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Singer stirs cross-cultural bonds

By Mary Stamp

By singing Jewish songs she learned as a child at Temple Beth Shalom’s annual Kosher Dinner and by teaching preschoolers musical basics in Kindermusik, Shirley Grossman has sought to foster understanding to break cultural and religious assumptions.

Having grown up singing, she now shares traditional Jewish songs as part of the entertainment provided while guests wait to enter the dining hall. Shirley sings such songs as “Hevenu Shalom Aleicham,” a blessing of peace, and “Bashana Habaa,” a Hebrew song which imagines a world in which everyone cares and shares and in which everyone lives together without fear.

For Shirley, that song also sums up both the philosophy of the Kosher Dinner and her work teaching Kindermusik to thousands of children for more than 20 years in Spokane.

Both are about sharing, caring and connecting to create understanding about another culture as



Shirley Grossman nurtures a love of music and singing.

a way to make the world better, she said.

“Tikkun olam—to make the world better—is our job as Jews,” she added, noting that most who come to the dinner and to the Kindermusik classes dream of a world of love, tolerance and acceptance.

In her childhood as the daughter of a Russian-Jewish immigrant family who settled in Canada, she knew of the persecution of previous generations.

Her mother came from Russia at 13. Having seen Cossacks kill Jews, her mother believed there could be no God if that could happen, Shirley said.

Her father, who was second generation, taught high school physics and math in Herbert, Saskatchewan; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Trail and Victoria, B.C.

He kept the minutes of a town meeting in Saskatchewan that showed the anti-Semitism of the 1930s. At that meeting, the people decided they did not want their children taught by a Jew, and her

Continued on page 4

For one-stop service center

Dream moves from paper to concrete

From a dream to discussions to sketches on paper, the vision to build a South Central Spokane one-stop center for educational and social services has been transformed into concrete, wood, windows, a roof and siding.

Soon it will be filled with people serving people to move them from dependency to self-sufficiency.

Aiming to open the two-story, 17,000-square-foot new Emmanuel Family Life Center by June, the Rev. Lonnie Mitchell and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church at 645 S. Richard Allen Ct. continue to take steps to make the congregation’s dream come to fruition.

Soon the building will be filled with preschoolers, after-schoolers, computer-lab users, community college students, adult-education seekers, health screeners, youth campers, seniors and nonprofit service providers.

The vision for the center began to be nurtured and developed in 1995.

The Fig Tree photographed Lonnie with architect’s drawings in April 2001. Construction started in April 2005, progressing each step as funding became available.

So far, Richard Allen Enterprises, named for the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, has raised \$1 million for the \$1.4 million anticipated costs to complete the building.

In November, Lonnie asked members to give \$1 each Sunday toward costs. Since then members have raised \$5,000.

“It’s a faith walk, trusting God to complete the funding for the building,” Lonnie said. “We hope it will be paid for by the time construction is completed, so we will have no loans attached to it.”

He reported that the Gates Foundation recently gave a chal-

lenge grant of \$180,000, leaving more than \$200,000 to be raised from church and community members.

Sixty community volunteers have signed up to help put up and complete the internal framing and drywall, carpeting, and electrical, plumbing and heating systems, with “sweat equity” like Habitat for Humanity house building, Lonnie said. They will work in April and May under the supervision of the contractor.

Lonnie described the programs and people who will be in the building:

The lower floor will house a food bank, soup kitchen, multipurpose room, gymnasium, child-care center and the Richard Allen Youth Academy, which will expand to serve 70 children rather than the 32 they now serve.

Lonnie said the center seeks to add Head Start and ECEAP slots.

The second floor will house the computer center, the homework center for 17 to 20 children a day, after-school tutoring for children from several grade schools, and offices for several nonprofits.

Upstairs will be Institute for Extended Learning (IEL) adult classes, such GED and continuing education, and classrooms for the

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Food banks to absorb clients of county’s largest food bank

St. Vincent de Paul, Spokane County’s largest neighborhood food bank and a 112-year-old agency that served the working poor, closed its doors on Feb. 29.

In its last weeks, volunteers and staff worked with Second Harvest and the Salvation Army to redirect their more than 4,000 clients per month—60,000 individuals a year—to 20 other neighborhood food banks.

St. Vincent de Paul gave out about 1 million pounds—nearly one fourth—of the 4.5 million pounds of food Second Harvest distributes in the county. It handles more than 13 million pounds of food for the whole region.

Second Harvest and The Salvation Army are collaborating to ensure that St. Vincent de Paul clients know, based on their zip codes, where their neighborhood food banks are.

Jason Clark, executive director of Second Harvest, expects it will take a few months to work out referrals, monitor where clients go and reallocate food to keep up appropriate supplies in the right places to serve the people.

Major John Chamness, regional coordinator for Salvation Army Inland Northwest, said: “We are saddened by this unfortunate situation—losing one of our community partners—and we are working with Second Harvest to ensure that the families and individuals who have relied upon St. Vincent de Paul’s services will continue to receive the food they need.”

The Salvation Army fed about 700 families a month at 2020 N. Division, before it moved its food bank in October from there to its Family Resource Center, 204 W. Indiana. Since then, it has served 1,100 people a month. It expects to assist 4,000 clients in March, absorbing many of the St. Vincent clients, said Christy Markham, development director.

“When we moved to our current location, we more than doubled the square footage of our food bank and added bulk storage and a reach-in freezer and refrigerator,” said Kim Petrusek, Salvation Army social services director.

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Group seeks European council with Catholics

Geneva (ENI). The head of the main group of Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant denominations in Europe has proposed a Council of European Churches that includes the Roman Catholic Church. The Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, a French Protestant who is president of the Conference of European Churches, made the proposal in a February meeting of CEC and representatives of Europe's Catholic bishops. There are three regional ecumenical bodies with the Catholic Church as a full member—the Caribbean Conference of Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, and the Pacific Conference of Churches—as well as some national bodies in countries such as Brazil and South Africa.

Church and media need mutual respect

Hanover, Germany (ENI). Church leaders and journalists often have little idea of the pressures each faces, said German Lutheran Bishop Margot Kässmann, who asks the media and the church to show mutual respect. “The fact that a newspaper needs a short sentence, or that radio stations have only a few minutes in which to report, often does not fit in with how we talk in church. A sermon lasts at least 15 minutes, and a theological lecture at least 45,” the bishop said in a February speech to journalists at the Protestant Media Academy in Berlin.

Journalists sometimes mock the church because it takes so long to say things, she noted, while church people may scorn the media for looking for sound bites: “Most of Jesus’ parables probably last no longer than a minute and a half,” said Kässmann, who has led the Church of Hanover since 1999. “Often people in the church are afraid of the media. The media have enormous power. Through their pictures, text and sound they can build someone or something up, and then destroy them just as quickly.”

She considers transparency the best strategy: “If I have nothing to hide, then I can say openly exactly what is going on,” she said, encouraging journalists and church leaders to take the time to talk with each other, so church leaders understand pressures of production and media respect the church and Christian faith.

World Council Central Committee marks 60th

Geneva (WCC) At its February meeting, the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee chose the venue for the 2011 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, achieved progress towards a broader WCC Assembly, welcomed two new member churches, appointed a search committee for a new general secretary and celebrated the Council's 60th anniversary.

A celebration at Geneva's St. Pierre Cathedral marked the WCC 60th anniversary, which is being celebrated this year under the theme, “Making a Difference Together.” Church representatives, ecumenical partners and international guests thanked God for the gift of fellowship that has endured challenges over six decades.

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, said the WCC provides a platform for churches to engage in dialogue, promote Christian unity and respond to needs of society.

The WCC welcomed the Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil and the Lao Evangelical Church.

It set Kingston, Jamaica, as the site for the 2011 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC), ending the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence 2001-2010.

At the 2013 assembly, it will plan for broadened participation of ecumenical partners and non-member churches, without compromising WCC achievements, identity or methodology.

General secretary Samuel Kobia will not seek a second term. The central committee appointed a search committee to fill the position at its next meeting in September 2009. He will remain in office until Dec. 31, 2008. An acting general secretary will begin Jan. 1, 2009 until a new general secretary is elected.

The WCC's governing body also approved public statements, policy concerns and program plans on elections, Kenya, Pakistan, cluster weapons, Gaza, reconciliation, climate change, Kosovo, ecological debt. Details are available online at www.oikoumene.org/en/events-sections/cc2008.html.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Easter Sunrise Service faces hope, doubt

The Easter Sunrise Service sponsored by the Interfaith Council of the Inland Northwest begins at 6:30 a.m., Sunday, March 23, at the Lofty Cross of Inspiration at Greenwood Memorial Terrace, 211 N. Government Way.

The setting overlooks the city of Spokane and the sun rising in the background.

“The Threat of Resurrection” is the theme the Rev. Joyce O'Connor Magee, pastor of Manito United Methodist Church, has chosen for her Easter Sunrise message.

Worship leaders include the Rev. Todd Scranton of St. Paul's United Methodist and Interfaith

Council board members Gloria Lopez and Joseph Urlacher.

The service will include music led by Manito's music director Michael Wagner, accompanist Ellie Tupper and bagpiper John Blunt. It will be ASL interpreted and include a freewill offering.

“The only morning of the year that I am ready to be up before the alarm goes off is Easter morning,” said Joyce. “When I was growing up here in Spokane the first thing we did, even before Easter Baskets, was the sunrise service.

“A special community comes together—hopeful, doubtful, anticipating new life and the pos-

sibility of resurrection,” she said. “I like gathering with those crazy enough to trek up a hill in the cold dark to wait for the breaking in of the sun and the moment the world shifts towards God's future.

“Up there we look beyond the cross to our hometown and pray for the city, its people, our people. In a world longing for change, Easter threatens our ordinary lives. We hope for change yet are terrified by it. We leave the place of resurrection challenged to be changed into what God calls us to be and who our neighbors need us to be,” Joyce said.

For information, call 747-4755.

Lands Council announces events, projects

The Lands Council is holding an open house from 5 to 7 p.m., Friday, March 7, at 25 W. Main to show its new offices, present an exhibit of nature photography by Spokane resident Charley Gurche and talk about its projects.

Other spring events include:

- The 13th Annual Dinner and Auction begins at 5:30 p.m., Friday, April 18, at the Northern Quest Casino.

- On Saturday, April 19, the council is helping with Spokane's Earth Day celebration, from

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Riverfront Park. They need volunteers for various other tasks. Earthworks Recycling is sponsoring the Earth Day Spokane website at www.earthdayspokane.org.

- The council's Spokane River Restoration Day will be from 9 a.m. to noon, Sunday, April 20, meeting at the Sandifur footbridge in Peaceful Valley. Volunteers are needed remove noxious weeds and plant native species along the river in Peaceful Valley.

The Lands Council, which was

started in 1983, works to preserve and revitalize Inland Northwest forests, water and wildlife through advocacy, education, action and community engagement, in collaboration with a range of interested parties.

Its web page at www.land-scouncil.org offers information on current projects to protect forests, water, wildlife and people.

A current focus is preserving roadless wild areas in North Idaho and seeking comments by April 7.

For information, call 838-4912.

International Women's Day is March 8

The Spokane celebration of International Women's Day will be held at 2 p.m., Saturday, March 8, at the Spokane Women's Club, 9th and Walnut.

The day has been celebrated worldwide since 1908, when 15,000 women marched through

New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights. The theme for the 100th anniversary, “Shaping Progress,” will be observed in 139 locations in 23 countries. For 10 years, the Spokane Women's Coalition has gathered women and groups serv-

ing women's needs for the event.

There will be music and speakers on the U.N.'s Third Millennium Goal, “34 Million Friends,” a book signing, door prizes, displays and the Bella Abzug Award.

For information, call 448-2189.

Responsible media group builds awareness

For the second year, the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media and Gonzaga University are partnering with Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington and North Idaho to help girls deal with pressures of adolescence through the “Uniquely ME!” program.

The alliance, which monitors the impact of media on society and works with professionals to influence media to act responsi-

bly, also showed and discussed “The Beauty Backlash,” as part of its Media Literacy Film Series on March 4 at the Magic Lantern.

“Uniquely ME! and the film look at how ads and unrealistic images of beauty in media foster low self-esteem in women, particularly teenage girls.

Through the national “Uniquely ME!” program, five Gonzaga student facilitators meet with area

elementary and middle school students to discuss peer pressure, relationships and eating habits.

For information, call 323-3578 or email nw-arm@gonzaga.edu.

Pax Christi leads Lenten service

Pax Christi Spokane will hold a Lenten Prayer Service, “Lead Us from War to Peace: A Service of Repentance and a Litany of Repentance from the Fruits of War,” at 6 p.m., Wednesday, March 19, at St. Joseph Parish,

1503 W. Dean.

The event during Holy Week will be a collective act of repentance coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the beginning of the war in Iraq.

For information, call 358-4273.

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Speaker calls Arabs, Israelis to reconcile and end hatred

Author Nonie Darwish of Arabs for Israel will speak on “Possibilities for Peace: Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges in the Middle East” at 7:30 p.m., Monday, April 7, in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

Her presentation is co-sponsored by Gonzaga University’s Institute for Action Against Hate and the Spokane Chapter of Hadassah, a Jewish women’s organization that supports the largest medical and research center in the Middle East. She will connect both organizations’ call for people to break down barriers, and build tolerance and understanding.

Nonie will share insights from her book, “Now They Call me Infidel: Why I Renounced Jihad for America, Israel and the War on Terror,” her story and analysis of Middle Eastern culture.

Born in Cairo, she grew up Muslim and moved to Gaza in the early 1950s. Her father commanded Egyptian army intelligence. In 1956 when she was eight, he was assassinated and was considered a martyr for jihad. After studying sociology and anthropology at the American University in Cairo, Nonie worked as a journalist. In 1978, she moved to the United States.

In 2004, Nonie, now a Christian, founded Arabs for Israel—Arabs and Muslims who reject suicide terrorism as a form of jihad. They promote constructive self-criticism and reform in the Arab-Muslim world. They support the state of Israel, the Jewish religion, the Palestinian people, and Arab and Islamic culture.

She calls for peace and reconciliation between Arabs and Israelis, and for an end to preaching and teaching hate to children.

The Institute for Action Against Hate combats hate and hate crimes by focusing multi-disciplinary academic resources on causes and effects of hate, and on strategies for combating hate.

Founded in 1912, Hadassah supports the Hadassah Medical Organization (HMO) in Israel, which treats people regardless of nationality, religion or political standing.

For information, call 323-6132.

Volunteer tax preparers expect more to file to receive tax rebate

Tom Sylvester, a volunteer who helps people prepare their tax returns, reminds people on Social Security, disability or veteran’s income that they must file a 1040 tax form to receive a \$300 rebate from the U.S. government.

He hopes that pastors will spread the word, because generally, these people are not required to file a tax form.

Tom volunteers as tax coordinator at Garland Ave. Alliance

Church, 2111 W. Garland, where volunteers at eight computers help people do their tax returns. He and other volunteers are available there from noon to 3 p.m., Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

He said there are tax preparation sites throughout the area.

United Way in Spokane County offers information on tax sites and the days and times they are open Feb. 1 to April 15 by calling 211 or at unitedwayspokane.org

Fig Tree is updating data for directory

Progress is underway in receiving updates from congregations and community agencies for the 2008-09 Directory of Congregations and Community Resources.

Malcolm Haworth, AmeriCorps community outreach coordinator with The Fig Tree, said March 25 is the deadline for assuring that corrections and updates to listings are included in the print version of the directory, which will be published in early June.

Fig Tree volunteers have sent out mailings to congregations and resources requesting the information.

Last year the process required setting up the database and the copy for printing. This year it’s a matter of updating the information, he said.

“It’s amazing how many changes there are in clergy, nonprofit leaders and administrative staff,” Malcolm said. “We like to include their names, because it facilitates

the goal of this publication: to connect the people of faith and nonprofit communities person-to-person.”

He added that there have been a number of comments from those who use the directory that it is a valuable resource.

For example, Dennis Reed of Habitat for Humanity Spokane said he keeps the directory on his desk and uses it all the time, because it’s faster than using a database.

The Rev. Nick Block of Spokane Friends Church said “I take the directory with me everywhere I go.”

“It’s a good resource of what’s available in the community. Often people call us looking for resources we aren’t able to provide, so the directory comes in handy then to refer them,” commented Dennis McGaughy, director of Lutheran Community Services of the Inland Northwest.

“It’s right next to me in the top

drawer of my desk,” said the Rev. Tom Soeldner, pastor of Salem Lutheran Church. “It’s a truly community-wide resource. I like how resources are broken into categories so I can easily find what’s available for the person I’m trying to help.”

Malcolm appreciates such feedback.

“It lets us know that we are meeting our goal and serving the community, helping people who refer people in need to the most appropriate resources,” he said.

“Now it’s up to those listed to do their part and make sure that their listings are current and accurate,” he said.

Malcolm also noted that the resource is supported by both advertising and donations.

The mailings include an invitation to donate to support making this directory—and the connections and services it facilitates—possible.

For information, call 323-4037.

Divinity school president speaks for a Spiritus Center workshop

The Spiritus Center for Spirituality in Spokane will present a one-day event, “Fighting with the Bible,” from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 5 at the Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave.

Donn Morgan, president and dean of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, Calif., and professor of Old Testament, will be the presenter.

He is the author of a new book, “Fighting with the Bible: Why Scripture Divides Us and How It

Can Bring Us Together.”

Donn’s other books include “The Making of Sages: Biblical Wisdom and Contemporary Culture,” “Wisdom in the Old Testament Traditions” and “Between Text and Community: The Writings in Canonical Context.”

The Rev. Canon Kristi Philip is coordinating the Spiritus Center for Spirituality, which is jointly sponsored by the Diocese of Spokane and St. John’s Cathedral.

For information, call 624-3191.



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Sharing, caring and music mix to create mitzvahs—good deeds

Continued from page 1
father was not hired.
Despite knowing the pitfalls of teaching as the child of a teacher, Shirley decided to study education, completing studies in 1966 at the University of British Columbia. The university accepted credits from courses she took at Eastern Washington University after she married and moved to Spokane with her husband, Larry, in 1965. In 1968, she earned a master's degree in teaching music at Whitworth College.
She taught a year in the Central Valley School District before the first of two children was born. In 1985 when her children were older, she opened Shirley Grossman's Music School for preschoolers in her basement.
Eventually, Robin Amend of Amend's Music at 14th and Adams built a school behind the store. It houses several music studios, as well as Shirley's Kindermusik School.
Last year, Shirley sold the school, which has about 300 students, to Teresa Birch, and continues teaching three classes

of the older children.
Kindermusik is a curriculum taught worldwide.
It introduces children from infancy to seven to movement, singing, dance and instruments of classical European culture, American folk songs and many cultures around the globe.
Mothers attend with the youngest children, learning how to work with their children musically as part of their overall development.
Infants come with their mothers for 45-minute sessions. Toddlers from 18-months to three years old also come for 45 minutes, with their caregivers. Three- and four-year-olds come for an hour without their parents.
Five and six-year-olds come for an hour and a quarter, learning notes and how to read music and match it with pitch, Shirley said.
The "graduate" students also

come an hour and a quarter, learning music from around the world through storytelling, movement and dance. They learn African dances and Austrian polkas, hear Japanese stories and play different instruments.
"The program opens the world to children. We actually follow a map and talk of taking a trip to different countries," said Shirley.
While a number of the students have gone on to professions in music, the goal is simply to encourage a passion for and understanding of music.
The orchestra teacher at Ferris High School told her he could tell which students went to her school by their passion for music.
"What children learn early has an impact on them forever," said Shirley, who studied piano and sang from childhood.
"Many Jewish parents want their children to learn music and

culture," she said. "My family did not have much money, but my two siblings and I took piano lessons, and I loved to sing."
"Songs are part of me and part of my love for being Jewish," she said.
Soon after Shirley came to Spokane, her brother-in-law, Nate, who was the temple's choir director, invited her to join the choir.
Shirley considers the Kosher Dinner an opportunity to "invite our neighbors into our home" and welcome them with food, entertainment and hospitality.
"We need to connect with our community," she said, noting that the dinner is about forging relationships and understanding.
By connecting with people as people, Shirley said the Jewish community hopes to counteract any latent anti-Semitism or stereotypes of Jews.
"Each one of us represents our people," said Shirley.
"Because of my parents' suffering, I'm committed to being an ambassador of the Jewish people," she said. "I sing our Jewish melodies to build a bridge

of understanding."
Another part of her hoping for and working towards that vision, "one toe at a time," has been her recent involvement with Temple Beth Shalom's new Mitzva Corps, a group reaching out to members when they or a family member are ill, hospitalized or experiencing a death, by offering a phone call, a card, a visit or a meal.
A mitzvah is a good deed or charitable act, she said.
"It's where my heart is," she said of her desire to visit and help people who have needs, especially older people who are housebound or sick.
When she was a girl, she remembers that her parents took her with them when they visited hospitals and sick people at home. Similarly, she took her children with her to visit people.
Shirley said that Jews are expected to do these mitzvahs.
One song she sings at the Kosher Dinner expresses that commitment: "Wait and see...what a world it could be...if we share, if we care, you and me."
For information, call 747-3304.

**The 67th annual
Kosher Dinner
will be served from
11 a.m. to 6 p.m.,
Sunday, March 9,
at Temple Beth
Shalom, 1322 E.**

Dalai Lama begins global compassion movement for youth

Seeds of Compassion, a Seattle project on social and emotional development of children, will host a five-day visit by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama April 11 to 15 in Seattle to launch the "Global Compassion Movement."
He and other global dignitaries, scientists, researchers, public policy leaders and childhood development experts will facilitate events on the vision, science and programs of early social, emotional and cognitive learning.
Raj Manhas, director of Seeds of Compassion, said the Dalai Lama will discuss building qualities of thoughtfulness, understanding and collaborative problem-solving in early childhood as "a foundation that will lead to a healthier, more supportive and compassionate society."
The event will explore relationships, programs and tools to teach children, families and communities to be compassionate members of society.
A public event with the Dalai Lama is planned Saturday, April 12, at Qwest Field.
For information, visit www.seedsofcompassion.org.

Gives to Crosswalk teens

Pedals 2 People recycles bicycles

"Pedals 2 People," a local non-profit, recently collected and repaired 10 old bicycles and donated them to Volunteers of America's Crosswalk program for homeless teens in downtown Spokane.
"We believe bicycles can be agents of change that empower people to build healthier bodies, lives and communities," said Liza Mattana, board president.
The group repairs and refurbishes bikes, offering free bike tune-ups at community centers, and collecting donated bikes, fixing them and giving them to people who cannot afford a bike.
"Having a bike means more than a way to exercise and be out in the fresh air," said Laurel Kelly, director of youth programs at Volunteers of America, 525 W. Second. "For teens, a bike is a reliable form of transportation. It can mean making it to a job interview."

Crosswalk is an emergency shelter, a school drop-out prevention program and programs that break the cycle of youth homelessness, helping young people avoid or leave the streets by re-uniting families, providing survival necessities, finding safe homes, teaching self-sufficiency

and offering hope and support. Each year it serves more than 1,000 youth aged 13 to 21.
Liza said Pedals 2 People will give Crosswalk more bikes when more are donated.
"We believe the bicycle is an approachable, healthy and sustainable option for transportation. It can provide an enjoyable activity that can strengthen bonds between people," she said.
Pedals 2 People connects with other organizations to "recycle" bicycles locally and for communities abroad.
For information, call 981-3348 or email pedals2people@gmail.com. For information on Crosswalk, visit www.voaspokane.org

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presents

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Emmanuel Family Life Center helps community address challenges

Continued from page 1
Community Colleges of Spokane Running Start and adult-education programs, Lonnie said.

“We want to bring courses to the community to accommodate our philosophy of moving people from dependency to self-sufficiency,” he explained. “The center will be a one-stop shop for services to help children, youth, families and individuals improve the quality of their lives.”

The plan also includes offering health screening—mammograms, flu shots, dental services and preventive care—in an exam room where the Regional Health District can set up portable services.

Lonnie said they are still soliciting services to locate there.

The rental fee will be low cost to provide for utilities and upkeep.

The 400-member church will gain space for a fellowship hall on the lower floor when the preschool moves into the new facility.

Over the years since Lonnie came as pastor in 1991 when there were 13 members, the church has had to tear down walls and transform side rooms to accommodate the 250 to 300 worshippers who come each Sunday to its 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. services.

The numbers are less important



The Rev. Lonnie Mitchell inside the new, emerging center.

to Lonnie than the diversity of the congregation, founded in 1890.

“I look out on the congregation Sundays, and it’s almost like heaven with people from all walks of life coming to experience the love of Jesus,” he said. “It’s not just the faces, but an atmosphere of inclusiveness. People are not worried about what color they are. They come to experience the love of Jesus.”

“When we preach Jesus, it hap-

pens automatically. The majority come from the neighborhood, but many come from the South Hill, North Spokane and the Valley,” he said. “We fellowship during worship, loosening up to worship the Lord together.”

Lonnie said the congregation has long embraced the community-minded philosophy that has led to the new center’s being part of Bethel’s “campus.”

In 1972, the church built the

New Bryant Arms, now Richard Allen Apartments with 56 HUD subsidized apartments and two apartments for elderly people.

In 1996, the church established Richard Allen Enterprises to provide support services to help people move towards self-sufficiency through education and economic empowerment.

The idea grew as an example of the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) concept of

“building community.”

The Bethel “campus” includes three independent nonprofit organizations: 1) Richard Allen Enterprises, which manages construction and will manage the Emmanuel Center operations; 2) the Southeast Neighborhood Network Center with the computer lab, education programs and a summer youth camp, and 3) Spokane’s Emmanuel Family Life Center which includes the Richard Allen Youth Academy, Senior Services and Care, and Health Screening.

The programs are geared to help the community resolve specific challenges, fostering involvement of diverse communities.

East Central Spokane is one of the low-income areas of the region, designated for revitalization by HUD.

The description of the project includes the following information about the neighborhood: The estimated per capita income of the nearly 11,200 residents in the neighborhood is about \$8,800. About 32 percent of the neighborhood identify as a minority: African American, 17 percent; Asian or Pacific Islander, 7 percent; American Indian or Alaskan Native, 4 percent, and Hispanic or Latino, 4 percent.

For information, call 534-3007 or email revlonnie@yahoo.com.

Five families move into affordable homes after wintertime construction

Despite winter working conditions and delays, five families celebrated the completion of their new homes with an open house at Community Frameworks’ Takoda Park development on Feb. 23.

The families have been working together since early November 2007 to help build their own and their neighbors’ homes.

These are the first of 36 affordable homes planned in the Cheney-Medical Lake area.

The five families are participating in Community Frameworks’ HomeStarts, a first-time home-

buyer program.

HomeStarts coordinates a sweat equity program to help families build and buy their own homes.

Participating households have incomes of 40 percent to 80 percent of Area Median Income and their sweat equity qualifies them for down-payment assistance.

HomeStarts prepares the building sites, provides training, supervises home construction and qualifies applicants for low-interest loans and deferred mortgages.

The Washington State Housing Trust Fund, HUD’s Self-help

Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) and USDA’s Rural Development 502 loan program fund the project.

Community Frameworks, a Spokane-based nonprofit organization, has been working for

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Social enterprise helps women overcome barriers to employment

By Deidre Jacobson

Dominican Sister Sheila Fitzgerald is helping organize another transition.

Previously, she helped the Tulsa, Okla., diocese desegregate schools, guided transition of her religious community's schools to parish leadership and helped her community move from traditional religious life.

Now she is helping Transitional Programs for Women (Transitions)—a nonprofit in Spokane that sponsors programs to foster personal growth and wholeness for women and children in need—develop a social enterprise for women they serve.

Leaders consider this program a “new leaf,” for Transitions, which formed in 1995 bringing together Miryam’s House, the Women’s Hearth and the Transitional Living Center (TLC) and TLC EduCare under a board with representatives of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Sisters of Providence and Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters. It will address employment needs of women in those programs.

A bakery-café with a job-training kitchen is the centerpiece of the program that will prepare participants for work in the food service industry.

“We are now seeking start-up

money,” said Sheila. “Eventually, the social enterprise income will be reinvested in training and the operations will be self-sustaining.”

The program will include six months of training, 12 weeks of food preparation and 12 weeks of on-site work experience, including management services and customer-relations.

The curriculum fosters life skills to help women overcome their barriers to employment. In addition to assisting students with employment and life skills, a job coordinator will help graduates find employment.

The goal is to move the graduates into community employment, but there may be jobs in the program itself for some.

The long-term plan includes sustainable practices, such as purchasing foods locally and employing homeless people to grow food in gardens at Transition’s TLC property.

Sheila expects the pilot group to include eight women who will develop products and connect with businesses that agree to contract for services, such as ordering meals and products.

In addition to offering retail outlets, this bakery-café will provide work-site deliveries and catering.

Sheila grew up in a family of



Sister Sheila Fitzgerald
Photo by Deidre Jacobson

nine on a farm in a small town in Nebraska, the homestead of her great grandparents from Ireland. Her father died when she was young. The community helped support the family through the transition. The children worked to keep the farm going, and they worked for room and board to attend a private school in Omaha.

Witnessing the lives of the Dominican sisters who taught in her schools inspired her to enter a life of service.

After earning a bachelor’s in education and a master’s in curriculum, she began teaching kindergarten through eighth grade and then developed curricula for the school system.

As superintendent for 15 elementary schools and three high schools in Tulsa, Okla., she observed inequities of the segregated

school system and worked with the diocese to implement desegregation.

To prepare for it, she helped organize summer social awareness programs as an opportunity for black and white children to interact.

Then Sheila traveled around the United States as a consultant helping schools staffed by her Dominican community move from Dominican leadership to parish leadership.

“Some inner-city schools were pitiful in resources but rich in commitment to maintain quality education,” she said.

In 1982, Sheila was elected as one of four councillors to the prioress, the leader of the national Sinsinawa Dominican Community during a time of transition from the traditional ministries based in schools to responding to broader community needs.

In 1990, Sheila came to Spokane for a sabbatical at Gonzaga University. She stayed on to co-direct and then direct the CREDO program that provided renewal for people in ministry and missionary work around the world.

After four years, she returned to the Midwest to work in parish ministry in Iowa and Nebraska, including her home parish. She was able to help her family care for her mother, who lived to be 99 and was still on the family farm.

After Sheila returned to Spokane in 2002 as prioress of the Dominican Center, she became acquainted with the work of Transitions and volunteered at the Women’s Hearth, a day center providing a variety of services for women.

In 2005, Transitions asked her to lead a feasibility study on the viability of a social enterprise program.

She organized a steering committee of clients, staff and administration in Transitions. They brainstormed ideas and consulted with Gonzaga’s Venture Lab program with business students.

They decided to recommend an employment and job-training program, including culinary instruction with an emphasis on baking and food service education. The business plan also includes an outlet for the creative works of the women in Transitions programs.

An opportunity opened for partnership with Catholic Charities in their offer to use a commercial kitchen in one of their locations and a space for the bakery at the building they are remodeling on Fifth and Division that will also house Catholic Charities’ administrative offices. The partnership helped with the initial capital costs.

“When the building is complete, we will open our bakery-café”, she said. “Training will begin in the commercial kitchen as early as May. The long-term goal is to move 25 to 30 women through the program each year.”

“Crafts, art, cards, handwork and books created by the women from Transitions programs will be displayed at its outlet, so that participation can include women who are not able to enter the training,” said Sheila.

The bakery-café will offer a venue for educating the community on issues homeless and unemployed women face.

For information, call 455-4249.

Food banks need more helpers

Continued from page 1

Rhonda Allen, program manager at the Family Resource Center since November, said she expects many St. Vincent clients to come there, because it is a multi-service center, not just a food bank, as St. Vincent had been.

The Salvation Army provides clothing, furniture and household items at their thrift store at 2020 N. Division. They also offer life skills classes, such as helping people stretch their food dollars.

“Our food bank is a choice food bank. That means clients ‘shop’ to select what they want and will eat,” she said, noting that they can choose based on foods their children like to eat and on their dietary restrictions.

Many live on limited incomes with Social Security or disability and need skills to stretch those funds, said Rhonda. The Salvation Army also has a shelter, transitional housing, counseling and assistance with finding employment.

While St. Vincent de Paul was a walk-in food bank, The Salvation Army’s food bank is by appointment from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.,

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Wednesdays from 1 to 6:30 p.m. are walk-ins only.

“We also give the senior and WIC (Women’s, Infants’ and Children’s) government commodity boxes on a walk-in basis throughout the month,” Rhonda said.

Christy added that The Salvation Army will need more volunteers and more funds for more staff to meet the needs of the additional clients.

“It has been a long road of hard decisions,” said St. Vincent de Paul board president Michael Cain, citing declining membership in the local Society of St. Vincent de Paul and competition with other charities for resources.

Lucinda Kay, who has been in charge of public relations during the closure, said the lack of funds began when discount stores were able to offer prices competitive with the thrift stores for new items, plus the emergence of on-line marketing.

That led the Spokane outlet to close its two thrift stores, which had supplied a major portion of the \$360,000 they needed to serve the working poor, seniors on fixed incomes and families in crisis, she explained. St. Vincent de Paul funded its operations primarily through its thrift stores.

When they sold the stores, Lucinda said, there was funding for one year, and it was hard to raise the amount needed to replace the income with donations.

Clergy and leaders in nonprofit agencies who refer people to food banks need to know to refer them to a neighborhood food bank rather than St. Vincent de Paul.

St. Vincent de Paul food banks outside Spokane—in Colville, Coeur d’Alene, Dayton, Kellogg, Pasco, Post Falls, Pullman and Walla Walla—and St. Vincent food bank outlets in parishes will continue to operate.

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Four ministries give glimpses of West Central Spokane opportunities

Church aims to provide tipping point of positive energy

By creating opportunities for neighbors to meet and care about each other, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church at 1832 W. Dean hopes to provide a tipping point of positive energy so people go for walks, invest in their homes and keep up their yards.

By creating space where neighbors can gather for dinners, concerts, movies, parties, political debates, game nights and other events, so they become friends, the Rev. Paul Lebens-Englund, pastor, hopes the congregation can exemplify God's presence in the community.

He draws on Christian base communities he experienced the summer of 1996 in Managua, Nicaragua, which support members' survival and deal with systemic issues. He is implementing what fits from that model to bring Holy Trinity back to its roots as a neighborhood church.

"Our goal is to be leaven in the loaf rather than attract people with programs," he said. "West Central Spokane is in transition, emerging from a difficult history and a reputation as Felony Flats."

Paul finds the neighborhood more positive than its reputation for drugs, gangs and violence.

"A church is to be bread for the world, to feed people and send them outward to feed others," Paul said. "Often pastors preach only 'Jesus loves you,' not 'Jesus loves you, so you'd best get on with loving others.' I have one sermon, and that's it."

Studying political economy and theology at the Evergreen State College, he became fascinated with liberation theology and its practical notion of kingdom living. That and his time in Nicaragua were his gateway back into the church.

Knowing of U.S. complicity in the war in Nicaragua, he expected hesitation when he met Mothers of Martyrs of the War in a Nicaraguan village. Instead, they welcomed him with affection.

"I experienced God's mercy at a gut level," Paul said. "It was a spiritual experience, realizing intangibles matter. Their guiding story was forgiving over and over, even forgiving enemies. It was not just in their heads, but in their spirits."

He decided two weeks later to become a priest and dedicate



The Rev. Paul Lebens-Englund

his life to the same practice of mercy. His hesitation about serving the church was because he felt "churches often take their eyes off the 'big stuff' and fight about the 'little stuff,'" he said. "I learned to separate God and church, recognizing we need mercy and in the midst of petty disagreements, we at least agree to stay together."

"Our witness to the world does not require agreeing on the little stuff if we agree on the big stuff that moves us toward God's kingdom. If we can't practice mercy when we disagree about the fabric for vestments, it's hard to agree on feeding the hungry," he said.

Paul's peers often ask why he is in the church, which many consider hypocritical. Some accept the gospel but think the church is not the place to promote it.

After graduating from Evergreen in 1997, Paul spent two years in social work with a Catholic Worker program in Olympia, and then helped homeless and hungry people through South Sound Mental Health. His grandfather's illness drew him back to Yakima, where he worked with the local mental health provider until leaving for seminary in August 2001.

Upon completing studies at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific at Berkeley, Calif., he came as curate in 2004 at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John in Spokane, shadowing the dean for more than three years.

Paul knew of the struggle of Holy Trinity and expressed inter-

est to Bishop Jim Waggoner.

In the early 1990s, Holy Trinity was among the U.S. Anglican congregations that became caught up in the church's disagreement about sexual ethics and women's place in the church, Paul said.

A group voted to leave and formed St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church. The Episcopal Diocese retained the property and ministry there through 75 members who stayed.

Over the next 10 years, membership declined further. Paul started at Holy Trinity a year ago in February, after the diocese decided to change its status from parish to mission. The diocese has oversight on decisions about staff, finances and property.

The Diocesan Council called Paul to restore Holy Trinity's role in the neighborhood and with ministries, such as Our Place, which it had helped start.

Paul began with three long-time members and an average of 10 to 12 attending two services

on Sundays. Now an average of 55 people attend two services on Sundays, with some coming from the neighborhood and others from other Episcopal Churches. The young adult ministry at the cathedral leads a multi-sensory, participatory 7 p.m. Sunday worship at Holy Trinity. The 10 a.m. service is traditional.

"We are focusing on leadership development and sustainable structures," Paul said.

As a mission church, it has a "clean slate." So it offers events it has not offered before, such as a Mardi Gras dance party.

Holy Trinity moved from survival mode to exploring how to be a neighborhood church again in its 113-year-old church with a 104-year-old parish hall, built when it was started as a mission of All Saints Cathedral in a working-class neighborhood.

Outreach to neighbors begins with making restrooms accessible, bringing the kitchen up to health codes, building a wheelchair ramp, maybe adding coffee shop and painting buildings so they are inviting places to come.

"Immediate blocks were once known as a hotspot for trouble, drug deals, gang violence and absent landlords," Paul said. "Recently nearby buildings were purged of drug-dealing renters."

After the split in 1995, the church had torn down two of three run-down houses west of the church and sold the third to be moved. Now the property is church parking and a 2,000-square-foot lot to be used as a community garden with raised beds, green space and a labyrinth for meditation.

They hope to start a farmers' market and have more neighbors offer property for gardens so more

people can grow food and learn sustainable organic farming practices. Across the street, they hope to develop affordable housing.

The church's outreach included door knocking to invite people to an Advent movie series of classic children's cartoons, shown on a 14-foot screen in the sanctuary.

The church seeks to connect with people based on their life patterns, interests and concerns, aware there are single mothers with children, grandparents rearing grandchildren, individuals with disabilities, Eastern Europeans and Native Americans.

"We start with having fun and being good neighbors," he said.

Holy Trinity is also one of eight sites in national church targeted for leadership development with young adults from around the country. Four will live in the rectory and connect with neighbors on grassroots needs.

"The church exists for the world, not to preserve a building or institution," Paul said. "Good ministries are happening in small places. The first step to growth is a compelling witness to the gospel of compassion and care for the world."

The church is strengthening connections with Our Place, Anna Ogden Hall, Project HOPE, God's Gym and the COPS Shop. With the Kendall Yards development, we urge investing in the neighborhood and setting caps on property taxes so people on fixed incomes are not priced out," he said.

Paul goes to monthly meetings of the Neighborhood Council and West Central Ministries to learn what others are doing, cheer each other on, discern gaps and partner to fill them.

For information, call 326-6471 or email paul@trinityspokane.

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Youth for Christ opens doors as a home away from home, a place to go

By Virginia de Leon

In a large, dimly-lit room equipped with pool tables, a concert stage and a wall of televisions connected to Xbox 360s, youth from the West Central neighborhood take refuge.

They show up after school, right when the doors open to the City Life Youth Center.

For some, this “clubhouse” operated by Youth for Christ Spokane is a home away from home. For others, it’s the only place to go.

“I like the attitude here. It’s a lot of fun,” said Dan Tremblay, a 16-year-old who has been coming to the center for two years. “Knowing there’s always someone to talk to here and that someone cares about me has made me a much happier person.”

Since the center first opened in 2005, hundreds of young people have flocked to the brick building on the corner of Ash Street and Sharp Avenue.

What was once an old, abandoned warehouse has been renovated into a hip, new hangout—a place where youth can play games, receive tutoring help, eat a meal and talk to young adults who know their names and have taken the time to learn their stories.

Many teens who visit the drop-in center come from poor homes. Their parents don’t have time to help them with homework or attend to their other needs. Some are from broken homes plagued with drug and alcohol abuse. Others just need a safe place to spend time with other youth.

“These young people are bursting with potential, dying to have someone love them and invest in them,” said Josh Roe, executive director of Youth for Christ Spokane. “They are victims of circumstance. They come from backgrounds of poverty and hopelessness.

“Our goal is to provide for them an environment where they can build relationships with caring adults and be involved in healthy activities,” he said.

Four times a week, youth from the neighborhood walk to the center and take part in activities—games, tutoring, leadership meetings and even sewing.

Last year, Youth for Christ touched the lives of about 400 teens and served nearly 850 family-style dinners to teens, who often don’t have the chance to eat healthy food at home, said Josh.

An international nonprofit group committed to youth evangelism and biblical Christianity, Youth for Christ was first established in Spokane in the 1970s. In 1998, after experiencing some



Josh Roe, center, with Dan Tremblay and Josh Hoover
Photo by Virginia de Leon

problems in leadership, the program ceased to exist.

It came to life again about six years ago when Josh, who earned a degree in recreational management, returned to his native Spokane to minister to youth.

After a nine-month internship with Youth for Christ’s regional office in Tacoma, Josh and Whitworth College graduate Mary Scheuerman set out in 2002 to lay the groundwork in Spokane.

For many months, their “office” was the trunk of Josh’s car. Using an old list of names from when YFC was still active in Spokane, the duo drove around the city, knocking on doors, and meeting with pastors and others who shared their vision of helping young people and re-establishing Youth for Christ.

Josh and Mary also did a feasibility study, meeting with people from Whitworth, Young Life and other organizations. They discovered that there was a need for “intentional youth ministry” in West Central and other neighborhoods plagued with poverty.

So the two developed a ministry model with three components: a strategically located neighborhood youth center, ministry houses where college-age adults could live together and serve YFC, and programs to serve at-risk youth.

In 2003, work with youth began. Off Broadway Bible Study, a ministry in West Central, asked YFC to become involved with youth in the neighborhood.

So Josh, Mary and a few others met with eight teens in a West Central home. By Christmas, the group had outgrown the space.

Josh asked the Rev. Tom Soeldner at Salem Lutheran Church for permission to use the church’s gym. YFC also established its office in the basement of nearby First Free Methodist Church.

Meanwhile, the number of youth attending YFC gatherings at Salem continued to grow, which

prompted Josh to look for a permanent home.

When he saw the 7,000-square-foot warehouse at 1309 N. Ash St., he called its owner, Bill Bates, who owns Bates Pharmacy.

Over coffee, Josh told Bill of his desire to help at-risk youth and his vision to start a center. He told him there were at least 800 youth between the ages of 11 and 19 who came from broken homes and were living in poverty in West Central Spokane.

Josh also provided national statistics, including the fact that misdemeanor crimes, along with drug and alcohol use among teens, occur at alarming rates between 2:30 and 8 p.m. weekdays.

“Those are the hours when kids aren’t at school and have nothing to do,” Josh said. “Our vision is to give them a safe, culturally relevant place where they can hang out and ultimately move toward spiritual wholeness in Christ.”

Bill agreed to donate the warehouse to Youth for Christ.

After a capital campaign that raised nearly \$200,000 and months of renovation, the City Life Youth Center became a reality.

Now, YFC Spokane has four full-time staff members and many community volunteers. It also has help from 14 young men and women who live at YFC’s two ministry houses. The volunteers pay only \$150 a month for rent and provide about five to 10 hours a week of service to YFC.

While the ministry welcomes young people from many backgrounds, those now there are affiliated with Whitworth University or Moody Bible Institute in Spokane.

The organization also partners with 15 area churches and 24 community organizations that include schools, the Spokane Regional Health District and several higher education institutions.

Several youth who come regularly attribute Youth for Christ’s

success to adults on staff.

“We have mentors who teach us how to lead and how to be a follower of God,” said 16-year-old Josh Hoover, a sophomore at North Central High School.

He and Dan, who live in the neighborhood, credit Josh, who welcomed them to the center.

Josh Roe grew up in Spokane, attended First Presbyterian Church and graduated from Lewis and Clark High School in 1994. His past helps him relate to the young people who become part of Youth for Christ, he said.

When he was an eighth-grader, he “steered away from the Lord,” he said, and became involved with drugs and alcohol.

On the outside, everything looked fine. He was an honors student with a good job and a network of friends.

Inside, however, he felt empty. “Something was missing,” he recalled. “I was in the desert. I wasn’t right with the Lord.”

About 10 years later, as a college student at Western Washington University, he re-discovered his faith. During a heated debate over religion in a Bellingham bar—instigated by a drunk man reading out loud from a Bible he pulled out of his back pocket—

Josh heard his good friend, Andy, proclaim: “I know my Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.”

“My world changed,” said Josh, recalling his sudden transformation. “The Lord started leading me on a path.”


He started going to a non-denominational Christian church, joined a group for young people and met his future wife, Lindsey.

Since his return to Spokane, Josh and Lindsey have become members of New Community Church, a non-denominational Christian congregation that worships Sundays at the Rendezvous Event Facility in Spokane.

They bought a house and rental property in the West Central neighborhood, living in the neighborhood to show their commitment and conveyed their solidarity with the people they serve. Other YFC staff and volunteers have followed their example.

“That’s what Christ did. He came down to earth and moved in with the people who were down and out,” Josh explained. “That’s how he developed his life ministry. Moving into the neighborhood has had a powerful impact.”

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Whitworth graduate encounters hope amid violence locally, globally

Translating stories of El Salvadoran women's experiences of violence from Spanish to English for a January Women Walking Together team from the Northwest meant Julie Lauterbach retold the stories she heard in first person.

"It made the experience more personal and emotional than I was prepared for to say, 'I experienced this violence'," said Julie, a 2007 Whitworth graduate living for a year in intentional community with two other Whitworth graduates at Westminster House in West Central Spokane.

Having majored in Spanish and in English writing, she now seeks outlets to write the stories she translated to give voice to the women.

She also finds insights from Central America helpful in understanding some dynamics in West Central Spokane.

At Westminster House, which marked its 15th year of Whitworth graduates and other community members serving a year in West Central Spokane, she has lived since late June with two others, who share and reflect about the children and the neighborhood.

Each also works part time or goes to school. Julie has an editing business and writes freelance.

"I am here intentionally to work closely with children in a poor community where there is much domestic violence, drug abuse and physical or sexual abuse," she said.

"Here and in Guatemala and El Salvador, I have felt able to commune with God, to trust that no matter how in-depth God wants me to go into a community or a person's life, God will go with me," she said.

After hearing so many difficult stories, it was at first hard for her to pray or to see God's work in a person or society that did such horrible things.

"The women, however, could see God's work in the tiniest things," she said.

Julie realizes from both settings how important it is to resist pessimism and frustration, and to do what she can do.

It was hard for El Salvadoran women who came to the retreat to share about their experiences of violence, because "violence has become the cultural norm," said Julie, who sees violence as a cultural norm in the United States, too.



Julie Lauterbach

Whether violence against women is in El Salvador or in Spokane, Julie said, it is hidden.

"Women don't want to talk about it. It is shameful and taboo to talk about abuse, so women feel they are the only ones experiencing it," she said. "They think they were or are abused because of their inadequacy. Many think it's just their cross to bear, their lot in life."

It was so hard to share that some El Salvadoran women waited until the last day or two to open up. One morning she awoke at 5 a.m. when the roosters crowed. She could hear women gathered in the next room saying how they needed to stay strong so they could advocate for each other and for others.

"They were willing to share out of their desire to protect their daughters from experiencing violence," she said.

"They are concerned that even though peace treaties have been in effect for 16 years, the agreements are fragile. Some believe resistance armies are rebuilding and may start another civil war, said Julie, who studied spring semester 2006 through Whitworth's International Student Exchange Program at the Catholic University in Valparaiso, Chile, and lived with a family who spoke no English.

in Central America.

Women leaders at CEDEPCA teach that "the violence against women is violence against the image of God," Julie said.

They affirm that message to counter the accepted attitude that women are made less in the image of God and are more like objects made in man's image, as if that makes it okay to abuse women, she added, noting that there's a lack of recognition of the Divine in all of creation.

"While many expressed anger, adamant that they would not want the violence they experienced repeated in their own homes and families, they also expressed strong Christian hope in side conversations," Julie said. "They both shook me up and encouraged me with their stories."

What she found positive was that women of faith found support in their beliefs and in the context of the workshops in which they realized they were not alone in their grieving about the violence they experienced and in which they learned it was okay to grieve.

"I was both thankful and heart-fallen that there were so many young women at the conference," said Julie, who is applying for graduate studies in fine arts in writing creative nonfiction—travel, memoirs and personal narratives—with the goal of teaching at a university in Central or South America or the United States.

At home in Arnold, Calif, she had little exposure to people of different cultures. She said she grew up in a loving, Christian home and knew little of other cultures, churches or violence.

Julie describes herself as having a "protected childhood growing up in this isolated community"

of 3,000 in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California without a TV. She read books, listened to the radio, watched movies, played outside and was exposed to TV content through classmates.

Westminster House, where about 10 children come after school each day as a safe place to "hang out" and receive help with homework, has no TV, but the children gravitate to video games.

She also meets neighborhood children who come to the Logos youth program Wednesday evenings at Westminster Presbyterian Church around the corner.

Beyond violence in U.S. homes, she observes violence against women through images and expectations in TV, magazines and other media.

"I was mesmerized by TV when I first saw it," she said, noting that she is perhaps more sensitive to what she sees having not grown up watching it.

She observes the depiction of unhealthy images of women's bodies, of women often scantily clad in seductive postures and speaking in sexy tones.

An ad campaign she heard about in Guatemala makes her realize how devalued women are and that advertisers push too far with what they depict, such as a shoe company using corpses of naked women to sell "shoes to die for." The ad was pulled after people complained.

A desire to protect others from experiencing violence motivates some women to speak out against cultural norms that excuse violence, Julie said.

For information, call 990-2606 or email julie.lauterbach@gmail.com.

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Inner City Outings introduce wilderness through adventures outdoors

By Julie Lauterbach
As they descend from two 18-passenger vans, eight wide-eyed children from Spokane's West Central neighborhood scan the snow atop Mount Spokane, looking for the dreaded, endangered Mount Spokane Snow Spider.

The adults accompanying the children for the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings snowshoe outing smile and shake their heads.

They know the story is one of Chris Bachman's tactics to hold the children's attention by engaging them with a pre-trip environmental lesson about the site's background, wildlife and ecosystems.

Inner City Outings seeks to develop an appreciation for the outdoors in children who have few opportunities to be in the mountains, forests or on rivers.

Chris, one of the leaders and co-founders of the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings program (ICO), knows what it takes to engage youth in the outdoors.

In a world where children are over-stimulated with activities and technology, he and his partner at ICO, Curt Chambers, see a desperate need to provide eight- to 12-year-old children, especially those from an urban, poverty-stricken environment, with a healthy, active alternative.

Chris, now ICO's project director, was born in Blytheville, Ark. His father was in the Air Force, so his family moved several times.

The constant moves ensured his exposure to diverse ecosystems. While studying biological science at Southern Illinois University, he began to hike and backpack.

Chris' inspiration to start Inner City Outings came from becoming a father and seeing his children enjoy the outdoors.

Curt grew up in Eagle River, Alaska, where a major wilderness area was his backyard.

"It instilled in me a love for the outdoors," said Curt, who moved from Alaska to Colorado for his undergraduate work. He later earned a master's in social work at Eastern Washington University.

"I've worked as a social worker for 25 years, and I've seen the healing power of wilderness when you unplug kids from their regular environment," he said.

The program grew out of a conversation in 2004, when Curt was on local Sierra Club board. That summer, he traveled to gather information from other ICO programs.

He met Chris at a Sierra Club gathering in November, and the idea took flight.

They began paperwork in 2005, and by the summer of 2006, as part of the Upper Columbia River Group of the Sierra Club, Spokane's ICO had its first outing.

"We took 12 children with us and hiked from Bowl and Pitcher



Inner City Outing snowshoeing at Mount Spokane.

Photo by Julie Lauterbach

to Devil's Toenail in Riverside State Park," Chris said. "Not one of the children had been there before, even though it's in the West Central neighborhood backyard."

That first outing reinforced the group's mission to provide the youth of the West Central neighborhood of Spokane with opportunities to experience, learn about, and enjoy the outdoors.

The Spokane ICO, which has completed 20 outings, relies on donations, grants, community support and volunteer leaders. It requires time and energy to organize outings and recruit participants.

For its size and number of volunteers, the program has set standards for other starting groups.

"We're doing well, but that's not enough," Chris said.

As the program has grown over two years, outings are having positive, noticeable impact in the West Central community, they said.

For example, Chris and Curt give participants responsibility, treating them like persons rather than children.

"We say 'no' as little as possible. Too many hear 'no' at home, before they even have a chance," said Chris. "We try to facilitate a way in which they can get what they want, where they can 'earn' it. In other words, we say 'yes' as much as possible."

One participant from last year, for example, had to be taken aside

in her first outing and have the rules and expectations explained to her again. For the remainder of that trip, an adult volunteer stayed with her, walking her through the steps and listening to bits and pieces of her story.

By the fourth trip, Chris said, "she blossomed."

"We need to treat the children with respect and let them have fun," Curt added. "There are expectations, but by allowing them to have fun, we can reinforce positive behavior."

The concept of letting children to have fun and enjoy their childhood is one of the driving missions of the ICO program.

Both Chris and Curt lament over the current situation for many of today's youth, who grow up in an urban setting, whose parents both work full-time and who "have little opportunity to step outside and take in the wonders and beauty of the natural world," said Chris.

Curt feels children grow up too fast, over-stimulated with too many activities—music lessons, sports, art lessons, plays, TV and other activities—instead of having positive time with parents.

With urban development, there is less free, wild space. People have to drive to "the outdoors," Curt said, noting that this dynamic puts pressure on families and reduces family time.

He added that some children and youth are becoming "parentified," taking the role of parent in

caring for younger siblings.

These issues are behind Chris' and Curt's commitment to Inner City Outings and their desire to influence the lives of youth.

"Throughout history, strong environmental advocates, have had some sort of pivotal experience in their youth," Chris explained. "So we take children outside to provide a positive experience and build future advocates for the environment."

The adventures can be scary for some participants, especially those for whom the outings are the first time they have experienced some activities. Both Chris and Curt, however, always know the areas where they take the groups and scout them in advance.

Curt said they want to take the children "out of their comfort zone" and "break down some of the myths and untruths about nature," but do it in a way that the children feel safe, even in a place new to them.

"That's part of the magic that allows them to focus and suspend their disbelief in some stories," he said, such as "the story of the Mount Spokane Snow Spider."

Chris first used this story at the beginning of February's snowshoe trip. Because the children were focused on looking for the snow spider, they saw other things, like a pileated woodpecker tapping into a snow-covered pine tree.

The discovery and enjoyment of new and different environments keeps the participants coming back for other outings, such as canoeing the Little Spokane River or participating in an outdoor adventure ropes course.

Eventually, Chris and Curt would like to have more outings each year and reach out to other

neighborhoods and agencies.

To do that they need more volunteers like Jace Bylenga, an AmeriCorp Vista volunteer and Gonzaga University's environmental outreach coordinator, who is providing new leadership.

"I connect environmental issues with poverty issues," Jace said.

He believes children need to engage in the world outside the human-modified environment. So he seeks to connect the Inner City Outings with other organizations.

Chris said his motivation is from his heart, a feeling, a spiritual connection with nature.

"If I can communicate that feeling to one child, that's enough," he said.

Curt, who attends the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, points to people's need to have fun and enjoy themselves. When they enjoy themselves, people are more likely to learn and perform at a higher level, he believes.

For both Chris and Curt, the outdoors is where they have the most enjoyment.

"If you believe in something," Chris said, "and in my case it is being in the outdoors and protecting it, you should advocate for it. Individual actions affect the world."

"So we should stand up for the things we believe in to make our community and the world a better place," he said.

For the West Central neighborhood children who have participated in even one Inner City Outing, ICO leaders believe the difference made in their lives will be remembered in their adulthood.

For information, visit www.sierraclub.org/ico/spokane.

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Center for Justice negotiates solutions to change society

While many attorneys litigate for monetary settlements, Center for Justice attorneys in Spokane litigate, negotiate, mediate and educate to make win-win, often out-of-court changes for the common good.

Breean Beggs' practice of law as director of the center emphasizes non-adversarial, collaborative solutions that match his reason for studying law: He wanted to have impact on more than one person at a time.

After high school in Olympia and earning a bachelor's degree at Whitworth in international studies and peacemaking in 1985, the son, grandson and nephew of United Methodist ministers did social work for three years with Career Path Services in Spokane.

While he helped people complete their education and find jobs, he decided he could have a greater impact by studying law.

After graduating from the University of Washington Law School in 1991, Breean worked with a private firm in Bellingham doing "David-and-Goliath" litigation representing individuals who were injured in accidents and were suing large insurance companies.

Work in employment law, dealing with employers who discriminated, stirred his interest in civil rights and public interest law, which he practiced pro bono on the side.

Breean won a case for four high school students who wanted to meet and pray in school.

In 13 years as a private lawyer, he won cases and money, but wanted to do more.

Learning that the Center for Justice in Spokane was looking for an executive director, Breean realized that in that role he could do public service every day with people.

In 2004, he became director of the Center for Justice, which Jim Sheehan—a public defender for more than 20 years—founded in 2000 to do poverty law and family law, to serve individuals and to change the system.

Previously, the Center for Justice served about 500 people a year from brief advice to full litigation.

Since 2005, about 500 more have been helped each year in the Community Advocacy program and about 400 more in the Street Law program.

Community Advocacy uses Whitworth and Gonzaga university students as advocates and problem solvers for low-income clients, so they do not have to go to court in family and poverty cases.

Every semester and summer, six students receive a caseload to mediate and advocate without use of lawyers. The center is not faith-based, but many of the students are.

Street Law recruits volunteer



Breean Beggs

lawyers and coordinates groups of three-to-five to be available summer Saturday afternoons at Riverfront Park to answer questions of people who stop at their table. They also write documents, such as letters to landlords or employers, and help people fill out family-law forms. The service is free.

Street Law volunteers may see someone for 20 to 30 minutes. Community Advocacy usually provides 10 to 15 hours of help. The Center for Justice generally does 20 intakes a week at 30 to 45 minutes.

Of those, only a fraction become full legal cases.

"We provide hundreds of dollars of services and thousands of hours of help," Breean said. "Over a year, we have 100 to 150 full cases open."

Six attorneys, three para-legals, six law student work-study interns, six undergraduates, six high school students and community volunteers share the workload.

Half of the center's support is provided by Jim and half is from grants, legal fees and private donations, Breean said.

"We collect legal fees only if the other side has to pay," he said.

"We seek to treat people humanely," he added, noting that each is more than a "case."

Community Advocacy requests a \$25 administrative fee to encourage the client to buy in, but it's waived if the person cannot pay.

"If the defendants have to pay, such as in cases involving

discrimination or government misconduct, it encourages more private attorneys to enforce laws," Breean said. "Private attorneys often do what government attorneys should be doing. If the government is the defendant, the government has to pay."

"The impact of litigation is to change systems, not just have injured people compensated for damages," he said.

For example, the Center for Justice works on cases related to Spokane River water quality, river flow, sewage treatment, PCB cleanup and storm runoff, because the Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection Agency are not doing the litigation they should, Breean explained.

The center also has taken cases calling for accountability related to police practices that violate the law, such as treatment of people who are arrested, the amount of force used and the rising use of tasers.

"We have represented families who have lost loved ones to tasers and excessive force," he said. "Most of those tasered suffer mental illness."

There have been 12 such cases since January 2006. Not all are the fault of law enforcement he said, pointing out that the goal is systemic change, such as establishing an office of independent police oversight.

"We also challenge jail conditions, such as access to and quality of medical care, and freedom of religion," Breean said.

Other cases concern discrimination based on race, gender and

sexual orientation.

For example, the center participated in a case before the Washington State Supreme Court on same-sex marriage, filing a brief on behalf of children of same-sex partners who wanted their parents to be married. The center lost that case.

"We also do public education in seminars, through media and within the legal system," Breean said.

Another outside-the-box, win-win, non-adversarial solution resulted when the city began towing cars of people without drivers' licenses and required them to pay to reclaim their car. They realized both sides would be helped if the city helped the drivers work to have their licenses restored.

"The faith piece for me is to help people who would have no help but for us," said Breean. "I now can work for social changes to society, to restructure society one case at a time."

As it is designed, he said, the legal system "helps the wealthy stay wealthy—a substitute for the wealthy having a system of private armies to help them hang on to property."

When he and his wife, Laurie Powers, who grew up Catholic, came to Spokane with their three children in June 2000, they attended several churches before choosing Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ.

"I went from living in the world but not of the world to living with everyday people and advocating

for them regardless of their faith or how they live," he said.

Breean attended church regularly until the middle of law school. He had taught Sunday school and preached on social justice and evangelism.

"I became disillusioned by the public stands of some churches," said Breean.

Now he's active again, serving on local and regional UCC committees, preaching and teaching Sunday school. He became involved in the United Church of Christ while in Bellingham and attended First Congregational United Church of Christ there.

"College years were a shift for me spiritually from being judgmental about having theologically correct faith and lifestyles. Then I understood Jesus standing with people without judgment, not wearing holiness on the sleeve and alienating people," Breean said.

His motivation is the Sermon on the Mount and the biblical concept of jubilee—turning the tables so society works for everyone.

"The changes may not happen in my lifetime, but when the system is set up justly, it works more efficiently, effectively and harmoniously," he said.

Although the Center for Justice is not a faith-based entity, Breean said that his ability to carry the values of the Sermon on the Mount into the legal system through cases is consistent with his faith.

For information, call 835-5211 or email breean@cforjustice.org.

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Spiritual quest takes Orthodox cantor through varied musical styles

By Virginia de Leon
Matthew Gallatin's spiritual quest led him on a long, windy road that included ascents of awakening and discovery, as well as steep downward slopes that sometimes caused him to despair. His journey allowed him to experience many facets of Christianity—Brethren, Methodist, Seventh-Day Adventist, Evangelical, Pentecostal, non-denominational and charismatic churches—before he came to the doorstep of St. John the Baptist Antiochian Orthodox Church in Post Falls.

Having grown up in a musical family and having sung gospel, pop and folk music at home, in coffee houses and in church, he began using his musical gifts as cantor, chanting Byzantine melodies soon after starting at St. John the Baptist.

"Music has a power and is the purest expression of worship," he said.

He finds fulfillment in these simple chants, he said, especially when compared to the music he played as part of a worship band. They also feel more natural since the cantor's melodies set the tone and flow of the service. "It's an expression of your heart in addition to musicianship," he said. "The music is spiritually elevating."

During his first visit to St. John in 1996, Matthew was overcome with awe as he stood before an altar of icons and burning lamps, and as he breathed in the scent of incense as it wafted in the air.

At last, he felt at home. "I felt like I was walking into the courts of heaven," he recalled. "I found what I was looking for all my life. I felt that connectedness to the Christians of the first millennium and I knew, as I stood there, that Christ was far bigger than what I understood of him."

Orthodoxy presented Matthew with an ancient way of worship and a spiritual lifestyle "that allows Christ to penetrate every aspect of my life," he said. "I am joined intimately to him, to my brothers and sisters in my parish and to the Orthodox Christians who from the first century have shared this very unique life of the Spirit."

On Holy Saturday in April 1997, Matthew and his wife, Alice, along with their 12-year-old daughter, Kaci, were received into the Orthodox Church. Last year, they were joined by their son, Joshua, daughter-in-law and grandchild.

Soon after starting at St. John, Matthew became the church's cantor. Reared in a musical household by a mother who was a pianist and a father who played guitar, Matthew had been singing and performing since he was a child. So it seemed almost natural for him to use his musical talents



Matthew Gallatin

Photo by Virginia de Leon

to give glory to God.

Since he began attending St. John, the church also has grown from just a few dozen members to a congregation of several hundred. After completing its building in 1997, the parish started drawing families from throughout North Idaho and also from across the border in Eastern Washington. In 2003, it became so big that members decided to establish a mission parish in Spokane Valley, Christ the Savior Orthodox Christian Church.

Matthew and his family will move later this year to Bonners Ferry, Idaho, where St. John has started a small parish, Holy Myrrhbearing Women Orthodox Mission.

The Bonners Ferry-Sandpoint area is currently home to 10 to 15 Orthodox families, according to Matthew. Most are converts from various denominations. The long drive to Post Falls often didn't allow these families to participate in the church's liturgy and sacrament. So they started a mission parish.

Members from the three parishes—St. John, Christ the Savior and Holy Myrrhbearing Women—have also been involved in various mission projects in Mexico, Romania and Africa.

After spending nearly 14 years teaching philosophy part-time at Gonzaga and then later at North Idaho College, Matthew left his post at NIC to devote more time to writing and to the mission of his church—to introduce people to the ancient world of Eastern Christianity and to help Orthodox Christians grow together into "the unity of the faith" and "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," he said.

Matthew wrote about his journey into Eastern Orthodoxy in the 2002 book, "Thirsting for God in a Land of Shallow Wells."

Now, he travels around the country facilitating retreats and

seminars on topics ranging from liturgical music and iconography to evangelism and discerning the will of God in one's life.

During his presentations, he also tells people about his voyage of faith.

Matthew grew up on a dairy farm in western Pennsylvania. He was one of four children in a family that dedicated their lives to their Christian faith. His parents belonged to the Church of the Brethren when he was born but spent many years attending a Methodist church. When Matthew was 12, a family friend introduced them to Seventh-day Adventism, which then became the driving force in their lives.

As a young man in 1970, Matthew left the East Coast and moved to College Place, Wash., to study ministry at Walla Walla University, an institution affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church that until last year was known as Walla Walla College.

During his sophomore year there, he started questioning his faith, wondering to himself why Adventists adhered to certain laws.

One day, while preparing for class as the lay assistant to the church's youth director, he heard a voice: "Matthew, do you know what you believe?"

"Yes," he answered out loud. When the voice asked, "Is it the truth?" he didn't know the answer.

Matthew began to scrutinize everything he believed by reading the Bible and church doctrines. Five years later, he and Alice started attending other churches, gravitating toward "something charismatic." They ended up at Calvary Chapel, a non-denominational Christian congregation in Couer d'Alene.

Matthew became music minister and a year later, in 1983, he was ordained a minister and became the church's pastor.

Doubts and distress emerged as members turned to him with questions about God and truth. He didn't know what to tell them and decided he could no longer be a pastor. At 34, 11 years after he struggled with Adventism, he was again in despair.

Again, he and his wife explored different churches "to find an objective, clear validation" for his belief that Jesus was not a concept but a divine person "who is unchanging in his characteristics."

He decided to pursue a master's degree in philosophy at Gonzaga University. His study of St. Augustine led him to the writings of the early Greek fathers, including St. Irenaeus of Lyons.

Matthew wanted to relate to Jesus the way early Christians did, he explains on his website, by participating in the sacraments of the faith, especially the Eucharist.

After years of meditation and study, he concluded that the only place the early Church's sacramental life has been preserved is in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

For him, that conclusion is more

than theological or theoretical.

"The Eucharist is Christ. It is His body and blood. Partaking of it is a physical experience that produces transformation of heart, soul, mind, and body. The power of the Eucharist is in what it is, not in how I view it theologically. So I guess that makes my interest in it practical," he said.

"With great joy, I fell in love with a church that had such love and such a dynamic relationship with Christ," said Matthew, who is now 55.

"The truth about Christ isn't something we have to interpret. It is a historical reality that's been preserved in the Orthodox Church," he believes.

Matthew now challenges people by asking them the questions he asked himself during his own journey.

"Life in Christ is about transformation, which implies moving and doing. We have to be willing to embrace that to see where God is bringing us," he said.

For information, visit www.matthewgallatin.com.

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Traffic light stops people before and after worship, inviting them to give

A stoplight runs its cycle in the foyer of Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, flashing at members as they come to and go from worship.

It reminds them to stop, think of hungry people and donate to Church World Service (CWS) for global and local hunger relief.

Madelyn Bafus, the church's former coordinator of children's ministries, education and mission and service outreach, read in CWS resources for CROP Hunger Walks about a church that set up a stoplight to draw donations.

For a while, she used a non-functioning stoplight in the Christian education area.

One day she learned from John Reynen, a member who worked for the City of Spokane Transportation Department, that the city was replacing its traffic lights and the church could buy one.

Carl Jenkins, another member, put the stoplight on a post with a clear plastic collection container and rewired the light so it operated when plugged into an outlet.

The container will hold \$120 of pennies given by young children. Adults and older youth give dollar bills, checks and larger coins. Madelyn regularly takes out the larger donations but leaves the pennies in it.

In 2007, the church raised \$600 for CROP hunger projects.

"It's a constant reminder of CROP," she said, noting that even though the church previously recruited walkers every year. The last four years, it has primarily given donations in the container.

The church's and Madelyn's outreach does not stop there.

More than a year ago, she left her job with the church and became a caseworker with Interfaith Hospitality of Spokane, one of four local recipients of 25 percent of CROP Hunger Walk Funds raised in Spokane. It organizes churches to host homeless children and their families for a week in their buildings, and helps families find housing, employment and services.

Madelyn, who has a teaching degree, first began in children's ministry, but soon picked up on mission and service, she said, because "it's where my heart is."

When she was coordinator of mission and service, she offered different outlets and backed them up with Christian education.

"I hoped people would gravitate to where their hearts are," she said. "We have many opportunities to be Jesus' hands and feet."

Madelyn listed some of the ways Spokane Valley United Methodist Church's more than 400 members serve people in



Madelyn Bafus shows the attention-getting light.

the community and around the globe:

- Different members assist with different hunger efforts—preparing or serving Crosswalk or St. Ann's meals, as well as helping at the food bank.

"At Crosswalk, we are the 'roast church,' and at St. Ann's, we are the tuna noodle casserole group, because that's what we always take," said Madelyn, who still serves on the mission and service team.

For 15 years, the youth and the mission and service outreach team have helped every 12 weeks to serve the Sunday Lunch at St. Ann's Catholic Church.

- The church helped start a food bank that is now at Valley Partners, formerly Spokane Valley Center, which the church also helped start.

- Spokane Valley UMC helped start and housed Valley Meals on Wheels about 30 years ago. That program, which also receives CROP Walk funds, delivers meals to home-bound elderly and disabled people from its office at 321 S. Dishman-Mica Rd. Church members still volunteer to drive.

"When my children were young and I drove to deliver Meals on Wheels, I took them with me. Now my son, Chris, who is in his 30s, wants me to take his daughter, Chloe," she said.

- In addition, it is a support church when St. Mary's Catholic Church hosts homeless families through Interfaith Hospitality.

- Two years ago through World Relief, the church sponsored a refugee family from Liberia. Many years ago, they sponsored two Vietnamese families.

The commitment to outreach is visible in the foyer by the office:

- A basket holds clothing gifts for CASA—Court Appointed Special Advocates—a ministry of one group in the church.

- United Methodist Women collect toiletries for Hope House, a women's shelter in Spokane.

- Photos of Appoline and Helen, two orphan children in the Congo, sit on a table. The church has adopted them, writing letters and sending funds so they can go to school. Church children, who have heard the story of their parents being killed, often write letters, too.

In addition, reports on mission programs are often shared at the seniors' monthly soup-and-salad lunches, the 55-Plus Luncheon. About 72 come regularly from Good Samaritan retirement center, the neighborhood and the church. In 1999, the lunches started with three tables. Now enough come to fill 10 tables.

"We started the lunch, aware that the end of the month is a hard time financially for seniors," said Madelyn. "It also gives them a social outlet."

Madelyn, who grew up Lutheran in Walla Walla, earned a teaching degree at Washington State University in 1970. She and her husband, Jerry, became United Methodist soon after they married. She taught fourth grade for three years in Walla Walla, before they moved to Spokane Valley in 1979.

While her three children were growing up, she was active in the grade school and junior high parent teacher organizations, did some substitute teaching, led

Camp Fire for 17 years and taught Sunday school.

Seven years working at a pawn shop and meeting marginalized people heightened her commitment to mission.

For many years when she led the church youth group, the church walked in CROP Hunger Walks as a way to involve their youth. Some youth served at the water stations instead of walking.

"We walked to raise funds to be in solidarity with hungry people worldwide," she said.

Madelyn often used Church World Service resources and projects to help the children and youth see how pennies can add up to make a difference.

Madelyn's motivation is Jesus' words in Matthew 25: "When I was hungry, you fed me; homeless, you sheltered me," and finally, "when you do something to the least, you do it to me."

"Mission has always been part of my life," she said. "Christ asks us to reach out."

Words of John Wesley, founder of Methodism, also inspire her: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

Madelyn believes in sharing faith in practice, acting in Christ's

love, sharing faith words if an appropriate opportunity arises.

She realizes that "each person is a child of God" and that "people in need and in crisis are human beings God loves."

Working at the Interfaith Hospitality office at 2521 E. Sprague, Madelyn does intake interviews with homeless families, identifies needs and helps them find housing, employment and necessities. She networks with churches, agencies and programs such as the Homeless Coalition and Feed

Spokane.

Madelyn said volunteers help in many ways: Some set up beds for families; some cook; some visit; some wash bedding, and some help at the day center.

"It's mind boggling what we as churches can do when we work together," she added.

Madelyn enjoys helping children by helping parents find stability: "Maybe they will remember that those who helped them in a crisis were in churches."

Church members see and fill various needs, such as providing a car, a sewing machine or a job for another. Their generosity shows people in crisis that they have worth and that people in the churches understand the barriers and struggles they face, she said.

For information, call 747-5487 or email maddyb47@msn.com.



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Media word choices could foster a culture of peace by election coverage

The choice of words describing the United States’ peaceful process for leadership transition could create a climate that builds a culture of peace. Recent reports, however, often have used the words of war to describe campaign competition news.

With the same stump speeches, occasional direct encounters in debates and every silly snippet off script analyzed, journalists may stretch to make it “news.”

There’s an inherent competition, which some tend to turn into conflict.

As part of a project with the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media board, we are reviewing how media might create a culture of peace. Reading, watching and listening to media, I have been sensitive to word usage, conscious of how words create

our culture and perspectives.

We are still developing the review process, but in developing some criteria, I became sensitive as a reader and made some observations of print and broadcast coverage of the election.

Many times I was disconcerted by common use of “battle,” “fight” or “war chest,” terminology most stirring images of war, blood-letting, violence and death, in reference to disagreements, policy differences, campaign clashes, debate points and delegate counts.

Use of the “war” imagery seemed, given our task to see what makes for a culture of peace, to be turning our peaceful means for democratic, bloodless, reasoned transition in leadership into something violent.

I assume it’s out of habit, out of the tradition of exaggerating conflicts to hype them into something more sensational than they are.

An election is peaceful competition, political games, human relations, marketing skills, but not a “battle.” It’s not a coup d’etat. That’s a battle. It’s not a takeover, we hope. In fact, we have heard and welcome the much calmer exchange than in many previous elections. The candidates seem aware that the American public is tired of negative campaigning, sensationalizing differences.

What are the things that make for peace? What would election coverage look like in a culture of peace, rather than a culture worn out by violent words, actions and attacks?

It would be about accountability, compassion, conflict resolution, cooperation, cultural diversity, democracy, dialogue, empathy, empowerment, equality, freedom, healing, human rights, justice, love, negotiation, participation, respect, security, solutions, solidarity, support, transparency and understanding. At least these are some of the words the United Nations uses to describe “a culture of peace.”

The result of the more positive approach has been more participation—nearly 80 people were at my neighborhood caucus, exceeding the charts for delegate selection that anticipated 25 coming.

Would that we knew the gifts of peace and how exciting, newsworthy they are!

Mary Stamp - editor

Young adults judge church’s hypocrisy before knowing stories of hope

In almost any congregation, there is a hole in the membership. Older teens and 20-somethings are in short supply or under-represented relative to other age groups.

Congregations design contemporary worship services, buy the latest technological goodies and organize worship teams and music teams to attract young adults back to church. Sometimes it works, at least for a while, but it doesn’t take care of a basic problem for this age group.

We aren’t living up to what we have been teaching them.

The word “hypocritical” figures prominently in results of a recent survey of how 16 to 29-year-olds view Christians. The survey was conducted by the Barna Group and published in a book by David Kinman, “unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity.”

“The church is full of hypocrites,” is an accusation that seems to have been around forever. It’s often accepted with mock ruefulness: “Yes, that’s why we are in church.”

That isn’t working with young adults who have grown up in church absorbing parables of Jesus and stories of his unconditional ministry to all kinds of people.

They see their elders as too judgmental about hot-button issues and not living up to the yardstick they hold up to others.

The Barna Group, which does its research primarily for evangelical groups, published a report in 1996 titled, “Christianity Has a Strong Positive Image Despite Fewer Active Participants.” At that time, there was wide respect for Christians, even by 85 percent of those who were outside the church.

Today, 38 percent of the young outsiders say they have a “bad impression of present-day Christianity.”

Criticisms fall under six main headings: Christians are 1) hypocritical, saying one thing and doing another; 2) too intent on getting converts; 3) antihomosexual; 4) old-fashioned, boring and out of touch with reality; 5) overly motivated by a political agenda; and 6) judgmental and don’t love people as they say they do.

For the author, one crucial insight kept popping up: “Christians are primarily perceived for what they stand against. We have become famous for what we oppose, rather than who we are for.”

For this reader, one of the most interesting reports in “unChristian” is the lack

of a gap between Christians and non-Christians in their everyday lives. In their own research, the Barna Group found that Christians were less likely to use profanity in public or to have bought a lottery ticket, and more likely to have helped a poor or homeless person in the community than non-Christians.

However, there was no evidence of transformed lives when it came to alcohol and drug use, gambling, violence, spitefulness, and other behaviors that are usually condemned. Their children are watching.

While it has been dispiriting to read of the low regard in which followers of Jesus are held today, it is refreshing to read of people of faith whose stories are printed in this issue of The Fig Tree. They have found a way to live faith intentionally, but it may not be apparent to those they come in contact with because, except for those who work in churches, their faith is not readily obvious to others.

For instance, Breean Beggs at the Center for Justice, meets people where they are and provides help in navigating legal shoals they are not equipped for. He describes himself as having gone from living in but not of the world to living with everyday

people and advocating for them, regardless of how they live. His work is a real contribution to Christian community.

Julie Lauterbach has had the soul-searing experience of translating for El Salvadoran women who suffered violence. It has increased her empathy as she works part time and lives in a house in West Central Spokane that is open to neighborhood children who need companionship, a place to hang out and help with homework after school. Again, she fosters the fruit of community.

Paul Lebens-Englund hears his peers condemn the church as hypocritical, but he takes the base community concept he learned in Nicaragua and applies it in the neighborhood of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. The church is supporting community by being a gathering place for a wide variety of activities, helping the neighborhood be a neighborhood.

As director Woody Allen says: “Eighty percent of success is just showing up.” Showing up intentionally to be Jesus’ quiet but active presence in the community may not immediately improve the public image of Christians, but it’s our main tool as we work toward God’s kingdom.

Nancy Minard - Editorial team

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

We in the United States usually think of Lent as a sort of religious New Year, a time to make resolutions and to straighten out our lives. We should give up something we like, such as espresso, chocolate or sleeping in. The problem with this attitude is that there is nothing about God in that thinking. It’s all about us, perfecting us.

Instead, try this: while watching the snow or rain, ask God what’s getting in the way of your relationship with God. Then, wait quietly for the answer. It may take a couple of days. I’ve never known God to work on my timetable. That may be why we have 40 days of Lent—to practice waiting on God. The answer might pop up while washing the dishes or doing the laundry or talking with friends.

Then what do I do with the answer? That rather depends on what God’s answer is, doesn’t it?

The Rev. Elizabeth Larsen,
Troy Lutheran Church

In Matthew’s account of Jesus’ last days, we find this devastating sentence (26:5): “Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.” They woefully overestimated their loyalty.

Peter in typical ambivalence wanted it both ways. He wanted to be a steadfast disciple, but he wanted safety, too.

Peter’s ambivalence is alive and well. In the footsteps of Peter, many of us want to “follow Jesus at a distance.” I want to be close enough to bask in the glow of respectability and propriety, but not close enough

to oppose the obscene discrepancies in our society. I want to share in the religiosity of my peerage, but not the confrontations inherent in righteousness. I want to stand ostensibly for peace without openly opposing the military-industrial complex. I want discipleship, all right, but I want it safe and comfortable. I want to “follow at a distance.”

In Lent, the cross stands as a stark reminder that “distant discipleship” is a contradiction in terms. We are not called upon to saunter in the twilight of respectability, but rather to march boldly in the dangerous light of the cross.

The Rev. Wilbur Rees, emeritus
Shalom United Church of Christ –
Richland

I live in that tension of trying to figure out what is an appropriate lifestyle for me. When is what I have too much? What is an appropriate amount of possessions for a minister of the gospel? How many pairs of shoes do I need? How nice a television do I really need? Do I need high speed internet access at home or is the regular landline okay? Should I give the extra money to La Casa instead? Instead of buying another lens for my camera, should I be giving it to Camp Fire?

How can I give thanks to God for all the blessings I receive?

The Rev. David Helseth
Englewood Christian – Yakima

Three Cups of Tea tells the story of Greg Mortenson, whose near fatal attempt

to climb K2 in the mountains of Pakistan in 1993 led him to a tiny village where he received healing hospitality. In turn, he makes a promise to help them build the one thing they most want for the village—a school. This one school has turned into more than 55 schools—especially for girls—in the region that gave birth to the Taliban. Former reporter Tom Brokaw says that Greg’s story is “proof that one ordinary person, with the right combination of character and determination, really can change the world.”

Greg is the son of Lutheran missionaries who spent a good part of his childhood in Africa building a hospital on the slopes of Kilimanjaro. He says he does not have the faith of his parents, and as far as I can tell, the indication is that he would not consider himself Christian.

Because of this, there are some Christians who would feel this book wasn’t worthwhile for a church community to read. I disagree. Any story that tells about people giving of themselves for others and being effective in building relationships is worthwhile for us. Any story that inspires us to rid ourselves of the barriers that stand in the way between us and our brothers and sisters is precious.

The Rev. Chip Laird
Community Congregational United
Church of Christ – Pullman

I wonder how many of our cups are too full. Lent is the occasion for emptying our souls and psyches out from the constant overflow of clutter whether it’s

a busy schedule with too many events to worry about or a mind that is overrun with too many ideas and tasks to accomplish. At the end of the day, it’s still the same pile of clutter.

In monastic orders, particularly Benedictine spirituality, the act of listening to God is a primary spiritual practice. Listening is accomplished by poring over readings from Holy Scripture either silently or aloud, and asking such a question as, “What is God saying to me in my daily life?”

To listen is to encounter Holy Scripture as a living organism of God, one that inhabits our life in the world as well as our internal landscape. The study of Holy Scripture and the regular practice of prayer are the daily bread of Benedictine life.

Lent is the time for us to make the space in our life to deepen our relationship with God and to be intentional about doing so. Another habit from Benedictine spirituality is holy silence.

Instead of adding a new activity or practice, or making a list of habits to give up each Lent, what about committing a period of silence each day during Lent?

Creating the habit of holy silence is a liberating and whole-making experience. There’s a joy that comes in simplifying our life routines so we are not held captive by things either physical or psychological.

Choosing silence and listening to God are really the soul’s deepest hungers and delights.

The Rev. Anne Barton
St. Paul’s Episcopal, Kennewick

Novena speakers consider infant development

Father Denis Donoghue, S.J., and Kent Hoffman will lead the 2008 Novena of Grace, nine days of prayer and worship from Thursday, March 6 through Friday, March 14, at St. Aloysius Catholic Church, 330 E. Boone.

Under the theme, "Jesus, Long Have I Waited for You," the services will explore the Christian heritage, Ignatian spirituality and infant development to help people understand God's presence in their struggles and challenges.

Father Denis, who became a Jesuit in 1997 and was ordained a priest in 2005 in Pittsburgh, Pa.,

Diocese presents anti-racism training

To foster partnerships and challenge racism across racial, faith and community lines, the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane's Anti-Racism Task Force is sponsoring 15 hours of training from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturdays, April 19 and 26, at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 2404 N. Howard.

Organizers adapted national materials, "Seeing the Face of God in Each Other," to reflect the racial makeup of this region.

"We will share information, reflect on instances of racism in our lives and share tools to resist racism," said Darcy James, task force chair and member of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Grangeville, Idaho.

She is one of the trainers along with the Rev. Jane Nelson-Low of Wallace, Bob Runkle of Post Falls, the Rev. Wilhelmina Sarai-Clark of Moscow, Mary Beth Jorgensen of the Diocese of Spokane, and Lelanda Lee of the Diocese of Colorado in Denver.

The workshops are for people across the faith community. They are to attend with several members of their congregation or groups, so insights can be implemented.

Darcy has lived in varied racial settings—in a half-Anglo, half-Hispanic California hometown, in Uganda four times, in a California city when it was integrating schools, and in Grangeville surrounded by the Nez Perce.

She said the training helps whites understand how the status quo benefits them and how the system looks to other races. The goal is to foster partnerships needed for change.

For information, call 208-983-0334.

served with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in 1991 and traveled in Nepal in 2004, meeting with Buddhists and working with the Sisters of Charity. He is now studying pastoral counseling.

Kent, a psychotherapist and university educator since 1973 in Spokane, helped develop the Circle of Security project in 1991. It is an early intervention program used worldwide to support healthy parenting for high-risk infants and young children.

He also works with Spokane's homeless teens and young parents in Volunteers of America's Crosswalk program. Kent leads workshops around the world for psychotherapists, educators, so-

cial workers, clergy and parents on the developmental needs of infants and children.

During the Novena, St. Aloysius will offer three daily services, at 12:15, (12:30 on Sunday), 3:30 and 5:15 p.m. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered 45 minutes before each service.

The Novena roots started in 1615 in Goa, India, when a crippled boy was cured through the intercession of Francis Xavier. Now a saint, other miracles have been attributed to him, including the healing of Jesuit Father Mastrilli from a near-death accident in 1633. Mastrilli later formalized the Novena format.

For information, call 323-5896.

Calendar of Events

Mar 5	• Green Collar Jobs, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 5 to 7:30 p.m.
Mar 6-14	• Novena of Grace, St. Aloysius Catholic, 330 E. Boone, 12:15, 3:30 and 5:15 p.m. - 323-5896
Mar 7	• Lands Council Open House, 25 W. Main, 5 to 7 p.m. - 206-2851
	• Interfaith Vigil for Peace, World Day of Prayer, Gondola Meadows, Riverfront Park, 4:30 p.m., movie and discussion at Community Building, Spokane Peace Folks, 6:30 p.m.
Mar 8	• International Women's Day Celebration, Spokane Women's Club, 1428 W. 9th, 2 to 4 p.m. - 448-2189
	• Gathering for Peace with potluck, Dances of Universal Peace, "Peace One Day" film, discussion, Unity Church, begins at 4 p.m. - 838-6518
Mar 9	• Kosher Dinner, Temple Beth Shalom, 30th Ave. and South Perry, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. - 747-3304 x 32
Mar 10	• Adopt-a-Minefield Night of a Thousand Dinners, United Nations Association, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr., 7 p.m.
Mar 10-16	• KYRS Spring On-Air Fund Drive, volunteer: outreach@kyrs.org
Mar 12	• The Fig Tree Benefit Breakfast, "Stories Bear Fruit: Sustenance for the Journey," Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University, 7:15 a.m. - 535-1813
	• Spokane Citizens for a Living Wage, 35 W. Main, 5 p.m. - 838-7870
	• Women's Leadership Conference, "From Glass Slippers to Glass Ceilings: Women Challenging Leadership Myths, Lair Lounge, Spokane Community College, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Mar 13	• Great Decisions lecture, "Why Latin America Is Shifting to the Left: We Need to Understand our Southern Neighbors," Lindy Scott, professor in the modern languages department at Whitworth University, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University, 7:30 p.m. - 777-3270
Mar 15	• Five Years Too Many! rally and march five years since U.S. invasion of Iraq, Foley Federal Building, Riverside and Monroe, 2 p.m. - 838-7870
	• 10th Annual Benefit Banquet, Abuse Recovery Ministry & Services with Raymond Reyes of Gonzaga and Stacey Womak, ARMS founder, Spokane Convention Center, 6:15 p.m. - 484-0600
Mar 19	• El Salvadoran Dinner, St. Ann's, 2120 E First, 6 to 9 p.m. - 838-8322
	• Pax Christi Spokane Lenten Prayer Service, "Lead Us from War to Peace: A Service of Repentance and a Litany of Repentance from Fruits of War," St. Joseph Parish, 1503 W. Dean, 6 p.m. - 358-4273
	• Project HOPE workshop, "Building and Strengthening the Capacity of Project HOPE Partners," Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Mar 21	• Spokane Peace Prize Award Ceremony, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 6:30 p.m. - 455-6284
Mar 23	• Easter Sunrise Service, Greenwood Memorial Terrace, 6:30 a.m.
Mar 24	• People's History of Spokane, Futurewise, 35 W. Main, 4:30 p.m. - 838-1965
Mar 24, 29, 31	• Master Composter classes, Washington State University Extension, 222 N. Havana, Mondays 6 p.m., Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. - call 625-6800
Mar 27	• Flannery Lecture, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 7:30 p.m.
Mar 27-30	• Interfaith Creation Spirituality Retreat, N-Sid-Sen - 208-687-5255
Mar 29	• Peace and Justice Action League Series on Palestine-Israel, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 314 S. Spruce, 7 to 10 p.m. - 838-7870
Apr 2	• Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m.
Apr 3	• Fig Tree Board, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.
Apr 4-5	• Institute for Congregational Leadership workshop, 4624 E. Jamieson
Apr 5	• Donn Morgan, "Fighting with the Bible," Spiritus Center, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. - 624-3191
Apr 7	• "Possibilities for Peace: Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges in the Middle East," Nonie Darwish, author and founder of Arabs for Israel, Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University, 7:30 p.m. - 323-6132
	• Moldenhauer Memorial Lecture, Music Recital Hall, Whitworth, 7:30 p.m.
Wed-Sat	• Habitat-Spokane work days - call 534-2552
Thurs	• PJALS street vigils on Iraq War, Riverside & Monroe 4:30 p.m.-838-7870.
Fridays	• Colville Peace Vigil - 675-4554
1st Sats	• Ministers' Fellowship Union and Minister's Wives/Widows Fellowship, 806 W. Indiana - 624-0522
3rd Mons	• NAACP - 467-9793

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Gives April 7 Moldenhauer Memorial Lecture

Rural school music teacher also composes church music

Selkirk schools' music instructor seeks to instill in children and adults a lifelong love for and curiosity about music for appreciation or performance.

"I can't imagine life without music," said Donovan Johnson of Metaline Falls in Northeast Washington.

"Music is a tool to express emotions no other art can express. I play a soft solo on cello and ask kindergarteners how it makes them feel," he said. "Music is essential to life. It's much more than background noise."

He also sees it as part of life in a small community.

Along with teaching music in this small Northeast Washington school district, he is also a national and regional lecturer, and a contemporary-classical church music composer.

Teaching classes for children or giving national or regional lectures to adults, Donovan evokes curiosity by asking provoking questions about music.

He hopes music he plays in worship provides a commentary to move people to further faith exploration and that music he introduces in school classes will generate a life-long love for and curiosity about music.

For the seventh time, Donovan will give the annual Hans Moldenhauer Memorial Lecture at 7:30 p.m., Monday, April 7 at the Music Recital Hall at Whitworth University.

Since 2000, he has spoken at the Whitworth lecture on music and composers of the 20th century, and their place in society and music education.

Donivan, who has been teaching music in Metaline Falls and Ione since 1991, also lectures for the Society of Composers national and regional conferences. Most lecturers are college and university professors.

For two years, he has given lectures as part of Elderhostels in Newport and he is a guest lecturer for Eastern Washington University and Whitworth University classes.

This year, the Moldenhauer lecture topic is "I Have Overcome the World: The Tragic Art of Hugo Distler," who lived from 1908 to 1942 in Germany. Distler's church, a cappella and organ music influenced German church music for more than the 10 years he composed music to sacred texts, said Donivan, who earned a master's degree in composition at California State University in Northridge in 1973.

Donivan will discuss Distler's work and play examples of it.

For 17 years, Donivan has been the only K-12 music instructor for the Selkirk School District. He also taught K-12 music in California, Alaska and Idaho.

In Metaline Falls where he lives with his wife, the Rev. Tara Lein-



Donivan Johnson

inger, pastor of Metaline Falls Congregational United Church of Christ, he has also found an outlet for composing church and sacred music, as well as music to use in each grade level at the schools.

From his early experience listening to church choirs and organ music in the Norwegian Lutheran Church, which was one of the churches that united to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, he decided he wanted to add to that repertoire.

"Some days in the summer when I'm not near a piano, I compose in my head or on paper. I may try it out whistling. We live in a quiet area conducive to meditation and stillness," Donivan said.

"When I compose, it's an act of faith. Sounds come. It grows into something worthwhile for people to experience in worship or at a concert. Music is not a diary to keep private but is to be shared in community," Donivan said. "When people sing a hymn in worship, regardless of how out-of-tune or raucous it may be, they are lifting their souls to God."

His style of composition ranges from simple to complex, with many in a contemporary classical style, in contrast to contemporary Christian pop music. Most are short and dissonant," he said.

"Dissonance evolves but does not hit all at once, so the ear can

assimilate it," he described. "The dissonance is made by hitting 'wrong' notes that are, in fact, the right notes."

They include an 11-minute choral cantata that was sung in 1999 by a 120-member German choir in Basel, Switzerland.

Donivan said instrumental music has a role in worship to augment the meaning of words in ways only instruments can do.

"Music is the commentary part of the service, intended to move people," said Donivan, who has been at home in a variety of churches—Lutheran, Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist and United Church of Christ.

In Idaho, he attended Presbyterian and Catholic churches where he was music director. From 1997 to 1998, he was organist at the American Lutheran Church in Newport, until the 60-mile drive became too much in the winter. There, he composed one prelude or offertory each week.

He sometimes fills in as organist or pianist at Metaline Falls Congregational UCC. In the fall, he directed a choral work accompanied by hand chimes at Central Baptist in Spokane. He also gives concerts outside worship.

School is a major outlet for writing and arranging folk songs, which he considers important for a rural school district where funds to buy music are limited.

"Little children are curious and want to know. Junior high and senior high students have inquisitive minds and want to learn how to play, compose and improvise music," he said.

As one teacher with many students in a small school, he provides opportunities in the same class for students to sing, play band instruments, learn guitar and peer tutor each other.

There are 325 students in K-12. Donivan teaches music in the morning at the elementary school. He teaches two music classes for grades 9 to 12, and 7 to 12 band, choir and guitar. He also teaches senior English.

"By teaching guitar," he noted, "we encourage some guitar players to stay in school.

"We present 12 to 15 per-

formances by small groups and large groups, including December concerts at Hawthorne Retirement Community in North Spokane and Northtown Mall.

"We do a Christmas concert, ending with 'Silent Night,' which was written by a Lutheran pastor, and is part of our wide music heritage," Donivan said. "We also sing songs of Hebrew and other heritages, too.

"When children leave at graduation, I hope they understand what they listen to," he said. "I introduce them to the origins of different forms of music. I want to provide a repertoire of songs that students can take with them through their life."

Ione and Metaline Falls, he said, have high regard and high expectations for their school music program. Before 1991, many music teachers came and went. Donivan has stayed, earning the distinction for his school in 2001 of being one of the 100 best communities for music education.

As a small community's population dwindles, its music program often does, too. TV and athletics fill students' time, he said, but community support makes a difference.

Donivan grew up in a family that gathered Saturday nights around the piano. Now TV shows and MP3 players replace family singing when many learned "O Susanna" or "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

"In our culture, both parents work and there are many distractions that keep families from gathering around a piano and singing," he said.

So school and church remain outlets for learning and singing the songs that integrate music in people's lives.

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