member of Our Lady of Fatima parish.

During the coming summer, children and youth will come for fun activities that keep them learning, safe and happy, Joe said.

The summer programs include the Summer Youth Academy for children from three to 12 and the Teen Leadership Academy for youth from 13 to 18. The programs will involve 60 people all day, with children eating outdoors and rotating inside and outside for different activities.

The teens help teachers work with the children.

Teens will also build fishing rods and have a day camp to use them.

In addition, the center is coordinating with Washington State University in Pullman for the teens to spend three days, staying in dorms on campus, eating in the cafeteria and attending classes. The goal is to start them thinking that they can go to college.

For information, call 455-8722 ext. 211 or email joeo@mlkspokane.org.

## Council leader celebrates progress in Catholic-Protestant relations

In the recent past, Catholics and Protestants "hardly spoke to one another, at least about religious matters," the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches USA told 56 graduates of the Dominican Aquinas Institute of Theology in early May in St. Louis.

"Surely, it is a sign of the Holy Spirit that things have changed so dramatically in such a brief span," the Rev. Michael Kinamon said.

Michael, until recently a professor at neighboring Eden Theo-

logical Seminary in St. Louis, received an honorary doctor of humane letters from Aquinas' President, the Rev. Richard Peddicord, O.P.

Another sign of the changing times was a recent prayer service for ecumenical leaders hosted by Pope Benedict XVI in New York, Michael told the graduates.

"Thanks to the wisdom of the planners or the Holy Spirit, I was seated next to Pat Robertson, who, to let you in on a secret, is not my favorite theologian," he said, "but can I deny that he is my brother in

Christ, any more than Pope Benedict can deny that I am his?"

"I might wish that God would be more discriminating, but here we are, bound to one another by a love far greater than our disagreements," he said.

Michael, an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), quoted a favorite saying in his denomination: "We are Christians only, but not the only Christians."

He pointed out that "perhaps today we can say: we are God's children only, but we are not

God's only children."

Aquinas Institute is a theological graduate school that prepares priests, vowed religious and lay

people for church leadership. While most students are Catholic, the school welcomes other men and women, too.

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### Animal Rescue Camp - July 28-Aug 1

Cost: \$135, \$20 registration - middle school only

### Developing Science Video Games August 4-15

Cost: \$20 registration - costs covered by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

### Garland District Art Project - Aug 11-15

Cost: \$135, \$20 registration fee

\$20 registration counts toward camp tuition. A limited number of scholarships available.

For more information about the camps and to register online visit www.tincan.org or call us at (509)744-0972



# Summer church camps plant seeds of faith, service, recreation

*Continued from page 1*  
(ELCA and LCMS) congregations in Eastern Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Others traveled from outside the region.

“We encourage people to bring friends,” Bob said. “It’s imperative that we look at new ways to reach out to new campers.”

Camp Gifford, a camp owned and operated by The Salvation Army, knows a lack of funds sometimes prevents youth from going to camp.

About 90 percent of the 875 children and teens who come to the camp are from low-income households, said Jeff Potts, camp director. For them to participate, The Salvation Army offers a sliding-scale fee that starts at just \$60 a week and even less in some rural areas.

“We always have enough people who want to go to camp, but we have trouble supplementing costs so there have been times we’ve turned some campers away,” Jeff said.

Experiences in nature and with other campers in a safe, nurturing and faith-based environment can make a difference in children’s lives, said camp directors and managers interviewed for The Fig Tree.

While the transformation is evident among some after a week at camp, most experience the spiritual and emotional change over time, they said.

Summer church camp is about planting seeds, Jeff said.

“As much as possible, we try to tie it in to the big, powerful Creator God and how much God loves them, no matter who they are or what other people think of them,” he said. “For some campers, that’s a life-changing perspective.”

*The following summaries describe some of the new programs at several church camps in the Inland Northwest:*

### Lutherhaven offers Servant Adventures

Along with outdoor adventure, community service is the emphasis of Lutherhaven Ministries’ new program, Idaho Servant Adventures.

Campers will spend a week on projects such as working on National Forest trails, volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, spending time with the Coeur d’Alene Tribe, leading sports day clinics and helping seniors with household chores.

When they’re not helping in Coeur d’Alene or the Silver Valley,



Campers worship at N-Sid-Sen’s lakeside chapel.

Photo provided by N-Sid-Sen

youth and their families can go white-water rafting, rock climbing, mountain biking or find other ways to enjoy the outdoors.

By combining community service and outdoor adventure, the program “challenges young adults to cement lifelong relationships,” says the website. It provides opportunities “for God to work in the hearts of God’s people.”

More than 600 high school teens from around the United States have signed up. Each week, space is limited to 100 to create a close-knit community that encourages youth to bond with each other and their adult mentors.

“The program is about servant leadership and rearing young people to be leaders in their communities and churches,” Bob described.

“It’s about reaching out and helping others connect with one another and God.”

The goal is to build the church and commitment to ministry.

In addition to the Idaho Servants Adventures, the Lutherhaven Ministries programs also include Camp Lutherhaven on the East side of Lake Coeur d’Alene, Shoshone Base Camp in the Bitterroot Mountains near the Idaho-Montana border and community day camps in Idaho’s Silver Valley and throughout the Inland Northwest.

For information, call 208-667-3459 or visit [www.idahoservantadventures.com](http://www.idahoservantadventures.com) or [www.lutherhaven.com](http://www.lutherhaven.com).

### Camp Gifford serves low-income campers

Seven volunteers from 18 to 26 will travel thousands of miles from such countries as Australia and Zimbabwe to The Salvation Army’s Camp Gifford this year.

About 20 volunteers work with 50 staff members. They are from Salvation Army youth programs in their countries. As part of their training, they spend two months at Camp Gifford on Deer Lake.

“They add value to our program,” said Jeff, the director. “They’re mature, spiritual people who set an example with their lifestyle. They have an opportunity to minister because the campers are drawn to their charisma.”

This year, Camp Gifford launched a year-round mentoring and discipleship program for young adults. They will spend a year at the camp, doing community service and intensive Bible study. They will spend time in Spokane with the homeless and people in Salvation Army transitional programs, Jeff said.

Last summer, 876 youth from the region spent a week in different age-group camps—ranging from five- to 17-year-olds—from mid-June to mid-August, canoeing, swimming, hiking and doing other outdoor activities.

Depending on talents of staff, Camp Gifford will offer classes on such topics as French, cheerleading and journalism. At night, they gather around a campfire for fellowship and devotions.

### N-Sid-Sen campers focus on caring for creation

“Handle with Care” is the theme this summer at N-Sid-Sen, a year-round camp and conference center on Lake Coeur d’Alene. It offers camps for children from kindergarten through high school and for families.

“We will explore many ways we are called to care for God’s creation and ways we can make change to preserve this glorious creation,” said Randy Crowe, the camp’s managing director.

One program at N-Sid-Sen, “Camp to Belong,” is for foster children separated from siblings. It’s a chance for them to build positive memories to carry them into the future, he said.

“Many have been badly wounded, and the chance to build a relationship with a sibling or two or three is powerful,” he said.

Owned and operated by the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, N-Sid-Sen was established in 1935.

Since then, the camp has grown to 270 acres and almost a mile of shoreline. It includes sports fields, a cove with swimming and boating, a ropes course, hiking, cross-country ski trails, an outdoor chapel, picnic areas, basketball and volleyball. It has quiet places where one can enjoy “this piece of God’s creation,” says the website.

The name “N-Sid-Sen” came about in 1939, when church leaders turned to elders of the Coeur d’Alene Tribe in Plummer for guidance. Learning the camp was a place for youth to learn and grow in faith, the elders spent months reflecting and suggested “N-Sid-

*Continued on next page*

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# Camps open their facilities to serve communities in need

*Continued from previous page*  
Sen,” which means “a point of inspiration” in the Coeur d’Alene language.

“Our mission is to provide the space and atmosphere for folks to come and find their N-Sid-Sen,” said Randy.

For information, call 208-689-3489 or visit [www.n-sid-sen.org](http://www.n-sid-sen.org).

### Camp Spalding offers horseback riding in 2008

At Camp Spalding on Davis Lake, participants can ride horses and sleep in a Sioux tepee, can focus on music, arts, drama or dance, or can bond with siblings and parents at different camps.

Since 1957, thousands of campers have gathered in this wooded, mountain lake setting to deepen faith and have fun outdoors.

Campers from second grade to high school take part in boating, swimming, crafts and other “classic, summer camp fun.”

In addition to canoes and pedal boats, Camp Spalding, operated by the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest, offers a Frisbee golf course, a water trampoline, rock climbing and the “Blob,” a water toy for the lake.

For the first time, a few campers will go horseback riding as part of a horsemanship program. Youth also spend time around campfires and in cabins talking about God and spirituality.

For information, visit [www.clearwaterlodge.org/campspalding.html](http://www.clearwaterlodge.org/campspalding.html) or call (509) 447-4388.

### Zephyr campers help improve the campsite

Last summer, the 28 high school students who spent a week at Zephyr Conference Center decided to do more than the usual camp activities of swimming, hiking and roasting marshmallows.

They were inspired to give back by painting cabins, picking up debris, fixing benches around the campfire and doing other chores to keep the camp’s grounds beautiful.

“It looks renewed,” said Nico McClellan, Zephyr’s manager and facilitator. “Their hard work helped make the camp look fresh and cared for. It also gave them a sense of accomplishment.”

This summer, teens will again do service projects in their week at the camp on Liberty Lake.

“They’re here not just to learn Scripture, but also to live out what they’ve learned,” said Nico. “They’re trying to learn by giving back to the community.”

In addition to the teens, several dozen middle-school and elementary-age youth also came



Idaho Servant Adventure campers serve elderly and others.

Photo provided by Lutherhaven

to Zephyr last year. More will be back this summer, she said.

For the first time, Zephyr will offer a program that allows second- and third-graders to join the fourth- through sixth-graders. The children will join their older siblings to help them “feel more at ease and not so homesick,” Nico explained. The younger children will stay at camp for four days, while the fourth- through sixth-graders will spend six days.

She hopes these youth gain “a sense of stewardship and acceptance of everyone, a sense of community and family while bringing God into the picture.”

A ministry of the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), camps at Zephyr are open to people of all faiths and backgrounds, Nico said.

For information, call 255-6122.

### Twinlow celebrates 80th year of camping

Twinlow Camp and Retreat Center will celebrate its 80th anniversary with a reunion from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 16, at the camp at Lower Twin Lake just north of Rathdrum, Idaho.

Visitors will take part in a barbecue feast, swim, boat and share stories and memories of their experiences there.

A ministry of the United Methodist churches of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, Twinlow draws about 500 campers and volunteers each summer. In addition to overnight camps for second graders through high school seniors, children ages five to 12 can participate in day camp.

Many of the camp’s outdoor activities center around the lake, said Brian White, Twinlow’s director for the last four years. Campers canoe, sail, water ski, wake board, and enjoy the water and sunshine.

For nine years, Twinlow also has offered the Pacific Northwest

Cross Connection. In addition to having fun, participants also go to nearby communities to do service work—painting a home, doing yard work, performing minor repairs and other jobs and chores to help those in need.

Emphasis is on interacting with the families to show that people have many types of needs, not just visible, physical needs, according to the camp’s website.

Besides experiencing fellowship, campers gain confidence in their ability to fix houses and take part in a life-changing and holy experience of mission outreach. The youth service teams help families in Rathdrum, Spirit Lake, Athol, Coeur d’Alene and other communities in North Idaho.

Twinlow seeks to “create sanctuaries where people have freedom to explore faith and be in community with others,” said Brian. It’s where individuals can “grow closer to Jesus through different programs and groups.”

For information, visit [www.twinlowcamp.org](http://www.twinlowcamp.org) or call (208) 687-1146.

### Chabad Center sponsors Camp Gan Israel

Jewish youth in Spokane will be able to take part in a two-week summer camp in August through the Chabad Center of Spokane.

Rabbi Yisroel Hahn and five other volunteers will provide opportunities for children ages five to 10 to learn Hebrew and Jewish songs, do arts-and-crafts and participate in other activities to learn about their faith.

Some Jewish youth in the Inland Northwest take part in camps in western Washington and other

cities, said the rabbi. Locally, however, younger children who are not ready to stay overnight didn’t have many options.

So he and others from Chabad have planned a two-week day camp. Volunteers from the Chabad headquarters in New York will help with the Hebrew lessons and activities.

For information, visit [www.jewishspokane.com](http://www.jewishspokane.com) or call 443-0770.

### Camp Cross welcomes new campers and groups

Welcoming new people and groups to the beauty of the setting of Camp Cross on 107 acres on Lake Coeur d’Alene is camp director Chase Shield’s emphasis for the 2008 season.

“We want to share our facility and our positive community of living together joyfully,” he said.

The outreach takes two forms: 1) encouraging campers through a discount to invite a friend and 2) opening the camp for other groups to use.

Chase said Camp Cross, a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, is offering a \$30 discount for both the camper and a

friend the camper invites.

“It’s easier to invite someone to camp than to church. Here we meet people where they are without judgment or expectation. We just want to include more people so they enrich our community. More people makes camp more fun,” he said. “Living the Gospel means sharing this place of peace and acceptance.”

In August, Camp Cross will host a four-day Camp No Limits for children with prosthetic limbs and their families.

“We have wheelchair basketball and the beach is full of prosthetic limbs when children go swimming,” Chase said.

Camp staff help children learn to tie shoes or put a scrunchie in their hair.

Speakers share how they have overcome their limitations.

Chase is also scheduling an Inner City Outings Camp in September, a weekend for children from West Central Spokane to enjoy archery, romping in the woods and campfires as part of this Sierra Club sponsored program. Children will come without cost.

For information, call 624-5780 or visit [www.campcross.org](http://www.campcross.org).

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# Pasco's affordable farm worker housing exemplifies green building

**By Virginia de Leon**  
Before Catholic Charities Spokane built the 45-unit Tepeyac Haven last fall, the poorest of the poor in Pasco had nowhere decent to live.

Not only is Tepeyac providing much needed housing, but also it is built to specifications of green building.

Most farm workers and their families are crammed together in dismal conditions—in rusty trailers with shattered windows; in cold, cinder-block buildings; in basement apartments where the walls had turned black with mold, or in decrepit shacks that endangered their children's health and welfare.

Because they shared their living spaces with other families, they often cooked and ate their meals in the same room where they slept.

"People who are vulnerable and at risk need a beautiful place to live," said Rob McCann, executive director of Catholic Charities Spokane, a social service organization that helps people of all religious faiths in the 13 counties of Eastern Washington.

"The number one thing we could do for farm workers in the area is to provide them housing so that they can leave migrant camps and live somewhere safe and with human dignity," he said.

Guided by its mission to "provide help and create hope" for the poor and others in need, Catholic Charities Spokane built Tepeyac Haven—a 45-unit housing complex for farm workers and their families.

Along with being one of the most modern, attractive apartment complexes in the Tri-Cities, the \$8 million project is the first affordable-housing development in the United States to receive a Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation for green buildings under the LEED for Homes category.

Tepeyac Haven also was used as a national case study at the U.S. Green Building Council's International Conference and Expo last November. Now, experts in sustainable building consider it a model for other affordable housing projects across the country.

Most families who have moved into Tepeyac Haven are from Michoacan, Jalisco and other provinces of Mexico, said Alicia Toledo, Tepeyac's manager. Some were so poor that they brought only boxes of clothing and plastic furniture when they moved in last October.

They were just grateful to find somewhere affordable, decent and pleasant to live, she said.

"Most lived in places that were never repaired," Alicia explained. "People looked down on them because they are farm workers, so they didn't treat them well."



Annie Smart of St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Lind welded a crucifix for the dedication.

Photo by Glorianne Houston of Catholic Charities Spokane

Tepeyac Haven is the second housing complex in Eastern Washington created for farm workers by Catholic Charities Spokane.

It's modeled after La Morada en el Desierto, which was built four years ago in Othello.

Along with their pastor, the Rev. Miguel Mejia, parishioners at Othello's Sacred Heart Catholic Church asked Catholic Charities if the nonprofit would help the poorest among them who toil in the fields but make so little money they couldn't afford to move out of the labor camps.

After many meetings, much research and paperwork, Catholic Charities embarked on a tax-credit project that led to La Morada, a 27-unit complex designed for low-income families who work in agriculture.

Also known as "Desert Haven," the \$2.8 million facility features two-, three- and four-bedroom duplex-style apartments surrounded by grass, trees and flowering plants. Residents share a common area that includes park benches and a playground.

For families who have lived in poverty throughout their life, La Morada has become a haven, they said, and a fulfillment of the American dream.

The creation of the affordable farm-worker housing at La Morada in Othello inspired Monsignor Pedro Ramirez and parishioners at St. Patrick's in Pasco to ask Catholic Charities to build a similar housing project for agricultural workers in the Tri-Cities.

Like Othello, the Tri-Cities area is home to thousands of field workers who have no access to

health care, education and other opportunities to help lift them out of poverty.

Last October—three years after collaboration between St. Patrick's and Catholic Charities—Pasco celebrated the opening of Tepeyac Haven.

Bishop William Skylstad of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane came to lead the dedication and blessing.

Parishioners suggested the name, "Tepeyac," in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In 1531 on Tepeyac Hill in the outskirts of Mexico City, the Virgin Mary is believed to have appeared to Juan Diego.

"Everybody's happy here," Alicia said. "The women love having washers and dryers. The children have two playgrounds. People like their apartments."

Tepeyac Haven has the same architectural design as Desert Haven.

The project, however, goes beyond the Othello complex in using energy-efficient construction materials, such as high-tech foam insulation blown into the walls and installing energy efficient washers, dryers and other appliances.

Zeck Butler Architects and others involved in the design and construction chose building materials that not only were durable and environmentally friendly but also came from local sources.

"Tepeyac Haven's use of LEED accredited professionals ensured that those involved in the design and building process were able to make the smartest, greenest, most inexpensive choices available," according to the U.S. Green

Building Council.

The complex is near schools, a bus stop and a shopping area—a convenience for families who don't own a car, said Alicia.

Rent at the new facility also remains affordable despite rising prices in the Tri-Cities.

According to 2008 statistics from ApartmentRatings.com, the average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the Tri-Cities is \$613 and \$686 for one with two bedrooms.

At Tepeyac Haven, families pay

\$443 for a two-bedroom apartment; \$530 for three bedrooms, and \$535 for four bedrooms.

To lease an apartment at Tepeyac, residents must work in agriculture and also earn less than 40 percent of the median income for families in the cities of Pasco, Kennewick and Richland.

"It's among the nicest rental apartments in the Tri-Cities," said Rob. "The people who live there are folks who have come to the U.S. for a better life for themselves and their children. They deserve a nice place to live."

Catholic Charities is now considering the construction of another farm-worker housing complex in Pasco.

Although it's still in the planning stages, more than 100 families already have put their names on a waiting list, he said.

For information, call Catholic Charities Spokane at 358-4259 or Tepeyac Haven in Pasco at 545-8558.

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# Iranian cyclists leave path of peace and trees around the world

When neighbors around Polly Judd Park in Spokane met neighbors from Iran on May 10 for a pancake breakfast and to plant a peace tree, several said they would reciprocate the visit of two eco-tourists and adventure cyclists, Nasim Yousefi, 29, and Jafar Edrisi, 30, of Tehran.

Tom, Pam and Zak Deutschman who started Pancakes in the Park, neighbor John Snyder and Shahrokh Nikfar, a native of Iran who lives in Spokane, plan to visit Tehran in September, serve a pancake breakfast and plant a peace tree.

“The world is our neighbor. We are all human beings,” said Shahrokh, host of “The Persian Hour” on KYRS Thin Air Radio.

In April, 2007, he had seen a BBC report about Nasim’s and Jafar’s plan to spend two years on a “Cycling around the World for Peace and Environmental Conservation” tour.

That was shortly before the computer engineers left Tehran.

Shahrokh was among 300 people who emailed them in two days, offering hospitality and allaying their concerns about where they would stay.

When they arrived in Spokane May 9, they had visited 10 countries in Europe and North America. Shahrokh arranged for several local groups to invite them as a way to assure they would have visas to travel in the United States.

The hospitality that greeted them in Spokane was similar to their experiences in other communities.

The Deutschmans started Pancakes in the Park when they moved to Spokane six years ago. They serve pancakes at the park every two weeks as a way to meet their neighbors. They will spread the tradition this summer in other Spokane parks—knocking on doors to invite people to meet their neighbors.

Nasim and Jafar are neighbors from a bit farther away.

“I hope the tree will bear the fruit of happiness, understanding and peace,” Nasim said before shoveling dirt on the roots of the new tree in Polly Judd Park on West 14th Ave.

They named the Kentucky coffee tree, “Pancake,” in honor of the pancake breakfast.

Spokane’s “tree lady” Nancy McKarrow was also there to make the tree part of the Susie forest—70 trees honoring her daughter, Susie Stephens, a bicyclist who died in 2002.

Jafar and Nasim, who met nine years ago mountain climbing,



Jafar Edrisi and Nasim Yousefi arrive at Polly Judd Park to plant a tree.

spent weekends in nature and taking people on eco-tours to see the natural wonders of Iran as well as monuments of the ancient civilization.

Three years ago, they decided to tour the world by bicycle as an ecological way to travel and a way to meet people and learn about their lives and cultures.

“We also wanted to give a message from Iran about peace and conservation,” said Nasim.

“In Iran, we know of countries from international news, but often do not see their goodness. Some Iranians visiting other countries have been received poorly,” she said.

“We wanted to do something to show that Iranians are peace-loving and want to be friends with people. We also wanted to introduce the country as it is.”

They give a slide presentation at each stop. Their website gives background on them, Iran and their trip.

“People around the world have many questions about our people, our country and our culture. Speaking face-to-face, we offer answers,” said Nasim.

She and Jafar, who are of Muslim background, live in a neighborhood that is mostly Christians from Armenia.

“We are not very religious, but know our religion is about helping the poor, wanting peace and bringing kindness to each other,” she said.

“My mother often told me when I was growing up that if a neighbor is hungry, you should help,” she said. “At certain times of the year, Iranians make food to give to their neighbors and those

who are less fortunate. Charity is also part of our religion on a continuous basis, as well as these occasions.

“We believe everyone’s God is the same God, so we respect beliefs of other religions,” Nasim said.

While most places have welcomed them, a few people told them to say they are Persians, not Iranians, to avoid negative responses. They insist on saying they are Iranians to restore a good image of their homeland.

Only a few people in some countries told them to go away, but not in the United States.

“People here are helpful and kind,” she said. “It’s not good to prejudge other nations and people. We need to go and see other nations, to touch the lives of people, to experience their hospitality and to come home good ambassadors.

“People are the same all over the world. We need the same things to be happy,” she said.

The couple had some Hollywood-based notions about cowboys in the United States, but had seen no cowboys in their cycling travels.

They have been impressed by the restaurants with cuisine from so many cultures and nations.

After cycling from Boston to Florida they came to Spokane by bus. Then they went to Seattle to travel down the coast to California. Then they go to Asia.

Just as their preconceptions have been dispelled, Nasim and Jafar seek to dispel the preconceptions about Iran and weapons by showing photos of the mountains and ancient civilization.

they have been hosted by the cyclists’ family and friends.

Nasim and Jafar have completed one year of their two-year commitment to travel 20,000 kilometers by public transportation or bicycle.

They have joined people in peace vigils, attended churches and temples, and participated in interfaith events.

In addition to hospitality from individuals, peace groups and churches, they fund their travels by selling photos and calligraphy.

For information, visit [www.RMC4Peace.com](http://www.RMC4Peace.com).

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# Giving for disaster relief is an ongoing commitment for people of faith

In rapid succession, we have had a stream of disasters—with the cyclone in Burma/ Myanmar, the earthquake and aftershocks in Sichuan, the tornadoes in the U.S. Mid-west and East, and flooding in the Inland Northwest.

Those are only the ones ranking at the top of the news and on top of the emerging world food crisis.

A recent article reported “compassion fatigue” among those who donate to some agencies, perhaps because of the initial block to aid for Burma/Myanmar or perhaps because it seemed that the Chinese were responding so effectively to their catastrophe.

The deaths and destruction in China have hit home particularly, because my daughter, Karen Haworth, taught English for three years to teachers who live in the epicenter region. She was in Chengdu with Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

She has been sending emails to students and hearing back with relief from some, but remains concerned about those in the immediate area.

While media are our mediators of such events, each event is personal and the faith communities have direct links for their constituents to provide support.

The networks of Partners International, which has its headquarters in Spokane; of World Relief, which resettles refugees in the Inland Northwest; Catholic Relief Services, which serves locally and globally; Church World Service, which gathers awareness and funds in CROP Hunger Walks, and all the denominational connections such as Baptist World Aid, Episcopal World Relief, Lutheran World Relief, Presbyterian Disaster Relief, the Adventist Development and International Relief Agency, United Methodist Global Ministries and many other channels provide people in the Inland Northwest with ongoing presence in the regions where there are disasters.

For most people in congregations, disasters are ongoing events, requiring that members donate funds on a consistent

basis so there are partners in places where disasters happen, available to respond to immediate needs and to continue care for the long-term, as is happening as teams of people from Inland Northwest congregations continue to stream to New Orleans to help with Hurricane Katrina rebuilding.

The following are reports of how some of the various faith agencies are responding to the disasters in Burma/Myanmar and in China:

In many cases, denominations have networks that work cooperatively through Actions of Churches Together (ACT) International, coordinated through the World Council of Churches.

In China, for example, the Amity Foundation, which prints Bibles, operates a seminary and arranges for English teaching opportunities, also nurtures relationships throughout the country and thus has local churches through which to channel aid.

Immediately Church World Service was helping the Amity Foundation provide emergency assistance to 8,000 families whose homes were destroyed and assuring that 16,000 people had food. Amity has committed to helping rebuild 600 houses, 10 schools, five hospitals and five water systems.

Of course, that’s not everyone, but it’s a few people. People involved in congregations are generally aware that the world’s web of relief aid through faith communities provides for many others through their different local contacts.

By coordinating with partners, ACT International provided clean water and emergency food and items to more than 100,000 people in China.

Working through partners, local organizations reach poor villages no one else can access.

Similarly in Burma/Myanmar, CWS continues to reach survivors with materials purchased in Burma/Myanmar or regionally and transported through channels that were open.

Another example is World Relief, which

also has 60 years of experience responding to natural and human-caused catastrophes, has operated AIDS programs in China and has relationships with the government, churches and local agencies, allowing it to mobilize relief efforts.

Its partner, World Concern was also already delivering aid in Burma/Myanmar through its networks established over 10 years there. Local staff bought relief supplies in Burma/Myanmar, so supplies could reach survivors quickly and help the local economy.

Through other local channels connected with Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services was also providing food and shelter for survivors well before government agencies were able to send supplies.

In addition, 12 local staff members of World Vision in Qingchuan County of China’s Sichuan Province, began responding immediately after the disaster and sent appeals for temporary shelters as the greatest need. They began distribution of 800 tents and 30,000 quilts, 2,000 shelter tarpaulins and food.

To address needs of orphans in China, World Vision opened three child-friendly spaces with games and activities to help children regain a sense of normality.

World Vision plans to provide more than 123,000 Chinese earthquake survivors relief and long-term rehabilitation support of about \$2 million.

In Burma/Myanmar, World Vision staff were also already there, helping respond to waterborne illnesses—chlorinating wells, providing water tanks and disinfecting camp sites—and providing more than 78,000 people with clean water, rice and other emergency aid, such as clothing, blankets and tarps.

Like other relief agencies, Partners International’s indigenous ministry partners provided immediate and ongoing assistance to their neighbors in Burma/Myanmar, as well as China.

In China, Partners International partners were working immediately to meet the

physical, emotional and spiritual needs of people. Local teams drove as far as they could over broken roads and mudslides to assess the situation. One team leader was from the area most damaged.

Like other relief agencies, Partners International has provided updates on its website, bulletin inserts and prayer cards as means to draw attention and call for ongoing donations and prayers.

In the faith community, there’s no room for compassion fatigue.

There are always people in need calling for our response to feed, clothe, shelter, visit, care, give and pray. There’s never an end to opportunities to respond to human suffering locally and globally.

We are here and, through partners, we are everywhere around the globe.

Every disaster is personal. Every disaster calls for our mourning, our prayers, our donations and our time.

The fact that media were given such ready and full access in China, and found ways to enter and cover the story in Burma/ Myanmar strengthened our sense of common caring and humanity. The tears and mourning of survivors who lost family members viewed on screen were bonding, eliciting tears.

The stories of friends, neighbors and some of the 50,000 Chinese troops digging out survivors were dramatic.

The many faith-based agencies, with access from the early hours and an enduring commitment to be present through the coming years of rebuilding are appealing for additional funds needed to make their outreach possible.

Yes, our food and gas prices are up. Yes, our economy is slow. Yes, our future is uncertain, as it perhaps always is, but the need is blatant.

One use of U.S. tax rebate checks might be as gifts to the many faith-based agencies responding to crises near and far, the hands, feet, arms and legs that extend our caring and put our prayers into action.

Mary Stamp - Editor

Letter to the Editor

## Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

**Intentionality is preparing** oneself for the spontaneity of God. God often does surprise us with grace, but more often grace comes through preparation. To be intentional is to be actively involved in the disciplines of faith. These include daily prayer and scripture reading, meditation and quiet times, community worship and study.

How often I have heard folks say that God really spoke to them through a devotion they read in the morning. God surprised them, but they had offered their disciplined action to God in the first place.

One priest friend used to say that as churches our faith is built day by day with short devotional readings. God speaks to us when we are prepared.

If I wait to pray when I feel like it, I often don’t pray at all. When our prayer is premeditated, it is not missed, and through that regular devotion, God does speak. Vital churches have members who are connecting for more than just worship.

The Rev. Joyce O’Connor Magee  
Manito United Methodist

**If delayed gratification** is a spiritual discipline, we must feel closer to God this spring. Perhaps it’s because Easter came so early or the winter was so long.

So often we become focused on the future, on what we want to happen, what we wish will happen, that we miss the power of now. Or we live in the past, in the good old days, or we revisit old wounds, old hurts

and old conflicts.

Spring is the best time of year to open our eyes and focus on now. The bulbs poke their heads through the earth and grow to blossom. The birds return and we hear the sounds of little babies chirping for their mothers. The smell of cut grass, moist earth and even manure in the fields. The warmth of the sun on our skin and the feel of water from the hose and wind in our hair.

The Gospel of Matthew offers comfort and a swift kick to remember the signs of God’s love evident in the beauty of creation: “I tell you not to worry about your life. Don’t worry about having something to eat, drink or wear. Isn’t life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds in the sky? They don’t plant or harvest....Don’t worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today.”

The Rev. Debi Hasdorff  
Cheney United Church of Christ

**Someone once observed** that those who are ignorant of history are bound to repeat it. Let me add another maxim: those who are ignorant of history are suckers for those who re-write it.

Consider the often-made claim that America is or used to be a “Christian nation.” Those who make that statement would be appalled at the religious viewpoints of many who signed the Declaration of Independence. Most were Deists, regarding God as more an absent landlord

than a caring savior. Thomas Jefferson used scissors and paste to re-create the gospels to his liking. John Adams regarded the doctrine of the Trinity “the source of almost all the corruptions of Christianity.”

At the time of the Revolution, only about 17 percent of Americans belonged to a church, much less attended worship regularly.

Those who regard America 100 years ago as more “Christian” forget institutionalized racism, segregation, lynchings, sweat shops, child labor, urban blight and robber barons. U.S. life expectancy was 47, and 90 percent of physicians had no college education. Marijuana, heroin and morphine were available over the counter and Coca-Cola contained cocaine, not caffeine. There was no Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid. Only a minority of youth finished eighth grade, and church attendance was considerably less than today.

Personally, I like studying history. It reminds me of the progress we have made, progress initiated in part by churches in the name and spirit of Christ. Instead of glorifying the past as more Christian, we might celebrate ways our faith has made and is making a difference.

The Rev. John Temple Bristow  
Country Homes Christian

**We can and must do** our programs as the church, develop our doctrines, celebrate our sacraments, offer our outreach, sing our songs and pray our prayers, but

to be truly meaningful and to become part of God’s work of redemption, the church must point to that overwhelming life shattering and restoring love that God offers completely freely, a love that is stamped into the fabric of creation.

Our mission is not to fix this world. Our mission is not even to be effective, whatever that means. Our mission is to proclaim that profligate, unstinting love. What is more, much more as a matter of fact, we must take the enormous risk of opening ourselves up to that love so that it might transform us, so that we become the image of that love we seek to proclaim. We must be part of God’s word to a world that is so bewildered it thinks that “Why?” is the question, not the answer.

The Right Rev. Bill Ellis  
Episcopal Cathedral of St. John

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# Churches' language schools for refugees rely on volunteer teachers

Fifteen of the more than 35 students who participated in the Barton School's English language program at First Presbyterian Church this year were new to the school—coming from Korea, Tibet, Moldova, Afghanistan and Cambodia, said Kirsten Harrington, coordinator.

The school, which celebrates its 40th anniversary next year, had 20 new volunteer teachers, but more than 20 students were on its waiting list at the end of the year.

Barton students receive individual attention with the one student per teacher ratio, so new students can be accepted only if a current student leaves or a new teacher joins.

"We always need new teachers. No experience is necessary. We also have special projects and opportunities for short-term commitments, said Kirsten, looking ahead to the fall.

## Churches assist in Habitat Blitz

The 2008 Blitz Build of Habitat for Humanity-Spokane runs from May 30 through June 17.

Clergy will lead volunteers in prayer as they begin each work day. About 15 congregations are sending volunteers to pound nails and 13 will help serve meals.

Area churches also host out-of-town college groups and church mission groups who come to build.

Habitat-Spokane has built 182 homes since it began in 1987.

For information, call 534-2552.

## Lands Council hosts workshops

The Lands Council is hosting three workshops in June for citizens to give input on the City of Spokane's Sustainability Project.

They will be at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 3, at South Hill Library; Thursday, June 5, at North East Community Center, and Tuesday, June 17, at Shadle Library.

Kitty Klitzke, east-side staff of the statewide Futurewise, said the city has started a planning process to identify strategies to guide city government in how it will respond to the impact of climate change and rising energy prices.

For information, call 838-1965, or email [kitty@futurewise.org](mailto:kitty@futurewise.org).

More than 12 students passed the citizenship exam this year, and several other students are preparing for community college, she reported.

Computer classes were offered to the students this year for the first time.

The regular classes are 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Although school closed May 7 for the summer, several teachers are continuing to work with their students through the summer.

For information, call 838-1061.

The Country Homes English as a Second Language School celebrates its 30th year in the upcoming school year.

This year, co-director Virginia Summers said that 20 volunteers have been working with 30 students, breaking the usual pattern of one-to-one, in order to accommodate the students. Most students come from Asian countries, particularly Korea and China. Some were from Haiti.

"Some students have doctoral degrees and come to learn to speak English better while they are here as visiting professors at Whitworth University and Gonzaga University," she said.

Most of the tutors are not members of Country Homes Christian Church, which provides the space and books for the program as a ministry.

Virginia tutored a year before

becoming co-director four years ago with Doni Walker.

"It's like a big family with the caring of the tutors and the appreciation of the students," she said. "Last year we held a shower for a student who was having a baby."

Classes run from 9:30 to 11:30

a.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The last class until September was May 21.

Virginia has joined Country Homes Christian Church since she began working there after retiring as a bookkeeper.

For information, call 466-3414.

## Calendar of Events

Check with your congregation about summer opportunities for church camping experiences and vacation Bible schools

- May 30-June 17 • Habitat for Humanity-Spokane Blitz Build - 534-3553
- June 4 • Fig Tree Encouragement Project Training for Writers and Editors, Unity House, 709 E. DeSmet, 7 p.m. - 535-1813
- June 5 • Fig Tree Board Annual Meeting, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.
- Lands Council Workshop on Spokane Sustainability Project, Northeast Community Center, 5:30 p.m. - 838-1965
- June 6-8 • "In the Footsteps of Jesus," Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd - 448-1224
- June 13 • Domestic Violence Summit, Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. - 326-1190 x 145
- June 14 • Race Unity Day, Coeur d'Alene City Park, 1-4 p.m. - 208-664-5410
- Abuse Recovery Ministry, "Breaking Through: Embracing the Truth about Abuse," Rich Schaus, 2121 E. Wabash, 1 p.m. - 484-0600
- June 5 - Sept 5 • Conservation Northwest Hikes at [www.conservationnw.org/events](http://www.conservationnw.org/events) - 747-1663
- June 12 • Directory of Congregations and Community Resources publication and distribution - call 323-4037
- June 17 • Lands Council Workshop on Spokane Sustainability Project, Shadle Library, 5:30 p.m. - 838-1965
- June 25-July 26 • Summer Academy for Native American and Alaskan Native Students, Spokane Community College - 533-8009
- July 3, 4, 10 • Cathedral of St. John 2008 Carillon Guest Series, outside the cathedral 127 E. 12th, 7 p.m. - 838-4277
- July 20, 24 31 • "Hot Spots and Wars: A Tour of This Summer's Hot Spots and Next Year's Wars," speakers' series, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m. - 838-7870 Young adult presenters are Eric Colby on Palestine and Israel, July 3; Nima Motahari, on Iran, July 10; TBA, Colombia, July 17, and Dana Visalli, on Iraq, July 24.
- July 3, 10 17 & 24 • Whitworth Institute of Ministry, "Whitworth University, 300 W. Hawthorne - 777-4345 or [tsutherland@whitworth.edu](mailto:tsutherland@whitworth.edu)
- July 7-11 • "Jubilate!" ecumenical retreat and workshops on "Re-imagining Worship," Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 253-922-1410
- July 15 • Spokane Fall Folk Festival performer application deadline, forms at [www.spokanefolklore.org](http://www.spokanefolklore.org)
- July 19 • Day of Serenity and Inner Peace, St. Joseph Family Center - 483-6495
- July 19-20 • Festival of the Arts on the Shadowy St. Joe, St. Maries - 208-245-3417
- Aug 6 & 9 • National Days of Remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Bombings in 1945 - Pax Christi - 358-4273 and Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane - 838-7870
- Aug 16 • Unity in the Community, Riverfront Park, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. - 838-1881
- Aug 22-24 • 19th Annual Spokane Falls Northwest Encampment & Powwow, Riverfront Park - 468-2595
- Tues-Sats • Habitat-Spokane work days - 534-2552
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- 1st Sat • Ministers' Fellowship Union and Ministers' Wives/Widows Fellowship, Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, 806 W. Indiana 624-0522
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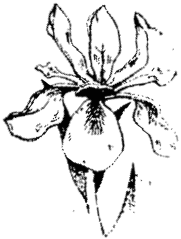
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Congregation's implementing ideas he shares nationally enlivened the church.

## *National United Methodist staff person serves Green Bluff church*

A national United Methodist staff member lives below the mountains among the orchards and small farms in Green Bluff.

From there the Rev. John Southwick telecommutes most days, commutes a week a month to New York City and travels throughout the United States to attend meetings and share resources.

The five years he has been there, he has served as the part-time pastor of Green Bluff United Methodist Church, where he has found a congregation ready to implement simple ideas for growth.

With God's help, he said, the 100-year-old congregation has renewed itself—building attendance from 20 to more than 50, quadrupling their giving, attending Bible studies and joining in outreach.

**His primary part-time work** is as director of congregational and demographic research for the national General Board for Global Ministries. In that work, he packages demographics and church statistics so a congregation can understand its area better, and so districts and annual conferences can have information relevant for starting new churches.

"We include trends in the culture with demographics that relate to churches to help churches know how to minister more effectively in their environment," he said.

John also edits a monthly newsletter on Background Data for Mission, looking at culture, demographics and church response.

With the national church, he travels to help churches around the United States know how they might grow and have new life and vitality.

"It's a joy to be part of a church that's doing that," he said. "God has done good things among us at Green Bluff."

John, who has a bachelor's degree in physics and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Minnesota in the 1970s, felt called to ministry after college. However, he spent several years as an economic researcher for the phone company in Colorado, preparing impact statements required by regulatory boards for increasing prices.

Now he applies his research and demographic skills to the church scene.

After completing studies at Iliff Seminary in 1986, John served several churches in Colorado before coming to Milton, Wash., near Tacoma, where he served seven years.



**The Rev. John Southwick, local pastor and national leader.**

John then accepted the job with Global Ministries in New York City and lived there for five years before moving to Green Bluff.

**The church, which celebrates** its centennial in 2009, previously experienced conflict and lost members. Those remaining were open, receptive and hopeful, which he said are key elements for church renewal.

John said the church has been at 9908 E Greenbluff Rd. most of its life. Its white building with 13 pews was built in the 1940s after the old building burned. The average attendance has been 40.

**Changes in worship life** have had a major impact on the congregation.

"We shifted from traditional to blended worship," John said, explaining that blended is part traditional and part contemporary. "We use lots of music and media—an overhead projector, DVDs and videos. With services full of energy, no one is concerned about going over an hour."

**An extension of people** into mission has accompanied the increases in attendance and giving. The church's mission outreaches that include:

- Supporting a new church start through United Methodist Global Ministries in Russia;
- Giving to and volunteering with a food bank in Mead;
- Joining in the CROP Hunger Walk to raise funds for local and global hunger relief;

aware that the church is not a country club to serve only those who attend. It's there to reach out to serve others.

“That ethos allows an openness that communicates welcome to people,” he said. “As new people come with different interests, the church incorporates their gifts.”

**Prayer is another key element** in church renewal, John said.

The motto on the church's T-shirts is: "It's a God thing!"

"We give credit to God for what is happening here. God has done much beyond our programs, outreach and prayer," he said.

Green Bluff United Methodist holds a Wednesday evening prayer meeting. Those who come pray for more than typical concerns about illness and travel.

"We pray for God to bring new people and that we will touch people in the community and world," he said. "We believe God answers prayer."

**Spiritual formation** for church leaders is yet another element for church renewal.

Green Bluff United Methodist's leaders join in Bible studies and other spiritual growth opportunities. Five years ago, the Sunday school "nearly did not exist," John described. Now there are four age levels, with adult classes for men and women using the denomination's Bible study.

"People who participate in the Bible studies are those who start the new ministries in order to live their faith," he said.

In John's travels with Global

Ministries, he goes to conferences where people share exciting stories about their churches. That both motivates him and gives him ideas to share locally.

John said his preaching follows the lectionary, seeking to make the Scriptures for the week exciting and relevant through humor, media and connecting with people, sharing how they apply to life.

Most who attend are from Green Bluff or the nearby surrounding area.

**The church is a community** center, providing gatherings such as an annual Easter egg hunt and vacation Bible school for 50 children, and participating in Green Bluff's annual Apple Fest, selling homemade apple dumplings and pies at a booth.



Old timers gather at the Grange Hall across the street. There is no local government, school or shopping, he said.

Most residents in the area are small growers on five to 10 acres. Many of them either have other work to earn a living or are retired.

There is some slow growth in the community, but Green Bluff is not zoned for developments, as is land nearer Mead or Colbert.

John has long-term intentions to stay at Green Bluff. He said that United Methodists are less likely to move pastors if the pastor and church are doing well. The part-time work there fits well with his national responsibilities.

For information, call 238-9100 or email [jsouthw@gbgm-umc.org](mailto:jsouthw@gbgm-umc.org).

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