

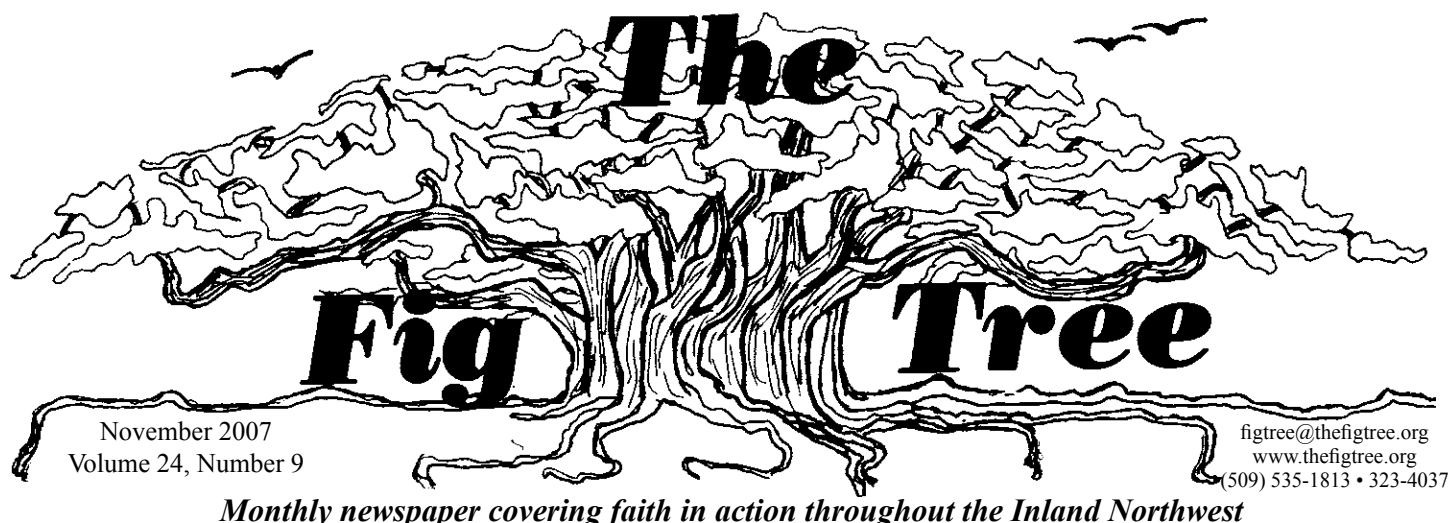
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Church bazaars require people power

By Beth Kowal

Churches around the world have held bazaars for hundreds of years. Bazaars are a tradition that builds fellowship and community, while members raise funds for charity, mission and outreach.

Today, however, many churches no longer call their holiday festivities a bazaar.

The word, “bazaar,” comes from Pahlavi, a Middle Eastern language. It means a market with different shops and stalls lining a street.

The concept of a church bazaar is steeped in tradition passed down for generations. Traditionally, churches sell homemade crafts, such as knitted, crocheted and quilted items, canned and baked goods, and used items donated for resale.

Crafting the items and attending planning meetings take hours. With younger generations working and having different priorities and hobbies than handiworks, some churches are discontinuing their bazaars.

As people retire from bazaar committees, churches have to discern if they can continue the bazaar or want different events



Carol Swensen and Patty Harrison push dough into forms for sandbakkelse.

for fund raising and community outreach.

Women’s teas, women’s Christmas desserts, trees of giving, Christmas markets and international fair-trade marketplaces are alternatives to holiday bazaars.

Spokane area churches offer a range of holiday events.

Central United Methodist’s bazaar has been “going strong” since the 1930s, said Dorothy Worthington, who has been involved with it for more than 50 years.

“It raises funds for local and foreign missions,” she said, noting that it also helps the church meet the budget, provide camperships and help people.

In the 1930s, the church had 13 fellowship organizations. Today, it has one. Members’ interests have changed, and it’s hard to find people to fill committees.

“We are a downtown church. Satellite churches have grown,” she said. “Most members work. Previously most women were housewives,” Dorothy said, adding that many young people give financial support instead of time.

Forty members are organizing

Continued on page 4

Missionary-translator conveys truth expressed in prophetic poetry

By Mary Stamp

“You seduced me, Lord, and I was seduced,” Gloria Kinsler read from one of the poems by Julia Esquivel, who was ill and unable to come to Spokane for The Fig Tree’s Faith in Action Dialogue.

Instead of translating Julia’s Spanish words to English, Gloria translated her poems, her life, her truth-telling through Guatemala’s suffering, and its impact on her own faith and life.

The words were from Julia’s poem, “Confession,” based on Jeremiah. It expresses the truth that many prophets, like Julia, begin with God’s love and their love for God seducing—or as other possible translations of the word from Spanish might imply duping, tricking or deceiving—them into commitments, lives and

risks that they never anticipated.

Gloria considers Julia a prophet because she spoke truth to power on behalf of Guatemalans. She was moved by love to risk her life, weeping with those who weep and pouring herself out on behalf of “the least.”

Gloria gave presentations in October at Bethany Presbyterian and St. Ann’s Catholic churches, at the Women’s Hearth, at Gonzaga and Whitworth universities, and for the Bioneers Conference.

After her life intersected with Guatemala and Julia, Gloria set aside schoolbook impressions she had of the United States.

From 1963 to 1977, she and her husband Ross were Presbyterian missionaries in Guatemala.

She was in her late 20s when she first met Julia, five years older

and “much wiser,” Gloria said.

Today, Gloria is disheartened that “we in the United States have lost a sense that torture is wrong and that greed, once one of the seven deadly sins, is a virtue. Our society and faith are twisted.”

Julia, a Latina who studied at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala, the Latin American Biblical Seminary in Costa Rica and the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches in Switzerland, told Gloria her life turned around when she ministered to young women in jail, women who stole or prostituted their bodies to feed their children.

Latinos and Latinas are descendants of Mayans, forced to work as slaves on plantations on the Coast and to stop speaking their languages and wearing their traditional clothes. Their lands were taken, because the people had no written deeds.

In 1945, realizing they were ruled by fascists, the people of Guatemala overthrew the dictator and held a democratic election, Gloria said. There was a second election four years later. Changes began: labor laws, public schools, hospitals and land reform.

Large landowners were to sell unused land for the value they declared on their tax statements. The land was to go to campesinos, poor peasant farmers.

U.S. government and corporate policy were involved in the politics and suffering in Guatemala, she said. For example, two brothers who worked for United Fruit later served as U.S. Secretary of State and director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

United Fruit, a major landowner in Guatemala, helped overthrow the democratically elected president in 1954.

A series of dictators and civil war followed in the 1970s and 1980s.

The disparity between rich and poor then and now is great. Two percent of Guatemalans lived luxurious lives in their gated communities, not sharing the wealth generated with those who worked for them in slave-like conditions on plantations that provided cheap fruit, coffee or sugar to North Americans, Gloria said.

“Anyone who wanted to change the oppression was called ‘communist’ much like the enemy

image and fear generated by the word ‘terrorist’ today,” she said. “Communists then were thought to be lurking everywhere, in guerrillas some called rebels and others called freedom fighters.

“When violence became obvious,” Gloria said, “most churches closed their eyes, not wanting to be involved.”

Those who wanted freedom from state terror were kidnapped, killed or “disappeared,” said Gloria. The disappeared were tortured and often dropped from airplanes into the ocean or the mouth of a volcano.

Julia and an ecumenical group of Catholics and Protestants started a newspaper, Dialogo, to report on what was happening and what some Christians were doing. She also worked with Mayans in Christian base communities that studied Scriptures and related faith to everyday lives.

Catholic priests and others leading Bible studies and organizing co-ops to help the indigenous people improve their lives were seen as communists, Gloria said.

“The Christian base communities

Continued on page 6

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Islamic scholars seek ‘common ground’

Geneva (ENI) - More than 130 Muslim scholars said in a letter to Christian leaders, including Pope Benedict XVI and the head of the World Council of Churches, the Rev. Samuel Kobia, that world peace depends on cooperation between Christianity and Islam. “Our common future is at stake. The survival of the world itself is perhaps at stake,” the 138 signatories state in the letter made public on Oct. 11.

The letter, which is also addressed to Orthodox, Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed Christian world leaders, compares passages in the Quran and Bible, and identifies principles of accepting only one God and living in peace with one’s neighbors as common ground.

“If Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace,” the Islamic scholars write. “With the terrible weaponry of the modern world and with Muslims and Christians intertwined as never before, no side can win a conflict between more than half of the world’s inhabitants. Finding common ground is about more than polite ecumenical dialogue between selected religious leaders.”

Church head arrested in Iraq war protest

New York (ENI) - The Rev. John Thomas, president of the United Church of Christ, was arrested outside the White House in a protest about the Iraq war. He and another denominational official, the Rev. Linda Jaramillo, tried to deliver to the White House on Oct. 10 a “pastoral letter” with more than 64,000 signatures calling for an end to the military action in Iraq.

They were arrested after they refused to leave a no-protest zone near the White House gates. They had earlier sought a meeting with the White House’s public liaison office to hand-deliver the petitions. Their requests were refused. They were released after being held briefly at a police station and paying a \$100 fine.

Kazakhstan women pursue rights

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (ENI) - Margarita Zobnina, a medical biologist, joined a women’s group in her native Kazakhstan after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when women faced not only increasing impoverishment but also loneliness.

While some residents are cashing in on the wealth from one of the largest oil deposits in the Caspian region, many aid agencies report a growing gap between rich and poor. Margarita works with self-help groups for women seeking company and for those with the courage to fight for their rights in a region that lags behind many countries in respecting women’s rights.

Religious freedom in India declines

Bangalore, India (ENI) - In India’s populous, vibrant democracy, freedom of religion is on the decline, said John Dayal, a journalist-turned-Christian activist, who is now secretary general of the All India Christian Council. “Many rights have been systematically diluted over the years by governments, courts and fundamentalist forces.” His recently published book, “A Matter of Equity: Freedom of Faith in Secular India,” is a critique of religious freedom in the country. He said Christians enjoyed “better religious freedom three decades ago than now.”

WCC invites essays on ecumenism

The World Council of Churches invites students of theology and young theologians to offer new perspectives to the discussion on the future of the ecumenical movement by participating in an essay competition to mark the Council’s 60th anniversary. Clergy and laity will write on the theme “Making a Difference Together: Prospects for Ecumenism in the 21st Century.”

Authors of the best six essays, due Feb. 18, will present them at an international consultation in Bossey, Switzerland, in late 2008. Other essays will be published by the WCC. For information, visit www.wcc-coe.org.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service is Nov. 22

“Compassion, Community and Caring” is the theme for the 2007 Community Thanksgiving Service at 10 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 22, at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave.

The interfaith service is sponsored by the Interfaith Council and Second Harvest.

It will feature drums and organ,

chant and flute, plus prayers, blessings, songs, teachings and insights from different faith traditions in the Inland Northwest.

Cyndy Cook will speak on the work of Second Harvest.

Irene Supica and John Gorman of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church will chant.

Shane Ridley-Stevens of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints will play Shoshone flute.

Other participants are Baha’i, Buddhist, Episcopalian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Sikh, Slavic Baptist and Sufi.

For information, call 599-2411.

Willie Brown speaks at NAACP banquet

Willie Brown, who is a California attorney and a former mayor of San Francisco, will speak on “The Vision—Moving from Good to Great” at the annual Freedom Fund Banquet of the Spokane

Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The dinner will begin at 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10, at Northern Quest Casino, 100 N. Hayford Rd.

in Airway Heights.

Willie, who is a CNN Cable-TV political analyst, was influential in the California State Legislature through several governors.

For information, call 483-8644.

Orthodox aid director gives presentation

Dan Christopulos, development director of International Orthodox Christian Charities, will give a presentation on “IOCC: 15 Years of Helping People Help Themselves,” following 6 p.m. vespers on Saturday, Nov. 17, at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 1703 N. Washington.

There will be an offering to help with Greek fire relief, which the

IOCC is engaged in.

Members of Christ the Savior Orthodox in Spokane Valley and St. John the Baptist Orthodox in Post Falls will share in the event.

Holy Trinity held an evening of Greek music and dancing Oct. 27 and a fund-raising luncheon on Oct. 28 to raise funds for the IOCC to use to help Greek people

recover from the fires.

During the lunch, they showed a movie on the Greek resistance in World War II on what is called “Oxi Day,” a holiday marking when the Greek leaders said “no”—“oxi”—to letting the Italian fascists under Mussolini invade Crete, said the Rev. Stephen Supica, priest.

For information, call 328-9310.

Walla Walla church hosts energy saving event

The Oregon Department of Energy and Energy Trust Oregon will present workshops from 9:30 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 17, at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Walla Walla.

The morning workshop is on “Save Your Congregation Energy and Money” and the afternoon one is on “Energy Stewardship.”

Oregon Interfaith Power and Light (OIPL), a project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, will present the workshops.

The first session covers principles of energy stewardship for congregations, low-cost and no-cost measures to save energy costs and funding energy efficiency projects for religious facilities.

Topics for the afternoon session

include reducing energy costs for homes and businesses, affordable renewable energy options and the ethics of energy stewardship.

The keynote speaker for both workshops is Doug Boleyn, who has more than 30 years of experience in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

For information, call 503-221-1054.

Holiday shopping can make a difference

Ganesh Himal Trading and Fair Trade will hold its annual Festival of Fair Trade on Thanksgiving weekend, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday to Sunday, Nov. 23, 24 and 25, at the Community Building, 35 W. Main in Spokane.

“Holiday shopping can make a difference in the lives of others,” said Sarah Calvin of Ganesh Himal.

The Festival of Fair Trade offers alternative gift giving that supports fair trade artisans and craftspeople in developing countries.

“Fair trade as opposed to free

trade focuses on relationships between producers and consumers, the wellbeing of artisans and their families and the preservation of traditional cultures and crafts,” said Sarah. “Fair Trade guidelines seek to assure that craftspeople are fairly compensated for their work and have good working conditions and security based on long term relationships.”

Ganesh Himal Trading, a local fair-trade business has been importing fairly traded clothing, jewelry, home décor items and other accessories from Nepal since starting in 1984.

The festival includes other fair-trade enterprises in the area: Global Folk Art, Moonflower Enterprises, Singing Shaman Traders, ConoSur Imports and others.

“Shoppers will find unique, useful gifts, and information about the producers and their cultures,” Sarah said.

For information, call 448-6561 or visit www.ganeshhimaltrading.com.

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God’s Presence in our Life Experiences - Nov 10
Sr. Mary Garvin, SNJM, at The Ministry Institute

Advent, Mary and Silence - Dec 8
With Taizé Prayer: Shonna Bartlett at The Ministry Institute

The Ministry Institute
at Mater Dei
405 E. Sinto

Contact: Shonna Bartlett
800 - 986-9585 x6012
bartletts@gonzaga.edu

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Interfaith Council presents multi-faith services in congregations

Now operating with volunteers only, the Interfaith Council is focusing on educating people about its faith constituents. To do that, it is offering to present multi-faith worship services for interested congregations during their worship hour.

On April 22, Bethany Presbyterian held the first multi-faith service, and on Oct. 14, the Spokane Center for Creative Living held another one.

The service at Bethany arose as an initiative of the congregation's worship committee. Connecting with the Interfaith Council for resources, they learned the council had a vision of doing something similar.

The Rev. Paul Rodkey of Bethany said the church wants to promote dialogue with faith traditions through doing such a service annually.

Aruna and Prakash Bhuta shared a Hindu song and story. Nooshin Aflatoon, a Baha'i formerly of Iran, chanted a Persian prayer. Elliot Fabric of Congregation Ner Tamid and Congregation Beth Haverim shared from the Jewish tradition.

"The service provided awareness of how our spiritual traditions touch the holy," Paul said. "Our congregation welcomed the guests with receptive hearts. There are so many people. We need to connect with them, valuing, listening to and appreciating the holy each offers."

He believes congregations need to set aside competitive concepts that "my



Prakash Bhuta at recent service

God is better than your God" or that "only the way we do it is right, holy and perfect."

"Those approaches are outmoded and dangerous. The faith community is called to higher levels of integrity," he said. "We need to stop the wars among churches and faiths. When congregations and faiths continue to fight, they each lose, because they foster a demonic presence of fear that leads them to abdicate their mission, ethics and morality."

"We have all fallen short," he said, aware also that each faith expression brings powerful insights to other faiths. "We need to call each other, to remind each other of the big picture, so we do not become reduced to personal piety that divides," Paul said.

Picking up on the experience at Beth-

any, the Interfaith Council has a goal of offering multi-faith services within the context of worship services of different congregations.

The hope is to share in worship with different faith traditions, to gain insight into the wisdom of those traditions and to understand how each tradition contributes to world community and reconciliation.

"Each service gives a flavor of beliefs through song, chant or story, a short overview, like dipping a tea bag in water for five minutes," said Joe Urlacher, a Baha'i member of the IC board.

"Given that conflict can come from differences, our goals are to inspire, educate and create understanding by encapsulating multi-faith elements in the worship service of the host congregation," he said. "It's more informal and intimate, in the context of one congregation, than the Thanksgiving or Easter community services."

Joe believes each religion seeks to help believers develop good human relations and become good human beings by finding calmness and peace in themselves, their families and the national and international context.

"Without inner peace, we cannot make real peace," he said. "World peace cannot be achieved through hate or force."

Joe commented that Baha'u'llah, who was the founder of Baha'i faith, encouraged his followers to "consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of

friendliness and fellowship."

Joe Niemiec, co-pastor of the Spokane Center for Creative Living, said that in hosting the multi-faith service in October, he hoped to help his congregation see, understand and honor what different faiths believe.

His study for ministry included study of many religions, including Hinduism, which he practiced for a while.

"Some churches and faiths consider it a sin to visit or participate in worship with other churches or faiths. We invited faith communities to come in mutual respect, share a little of their teachings, break bread at a potluck and intermingle after worship," said Joe Niemiec, who came to Spokane in February from Redding, Calif.

The Interfaith Council will offer resources and people to help one congregation each month hold such a multi-faith service.

Joe Urlacher said they are seeking interested congregations.

Being run by volunteers, the council currently has no ministries. It is focusing on education, which includes displays at community events, as well as the services.

The board includes 10 members and associates who are Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic and Jewish. They have openings for other faith communities and congregations that would like to host a multi-faith service.

For information, call 599-2411 or email jurlacher@sisna.com.

Consultation begins efforts to define alternatives to unjust globalization

When does the pursuit of economic wellbeing turn into greed? This question will be discussed at a November ecumenical consultation in Dar es Salaam, gathering to develop joint church strategies and actions to address the interlinked problems of poverty, excessive wealth and ecological degradation in Africa.

The consultation continues a process started at the WCC's 8th assembly in Harare in 1998 and known as Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth (AGAPE).

In Africa, the gap between rich and poor has widened, with destructive consequences for peace and for the environment.

Discussions in Dar es Salaam

will draw a "greed line" as a practical guidance to Christians on sources of growth—such as speculation or expropriation—and what level of wealth accumulation is unethical. The process will emphasize African concepts like "Ubuntu," as well as the theology of peace in the market.

Similar church encounters will be held on four other continents before the next WCC assembly. Recognizing that there can be no peace without justice, these encounters will also inform the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, which will conclude the Decade to Overcome Violence in 2011.

For information, visit www.oikoumene.org/?id=3117.

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Friday, Nov. 16 - Harvest Festival Dinner - 7pm

7pm tickets are \$20 per person

Saturday, Nov. 17 - Family Fun Day - 11am-1pm

Cost: Free will donation or can of food for the poor

Boutique Bazaar & Bake Sale from 2pm-7pm

Sunday, Nov. 18

French Toast Brunch - 7am-1pm - Adults \$5 & Children \$3

Boutique Bazaar & Bake Sale - 7am-1pm - Raffle Drawing: 1pm

For tickets to the dinner or more info on these events please call 358-4290

Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ
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Saturday Dec. 8 - 11 am - 5 pm

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Bazaars capture cultures and share wealth with those in need

Continued on page 1
the church's Nov. 3 bazaar. It will have booths for food, china, craft items, books, cards and a luncheon of casserole, vegetables, bread and dessert. Members make crafts and sew all year.

Some bazaars share a church's ethnic heritage. Central Lutheran Church is holding its annual Scandinavian Bazaar on Nov. 2.

For more than 30 years, members have made flat bread, lefse, Scandinavian cookies, meatballs and candy. They have booths with crafts. In years past, they served lunch, but now hold Kaffe Stua—a coffee and dessert tea on the morning of the bazaar.

To prepare, men and women spend more than three weeks making lefse, cookies and meatballs. Several generations of friends and families—some from as far as Seattle—gather at the church to help deep fry rosettes and bake sandbakkelse and other Scandinavian specialties.

Patty Harrison, chair, said members peel, cook and rice about 35 pounds of potatoes a day. The next day, they make lefse from them. The process is repeated for eight days. This year, they prepared 700 pounds of potatoes.

In many churches, women do most of the bazaar preparations and activities. Central Lutheran has equal involvement with men peeling potatoes, setting up, selling items, directing parking and assisting behind the scenes.

"Sandbakkelse are Norwegian," said one of the women helping prepare them on Oct. 21. "Scandinavian," said another.

The mix of national heritages among those baking that day at Central Lutheran reflect the denomination's Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Finnish, German roots. In the 1970s, they united as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American.

At the bazaar, many will wear their Scandinavian outfits to add to the ambiance of the event.

The mix of heritages in subsequent generations is exemplified by Lucinda Saue, who said her granddaughter is Norwegian and Scottish/English, Hispanic, Spanish and Jewish.

Rowena Fredekind said her German name hides that all four of her grandparents were Norwegian.

The Lutheran's Women's Club sells cookbooks and uses donations to buy food. Proceeds go to charities such as Cup of Cool Water, Christ Kitchen, Sally's House and Lutheran World Relief.

Westminster Congregational



Rowena Fredekind stacks baked sandbakkelse.

United Church of Christ had a strong November bazaar for more than 120 years. With declining participation, they decided four years ago to have a Christmas Market in conjunction with the Children's Chorus Concert.

"Our goal is to involve the whole church," said Robin McLain, administrator.

This year, the church's new men's fellowship will cook lunch for the Dec. 8 event. There has not been a men's group in the church since the 1960s.

Scot Stout, who organized the men's group, said the men first thought they would start after Christmas until the pastor asked them to make the lunch with three soups, homemade bread, salad, dessert and beverages. They will make everything from scratch from family recipes and recipes the men have tried and enjoyed.

Even with a strong history of bazaars, some churches are not able to muster the people power to hold one.

The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist is celebrating its 79th bazaar this year. The first bazaar, held in 1928, helped lay the building's cornerstone and raise funds to build the cathedral.

This year, their Nov. 3 bazaar will raise money for the service league, the governing body for the women's guilds, and for local organizations. Each guild has a table to sell items: one sells

mustard and tea towels; another sells white elephant used goods and cookies, and the youth group will help a guild serve meals and run the fair-trade coffee cart.

Proceeds support Crosswalk, the Women's Hearth, vacation Bible school, youth missions and guild projects.

St. John's will also offer guided tours of the cathedral, carillon and organ music, and meditation by walking the labyrinth.

Sharon and Ken Fisher, who chaired the bazaar this year and last, said they want to introduce the community to St. John's as "a vibrant, active church" inside what appears to be "a monolith on the top of the hill."

In contrast to 19 guilds from the 1940s to 1970s, now there are few. Many women work and have less time to help do a bazaar.

"While our numbers are shrinking, our members are dedicated and bring their gifts," she said.

Instead of a bazaar, First Presbyterian Church hosts a women's Christmas dessert, a Jubilee Alternative Christmas sale and the Messiah sing-along.

These events support the church's local and international mission work.

The dessert and Messiah draw people into the church who might not normally come. The Jubilee Alternative Christmas Sale on Nov. 9 involves people who sell fair-trade crafts from around the

world. The money earned goes to the artists.

Brenda Norton, community life director at First Presbyterian said, "Most of what we do here during Advent is focused on missions, serving others and drawing people to church during the holiday season."

Patsy Opsal of Christ Lutheran said, "We've had a successful bazaar in the past with vendors and a luncheon everybody loved."

A few years ago, after no one offered to chair the bazaar committee, Patsy gave it up. Young women have different priorities.

Manito United Methodist Church also decided to discontinue its bazaar.

The Rev. Joyce O'Connor-Magee said that "years ago, crafts for bazaars were labors of love, time and energy. Now we don't have that time and are not receiving the value people put into them."

Some members make items that would normally sell at a bazaar, such as prayer shawls, but the purpose is different.

Today, many people see time as money. Church members prioritize personal activities over church committees, but are still willing to contribute financially.

"Some people have more disposable income," Joyce said. "They don't save pennies in a dish by the sink. They have the luxury of just giving."

Manito still has a rummage sale and bake sale, and people donate to charities.

Some churches never had a bazaar. They have other ways to raise funds and do outreach.

Life Center has two evening women's teas in December.

Penny Kasslen, administrator at Life Center, said each member who comes buys two tickets and brings a friend.

Life Center tries to keep fundraising events to a minimum. Half the funds people donate for drinks from their free espresso bar goes for mission. The youth raises funds for activities and camp.

Life Center focuses on community outreach by joining the community turkey drive, buying Christmas presents for people in need and sharing the Gospel in person-to-person evangelism.

"Our focus is leading people to Jesus and helping them grow," she said.

So each church finds unique ways to connect with the community, build fellowship and raise funds to help people.

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Everyone knowing everyone in small towns has plusses and minuses

In a small community where everyone knows everyone and many people are related, it's hard for anyone to seek help for abuse or housing services, even when there is a program like the Family Resource Center in Davenport.

Lynne Kuchenbuch, director of the Lincoln County nonprofit that provides victim advocacy and homeless services, said that farming towns are wonderful places to rear children. Children can walk or ride their bikes and go anywhere. Parents know neighbors will watch out for their children and call to report anything, because they care about each other.

"While there are positive aspects, there are also struggles when everyone knows everyone else, and knows or wants to know everything about everyone," she said. "Behind everyone-knows-everything is secrecy about what happens behind closed doors, when someone who is charismatic outside those doors mistreats a spouse or child.

"To talk about domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse or elder abuse is to break the rule about not speaking about controversial issues," Lynne said. "Most victims do not speak, so the community is not aware of the extent of abuse. If they speak, it's hard for the community to believe the victim."

The Family Resource Center began in 1989 to provide advocacy for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

In the early 2000s, the Department of Social and Health Services' Community Service Office left Lincoln County. So the Family Resource Center helps people apply for DSHS food and medical assistance through its Basic Food Education and Outreach Program. It's Economic Justice Program assists with grievances.

Lynne came for a few months in 1998 to help the center restructure, add to its mission and increase its staff to work with medical clinics, agencies, hospitals, public health, drug programs, police, the court and churches. She wound up staying as its director.

After marrying and moving to Wilbur in 1977, she worked as a clinical pastoral counselor serving people in Lincoln and Stevens counties from offices at the Sunrise Church in Wilbur—then her church—and at the Loon Lake Assembly of God Church. She now attends ACTS Healing Room in Spokane and lives north of Reardan.

In 1990, she earned a master's degree in pastoral counseling at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Dixon, Mo., and was



Lynne Kuchenbuch

ordained in Wilbur.

The Family Resources Center serves Lincoln County's 11,000 people with nine employees, five volunteers and a 24/7 crisis line.

While the center is a grassroots, community-based, secular nonprofit, the impetus for Lynne's response to people who have been abused or raped, or who live in poverty is rooted in her faith. Many who work there are active in different churches.

"Every day we deal with women living in trauma under the terrorist threat in their own homes," she said. "God does not intend that anyone be abused in marriage or in any relationship.

"We assist women, men and children who are victims of crime, domestic violence or sexual assault," she said.

Lynne said the greatest challenge in the rural culture comes from "unwritten, unspoken rules about who you are based on your name and your economic and social status."

Beginning at school, children are often labeled from kindergarten and may experience bullying if they are seen as "different," she pointed out. In a city school, there are many "different" children with whom they can associate.

If a child's mother leaves her husband because of domestic violence, if police come to a home because of abuse or if there is a sexual assault, children may be labeled and treated negatively by peers, she said.

The Family Resource Center addresses these concerns proactively through educational opportunities, including life-skills and parenting classes. It is also welcomed in some of the county's school districts where they have

established trust to provide curricula on sensitive issues of abuse, sex, relationships and bullying.

While the curricula are based on "cultural competency," Lynne said the values are like those of many faiths.

"The programs teach children how to hold each other accountable, peer-to-peer, on bullying and abuse," said Lynne, who believes that if they understand about healthy relationships at school, they will be better able to identify and practice healthy relationships in their homes and lives.

Some youth do 20-hour senior community-service projects with the center. Some teach women how to maintain their cars so they won't be caught in the "middle of nowhere" and find their abuser pulling over "to help."

"Some women choose to live in an abusive relationship, because statistics show that women have a 70 percent greater chance of being murdered when they leave their abuser," Lynne said.

When women in a small town report abuse, she said confidentiality in the community is difficult, but confidentiality is a core value

at the Family Resource Center.

Along with the lack of anonymity, women seeking help struggle with the tendency to blame victims. The community is likely to blame the victim, rather than question the perpetrator's behavior or demand justice because of his criminal behavior.

"We have been called names, because it is difficult for the community to hold perpetrators accountable, because the perpetrators are neighbors, friends or family," she said.

Advocacy is a sensitive task.

"We need to respect clients and be with them when they face their abusers in court, but we do not speak for them. That would reinforce their loss of power and control," Lynne said.

"We are there to empower, to let a client know her options and possible consequences of the options. We will stand with her if she acts and understand if she does not.

"Most perpetrators are never prosecuted, because there is not enough evidence to prosecute. Protective orders affect only physical separation, but do not stop harassment from 200 text mails or 20 phone calls a day," she said. "These are not violations, but could lead to further conviction if reported."

Some who leave abusive homes stay in town. Others leave. For those who leave, the center connects them with a network of six Northeast Washington county agencies which have shelters.

Some who stay are safe, but for some it's costly. A perpetrator may use the legal system to harass the victim through child custody and visitation arrangements.

"Before my experience at FRC, I believed law enforcement could accomplish everything according to the law. That was a 'fairy tale.' Now I know how difficult it is to prosecute the cases.

"The sheriff's department covers 2,300 square miles with eight incorporated towns and three unincorporated towns. So someone who calls for help has to wait," Lynne said.

In her experience, churches can be positive or negative factors. Many who leave their spouses find it is hard to attend a church as a single person.

"Small-town churches are family based," she said. "Churches need to be safe havens where victims can seek help, be received, understood and accepted without being urged to do something that could put them back in harm's way, such as return to a violent relationship," she said.

Domestic violence is about power and control, which may be manifested through spiritual, psychological, verbal, financial, sexual or other less visible forms of abuse than physical abuse.

In small communities, education is also reaching people one-by-one through modeling healthy relationships, which the center's staff seeks to do. They practice nurturing and self-care, and maintaining mutual respect.

Now, the center is dealing with more homelessness, as local affordable rental housing is being sold. Its shelter, which has been growing in recent years, helps homeless families deal with issues of health, disability, drugs and other impediments to housing.

Because space in the shelter is limited, domestic violence victims take precedence, so there are hotel vouchers for the homeless when there is no other choice.

To meet increasing needs, the Family Resource Center is building a domestic violence shelter and a homeless shelter with two studio apartments, as part of a three-phase expansion on four acres in Davenport.

For information, call 725-4358.



Shelter construction nearly complete.

Photo by Rebecca Harris

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U.S. foreign and corporate policy complicit in Guatemalan suffering

Continued from page 1
celebrated communion with coffee and tortillas, the everyday beverage and food, as wine and bread were in Jesus’ time and culture,” she explained.

“Julia spoke when no one else would speak. It was easier to pretend the suffering, violence and torture were not happening. Most of the war was fought outside of Guatemala City where tourists came,” Gloria said.

“Julia has been a voice of truth through her writing and her poetry,” Gloria said. “She reflects the pain of the Guatemalan experience of violence.”

Because of human rights abuses, U.S. President Jimmy Carter cut military aid to Guatemala in 1978.

In 1979, a priest in the ecumenical group Julia worked with was kidnapped and tortured. He recanted on TV.

Walking on the main street of Guatemala City after that, Julia was grabbed by would-be kidnappers. She screamed, yelled, flailed and made such a scene they let her go, Gloria said.

Julia fled into exile for about 15 years, first with the Grand Champs monastic community in Switzerland. While there, she worked with the United Nations Human Rights office. In exile, she wrote three books of poetry.

After the Kinslers left Guatemala, they spent three years in Switzerland while Ross served with the World Council of Churches where they reconnected with Julia.

When the Kinslers returned to the United States, Ross worked in the U.S. office of the WCC in New York City for three years and then taught at the San Francisco Theological School extension in Los Angeles.

There, Gloria became involved with Jesuits and Holy Names Sisters in the sanctuary movement, an underground railroad for Central American refugees fleeing oppression.

In 1987, the Kinslers moved to Costa Rica, where Ross taught at the Latin American Biblical Seminary and Gloria led church and solidarity delegations to experience the multiple realities of Central America, meeting with business people, farm workers, peasants, the U.S. embassy, priests, pastors, lay people, aid programs and ecumenical agencies.

Meanwhile, Julia spoke in Europe and North America, telling people of oppression, machismo violence in homes, government violence and human rights abuses that were intended to keep the wealthy protected and in power.

“I tell you this, because I don’t



Gloria Kinsler interprets the life and poetry of Julia Esquivel.

want it to happen to you,” she told an audience in a packed room at the World Council of Churches’ Sixth Assembly in 1983 at Vancouver, B.C.

She knew that the then U.S.-based and now multi-national corporations, as well as U.S. policies supported the injustices and inhumanities in her country.

Julia later lived in Nicaragua and helped refugees in Mexico.

Soon after the Peace Accords were signed in 1996, Julia returned to Guatemala, accompanied by international witnesses. She returned to her family home. Her aunt, who lived there, had told people Julia was a guerilla, so people were suspicious.

Gloria said that after Julia returned to Guatemala, she helped Auxiliary Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi compile several volumes in the Recovery of Historical Memory Project, documenting 200,000 civilian deaths and disappearances. She listened to and recorded stories as part of this effort to tell the truth, make reconciliation possible and prevent future atrocities.

The volumes, “Guatemala: Never Again,” were published in April 1998. The bishop, 75, was murdered three days later.

The document reported that about 90 percent of the atrocities, including massacres of more than 400 villages during the 36-year civil war were at the hands of the government, police and military.

Six months later, the United

Nations’ report said 95 percent of the violations were by government apparatus, Gloria said.

Now Julia, 77, works with women who were tortured and traumatized by the violence.

In 1999, Orbis published the Kinsler’s book, *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life*. Through this tutorial book, they interpret Central American realities to North Americans.

The Kinslers remind Christians of jubilee justice teaching—the vision of release from the bondage of debt.

Gloria said, “The first mention of Sabbath in the Scriptures is the story of the manna for the Hebrews in the wilderness. Everyone was provided for so they would have enough. No one was to have too much or too little.

“Sabbath and jubilee are intended to restore that balance when people move from times of want to times of plenty. There are still hungry, homeless, outcast people who do not share in the plenty God provides,” she said.

Gloria said life in Guatemala is worse today with widespread violence and poverty as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Previously Guatemalans lived in poverty, but survived with their families and communities intact.

Central Americans who fled repression, death threats and war in the 1970s and 1980s were considered “economic refugees,” but today they are economic

refugees. They come because NAFTA undercuts Guatemalan and Mexican farmers’ ability to sell their corn, rice, beans and chickens because U.S. subsidized corn, rice, beans and chickens are sold for less.

Farmers have to sell their land to agribusinesses to buy corn, rice and beans to feed their families.

“We blame them for coming,” she said. “Instead we in churches need to understand they come because NAFTA has destroyed their livelihoods, and because U.S. businesses and agriculture need them as cheap labor.

“Their communities are broken. Men have been killed or are in the U.S. trying to work. There is violence against the women and children left behind. The fabric of

Continued on next page

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Truth-telling is essential to help heal people traumatized by torture

Continued from previous page
their society has been destroyed,” Gloria said.

Unlike poor Americans who are blamed for and blame themselves for their poverty, poor Mayans know why they are poor—their land was taken and livelihoods undermined. They do not blame themselves, but retain a sense of dignity, she explained.

“Julia does not always write of the deep sorrow she carries with her,” Gloria said. She also shares hope in a poem, “Why Not?”: “If the stars can be reflected in puddles of mud, why could they not be reflected in the most evil of people.”

Excerpts of two poems accompany this article.

For information, call 323-4037.

Revelation (1984)

....The cry of the poor
is clear water
that rinses off our makeup;
we can let the mask fall....

The Sigh (1985)

When it is necessary to drink so much pain,
when a river of anguish
drowns us,
when we have wept many tears
and they flow like rivers
from our sad eyes,
only then
does the deep hidden sigh of our neighbor
become our own....

Mexican speaker describes migration issues

Sharing perspectives on migration and social movements among indigenous people on Oaxaca, Mexico, Centolia Maldonado Vázquez told of the influence of oil, drug trafficking, remittances, tourism and coffee in undermining communities, families and culture.

Speaking at Whitworth University as part of the Witness for Peace Northwest fall speakers tour, she gave insights into the migration to the United States.

“Migration results in breakup of families and loss of culture in the communities of origin. In destination communities, migrants find poor infrastructure, discrimination, racism and violation of collective and individual rights,” Centolia said.

Through her work with the Indigenous Front of Bi-National Organizations (FIOB), she helps with the development and self-determination of migrant and non-migrant indigenous people, assuring human rights, justice and gender equity across borders.

She said migration arises from the decline in agricultural production, other jobs and the



Centolia Maldonado Vazquez

market for textile, clay, handicraft and agricultural products.

Before the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), basic foods were produced locally. Families used commonly owned land. There were diverse native seeds, abundant, clean water and government-controlled prices.

Since NAFTA, less food is

grown locally, land is bought and sold, the land is less fertile, there are more genetically modified seeds, and water is scarce and contaminated, she said, and fewer locally produced goods sell because of competition of subsidized U.S. products.

“The FIOB believes Mexico and the United States need political, economic, legal and social changes to eliminate the causes of misery, the lack of respect for workers’ rights, unemployment, health problems, political and police repression, governmental corruption and the lack of democracy,” Centolia said. “The FIOB seeks a strategy that both respects international treaties and indigenous people’s rights.”

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Poetry and art help woman emerge from abuse and illness

By Deidre Jacobson
While Cheery Arquero's faith in God wavered many times in her life, she believes God's presence was always close at hand, even through her experiences of physical, sexual and verbal abuse that several times shook her desire to live.

"I gave up on God, but looking back, I can see that God never gave up on me," she said.

Cheery's journey of faith and healing brought her to the Women's Hearth, a drop-in center for women at 920 W. Second in downtown Spokane a year ago.

Her story is similar to many who gather there to find a safe, welcoming place for them to struggle to mend their lives.

Founded in 1991, the Women's Hearth brings women together with volunteers to form a community that nurtures relationships and self-determination, and empowers them to challenge systems that oppress women. As women share their stories and lives, they grow and heal.

The Women's Hearth is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday to nurture women like Cheery.

Now she seeks to devote her life to helping others heal by sharing her story as a catalyst for their healing.

She facilitates an art group at 12:30 p.m. Wednesdays at the Hearth and encourages the women in her class to express their deep emotions on paper.

Sorrow, shame and rage can find expression through the use of color and design.

As she releases her own pain, she finds she can reach out to help others heal.

Cheery has found both art and writing are ways to channel the fantasy life that once helped her escape her bleak reality.

She realized that her fantasy life became her reality and kept her



Cheery Arquero shows one of her paintings.

from experiencing real life and relationships.

As a participant in the writing workshop at the Women's Hearth, she is writing her life story.

"When memories and feelings are deep, sometimes they are difficult to express verbally. Writing in a journal or composing a poem provides release," she said.

In her journal, Cheery details her experience of sexual, physical, verbal and emotional abuse in several contexts during childhood and into adulthood, including rape and domestic violence.

She shares how she found comfort from her confusion and shame by developing a fantasy life as she wrestled with a foster home, returning home, inner struggles, suicide attempts and hospitalizations.

"The more I tried to figure out how to act, the worse people seemed to think of me. My escape was art, poetry and my fantasy world," said Cheery.

Her third husband's compassion and love, she said, has been part of her healing.

"When I want to talk, he listens," she said. "At first, I was shocked."

After having three children and starting to reconnect with God, Cheery continued to struggle with the addictive nature of her fantasy life and with suicidal thoughts.

Honoring her dream of teaching geology, she went back to college at age 31 and graduated with a bachelor's degree. Upon receiving a fellowship at Eastern Washington University, she moved with her family to Cheney, where she

now attends church.

Connecting with a Christian counselor, she began to feel that God was telling her not to be afraid.

"The prayer group at my church prayed for me and with me. I worked with the counselor, painfully recounting my experiences and journaling—pouring out my memories."

As the fantasy and suicidal thoughts have lessened, her counselor urged her to embrace a further step of healing—forgiveness.

In March 1993, she decided to forgive.

"I knew that anger and bitterness kept me a prisoner. I made a card for each person who had hurt me and read it out loud. Then I put each one in a coffin and gave them to my therapist," she said.

"Now I want to help other women in their healing journeys through poetry, art and sharing my story," Cheery said. "I want every woman to have hope."

In her poem, "Abuse: Why Are

You," Cheery invites others into her experience of abuse that led her from reality into fantasy and back to reality.

The poem expresses how abuse, whether subtle or blatant, stirs fear that "blasts your soul away," so "you become nothing, an object of someone else's delusions."

Despite resorting to fantasy, the poem continues, reality and pain catch up: "Where did all the hurt surface in the center of who I am?" Recognizing the distinction between fantasy and reality, she chooses to live with other people even though she cannot change or control their behavior as she can with the fantasy people.

Cheery's poem ends with an affirmation to let real people play their part in her life of reality.

At the Women's Hearth, she has developed friendships and conversed one-to-one with women, learning from and with them as they delve into each other's lives and souls, sharing from the depths of their hearts.

For information, call 455-4249.

Eco-Justice Program seeks Thanksgiving prayers

Washington, D.C. - To commemorate Thanksgiving, the National Council of Churches (NCC) Eco-Justice Program will accept prayers for the nation's farmers as part of a "Thanksgiving Prayer Offering" through Dec. 15.

People of faith are encouraged to submit prayers, which will be collected in a web-based anthology to highlight the connection between the food they eat and the farmers who plant, grow and harvest God's bounty.

"To be truly thankful for the food that God provides, we must be aware and acknowledge all of

the hands and processes involved as it finds its way to our table," says Cassandra Carmichael, director of the NCC Eco-Justice Program.

"Farmers, farm workers and rural communities as well as the rest of God's creation—land, water, air and soil—deserve our thanks as we sit down with family and friends this Thanksgiving season," she said.

Prayers can be submitted online at www.nccecojustice.org/thanksgivingcontest.html.

The "Thanksgiving Prayer Offering" coincides with the promotion of two free, downloadable harvest-themed resources produced by the NCC Eco-Justice Program that can be used for congregational study and Thanksgiving Sunday worship services: "At the Lord's Table: Everyday Thanksgiving" and "Our Daily Bread." The resources are available at: www.nccecojustice.org/faithharvestworship.html.

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Corporate food production affects some people's right to food

Given that food is a human right protected by humanitarian and international law, Brother David Andrews of the Congregation of Holy Cross asked in Spokane a question he deals with in his work with the National Rural Life Conference in Des Moines, Iowa:

"How hard is it to feed everyone? The world's growers grow enough calories, but people continue to die of hunger," he told an audience at Gonzaga University for the Catholicism and the New Millennium opening lecture.

An advocate of sustainable food systems, he has attended meetings of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Cancun and Hong Kong. He also serves on the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture and on the board of Heifer International.

Speaking on "Eating Is A Moral Act," he pointed out that each time people put bread in their mouths they are part of the world—from the farmer who grew the wheat to the person who made the bread.

"We have the most in common when we eat and drink," he said, disappointed that the United States has not recognized the United Nations document that declares food to be a human right.

It is a civil right "for the good of the order," Brother David said. "It's not just a right to choose what to eat, but to choose what kind of system we want to feed us—an industrial agricultural system or a sustainable ecological system.

"Human development and health need to be considered along with the bottom line in a holistic view of values," he said. "Human development is physical, cultural, social and spiritual for individuals and for communities. Those factors comprise the 'integral bottom line' in contrast to the 'bottom line' that is only monetary.

"We must think about the whole person and whole community," he said.

The two systems have different criteria: One produces in quantity and the other, with quality.

"Production for quantity focuses on growing too much and exporting the excess. It focuses on efficiency, cutting out waste, producing the most with the least cost," he said.

When ethanol weighs in, it will affect decisions about growing the U.S.'s largest crop, corn. It may mean taking land that is left fallow for one or two years as a conservation method to replenish the soil, and planting every year—using marginal land that may be more prone to erode.

Brother David spoke of concerns when large corporations gobble up other large corpora-



Brother David Andrews converses after his presentation.

tions and control the agricultural industry. These concerns have been raised at meetings of World Trade Organization, which is writing rules for world food trade with few regulations.

While that seems to be the trend, he said that there are people promoting another way, voices saying the food system can be different, because "the poor of the world deserve our action on their behalf," he said.

"There are empty villages in the United States and around the world with their land for sale," he said. "What will happen to communities that used to thrive?"

Sustainability is an alternative vision that recognizes the potential destructiveness of climate change from the focus on economic profits. It sees the need for appropriate technologies and human care as integral to the bottom line.

People are organizing for change through promotion of fair trade, just wages, community supported agriculture, farmers' markets and buying local.

That approach is even catching the interest of Walmart and McDonald's, which, he said, say they are developing sustainability programs.

"We are promoting carbon consciousness related to menus, so people can choose to reduce climate change," he said.

"The notion of sustainability is emerging as people become concerned about what's in their food and what effect growing food has on energy, building designs and landscape," Brother David said. "People oppose sweatshops in the field for farm workers.

"Students are asking for cage-free eggs, boycotting fast-food restaurants to win higher prices

for tomatoes so farm workers can be paid more.

"Pope Benedict XVI calls for responsibility to God's creatures, warning about treating them as a commodity to produce higher quantities of food. Animals and human beings have a mutual relationship in the Bible," Brother David said.

He defines "food security" as assurance that all people at all times have access to nutritious, safe, acceptable, culturally appropriate food, produced in a socially just way. It requires people to reclaim sovereignty over food decision making in developing and developed worlds. The WTO challenges that concept, resisting limiting their investments.

The local food movement is one way to promote sustainability.

Communities are organizing farmers' markets with direct marketing from the farmer to consumer. Industrial apple growers, for example, may be more concerned about how an apple looks than its taste or nutritional content.

"We also need to watch laws that would cut local control over seeds by disallowing local initiatives to limit or prohibit genetic modification of seeds and plants, and patents of them by companies," Brother David said.

"The food system needs to be accountable, locally and regionally based and environmentally sustainable to have democratic food security in contrast with a corporate food system," he said.

The Business Alliance for Living Local Economies (BALLE) is a network of businesses focused on sustainable farming using the integral bottom line.

Food Policy Councils are working for food sovereignty in

Canada, writing food charters to include the community, as individuals and groups articulate positions and strategies on issues that affect them.

Brother David's goal is food self-sufficiency, bringing governance back to the people.

"Catholic social teachings bring us to believe in the importance of sustainable agriculture. Many Catholics are not aware of our social teachings beyond being kind to their neighbors. Those teachings call us to awareness of systemic issues," he said.

Catholic social teachings include humanitarian change, subsidiarity—higher levels not taking

from lower levels of community—solidarity in commitment to the wellbeing of others, distribution of goods for the wellbeing of all, the common good, the integrity of creation, the preferential option for the poor, encouragement of dialogue and collaboration, and the defense of nature.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Brother David said, calls for strengthening urban-rural community, recognizing farming as a vocation, a way of life and an expression of faith following moral criteria.

He challenges people to watch the Farm Bill: Does it respect sustainability? Does it shift power from large-scale producers?

He urges people to see loopholes and inconsistencies in laws, support local environmental sustainability, help farmers and farm workers find common ground, challenge large subsidies to corporate farmers for mono-crop production, and to challenge politicians who are in the pockets of large corporations.

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While some media promote the romance of war, others question it

Ah! The glory, the drama, the romance of war! We see it depicted on the big screen, over internet, on TV, in video games, on the radio and in newsprint.

We see a soldier in his dress uniform kiss his bride. We see fathers and mothers return from war into the arms of spouses and children. We imagine the bravery of soldiers in camouflage garb with high-powered guns wiping out invisible people—enemies.

The imagery of glory, drama and romance silences some people behind the “support the troops” slogan that is part of the propaganda machine of war.

That machine is designed to feed the pocketbooks of a few out of the billions Congress seems inevitably to approve, fearing potential political repercussions more than respecting lives of innocent human beings caught in the path of slaughter.

“Support our troops” when they come home may mean a big parade—if only we

can win. Meanwhile, we have glimpses of two- to three-week homecomings with families hugging at the airport.

Invisible are silenced veterans, who keep horrors to themselves, who know atrocities they committed and find it hard to live with themselves or their nightmares as they seek to re-enter—if lucky—middle-class lives.

Some who return, continue to glorify war to salve the pain of what they did. Some find solace in faith that redirects the discipline of military life into a disciplined faith. Some speak—some right away and some eventually over the years. Some remain silent as their children go off to new wars concocted by the political games that some believe require war to maintain power of a party or person.

We think the wars are over there or on our screens, and we are immune, but the horror of war is with us in our homes, next door, in the drug culture, in homeless people. It

is evident in anyone not supported enough by any of the “support our troops” rhetoric that silences people before, during and after wars.

We teach war when we teach history as only dates of battles and treaties. We teach war in the violence we are told people demand on their screens. We teach war by assuming its romantic, dramatic, intriguing glory.

War permeates our apparently comfortable society. It eats away at our economy, wholesale transferring wealth to a few—wealth above the budget, borrowing from future generations. That debt will leave many vets poor in their elderly years.

War fills our homeless shelters, streets and soup kitchens with vets and people cut out by an economy that undermines affordable housing, living-wage jobs and safe homes.

War leaves many vets and civilians

depressed, disoriented, in shell shock, in post-traumatic stress if not limbless, brain-injured, heartless, scarred, drug-addicted, or ill from nuclear fallout, depleted uranium, agent orange or other side-effects of the weaponry we have used.

In the midst of that glory, drama and romance, Hollywood, perhaps attuned to public disapproval of the war in Iraq, is producing several films critical of the war while we are in the midst of it. That’s unusual.

Let us hope they will raise firmly and publicly enough some of the real-life questions that have emerged as this war has intersected with lives.

When and where do you see the face of war, the post-war face of war, the ongoing hurt of war, the injustice of war in your daily life? What do our faiths call us to do in face of war?

Mary Stamp - Editor

Humankind still attempts to pursue idealistic ends by cruel means

Why is humankind still trying to accomplish anything by going to war?

The main things that wars have given us are more and more deadly weapons, plus excessive profits for their manufacturers.

While trying to find answers to questions asked by four-year-old children, Wendell Jamieson had to be persistent to find an answer to “Why is there war?”

People in government didn’t try to answer. Even the War College didn’t have an explanation.

The answer Jamieson published in his book, “Father Knows Less,” came from a professor at West Point, Colonel John Smith, who is a Gulf War veteran.

The colonel’s main points bear thinking about, especially by anyone who regards war as a problem-solving device.

The four main reasons he gives are fear, economics, different ideologies and a sense of honor.

There certainly has been plenty of fear

going around lately.

What were the yellow, orange and red alerts supposed to do, other than arouse fear?

In terms of their effect on behavior they were reminiscent of the Baby On Board signs some people put in their car windows a few years ago. Was anyone’s driving behavior improved after reading one of those?

If you’ve noticed how often contractors for various goods and services in Iraq and Afghanistan are being awarded no-bid contracts, it should be obvious that there’s much money to be made in war.

Armaments manufactured in the United States are sold all over the world through a variety of legal and illegal channels.

The greed and the problems caused by it are not new.

Greedy people never seem to have enough of anything, even the feeling of entitlement that their position gives them

the right to be greedy.

An inflexible ideology and a skewed sense of honor can lead to the feeling that it is permissible to impose one’s beliefs on others, taking any level of stern measures, including torture and killing, to bring about compliance if resistance is met.

On a recent broadcast of “Frontline,” a former vice president of Iran said: “Politicians who see themselves as carrying out the will of God are dangerous to the world.”

According to the colonel, the four elements can appear in any order or at any level. There is no set recipe.

In the 1970s, polls showed that 80 percent of the people in the United States opposed the nuclear arms race, but leaders stubbornly followed that course. Why? Did those in power and those with money have too much invested?

Similarly, our oil dependency, behind some of our warlike behavior, is something

most Americans would like to be free of, but subsidies go to oil companies, not alternative energy development.

Polls today indicate that 60 to 70 percent of the people want our nation out of Iraq. Leaders seem tied up in the entanglements of the financial interests that keep us there.

Why is there war?

Humankind is still trying to accomplish supposedly idealistic ends through the singularly messy, cruel and wasteful methods of warfare.

How do we expect to create good from something that brings out the worst in so many people, in our private contractors, in our government leaders and in our society?

Are we, in the words of one of Julia Esquivel’s poems “manufacturers of orphans, misery and death”?

Nancy Minard
Editorial team

Reflections

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

Letting go of certainty to find new answers means being willing to sojourn with each other in some confusion for quite a while. That’s uncomfortable for everyone. A journey without clear landmarks and an agreed-upon, predictable destination arouses anxiety.

Thirsting for hope, thirsting for a future that fosters freedom and creativity for all people can drive us out of the captivity of our certainties and into the wilderness of discovery.

In the Bible, wilderness is a scary but necessary place, a place to confront false gods, to shed illusions about ourselves, to choose faithfulness to God’s guidance over temptation to self-interest.

Boldness is not random action, not acting before we pray and listen. Boldness that brings hope is grounded in prayerful listening to God and to each other, so that prophetic action by individuals and churches is in response to Christ, not just a grab for power or gain.

Storms are inevitable as differing ideas meet and test each other. Even the most prayerful listening can produce storms of concern and anxiety as we wrestle with the possibility that we need to consider some change. It’s not just “the others” who need to change.

The Rev. Jan Griffin
All Saints’ Episcopal - Richland

Our long, drawn out, sometimes public discussions of the nature of God can be adventures in missing the point. What we share—all of us, not just those who believe a certain way—is the living of this life brimming with the danger and possibility.

The questions we ask one another become important, and so, too, does this time we allow one another to answer those questions. Do we leave time enough to ask questions that lead to real life? Are we gathering and sharing unstructured, but intentional space with one another to find out what meaningful things are happening in each other’s lives?

The more we can do this together, the more we become a community that embodies God. The more we can do this together, the more we help one another through the struggles and paste them into the “center of our longings.”

There are consequences to this way of living together and with God. It is intimate. It will change us. It is messy and inefficient. It takes courage. I hope that in this season of falling leaves and waning daylight, we can share our lives boldly with one another, so we can live deeply rather than on the surface. When we do, may we too, speak of God.

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

God is inviting us to “grow in grace.” Growing in grace is taking time to live in the Word, to pray and to allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in this new adventure. Growing in grace is learning to give voice to how God has been working in our lives today. It is remembering that God fills God’s people with power and the boldness to speak God’s love to those who need it most. Growing in grace is about sharing in God’s mission to love and bless and save the whole world!

The Rev. Ginny Johnson
St. Paul Lutheran - Quincy

What intrigues me most about the Lord’s Prayer is that the whole thing is done in plurals—*Our* Father; Give *us* this day *our* daily bread; forgive *us* our debts, as *we* forgive those who trespass against *us*; lead *us* not into temptation, deliver *us* from evil.

If God is literally *our* father, then it means that we are siblings. The Lord’s Prayer does more than remind us of that. It is a response to people asking Jesus, “Teach us how to pray.” So he says through his words, “Pray as a family.” Remember that you are my brother and sister. I am yours.

Dennis Ashley, board president
Unity Church

The “drive-through” culture spills into religion. Some opportunist au-

thor may soon write a book entitled, “All You Need to Know about Jesus While Waiting for the Elevator.” In my student days, we desperate scholars tried to memorize “Cliffs Notes” the night before the exam. I suspect that those who succumb to such condensed studies are not so much interested in mastery as the ability to impress others with a few words or phrases that leave the impression of a thorough knowledge of the subject.

Yes, we can learn religious jargon in a matter of minutes and memorize a creed during our half-hour lunch, but a changed life requires a bit more time, energy and commitment. Faith isn’t a quick fix, and God doesn’t fit onto a bumper sticker.

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

The Fig Tree is a terrific ministry we enjoy each month and pass many articles on.

Lois & John Selmar
Gresham, Ore.

The paper gets better all the time. You do a great job.

Martha Ice - Spokane

Thank you for your faithful work.

Linda Barnes - Spokane

Faith leaders urge reform of farm bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Church World Service is in a group of faith leaders calling the Senate to reform U.S. farm policy.

The Rev. John L. McCullough, head of the New York-based hunger fighting agency, said the U.S. system of low crop prices and government subsidies is destroying small farmers and communities in developing nations and harming U.S. rural communities.

“We need farm policy that supports small farmers and does not make it difficult or impossible for small farmers in developing nations to make a living by farming,” John said.

The alliance of faith groups urges Senators to adopt reforms to reclaim the farm bill’s historic moral role as a covenant with small- and medium-sized farmers, and a source of hope to people in need at home and abroad.

“Fairness and opportunity for farmers in times of need were the fundamental values on which Congress built the first farm bill in the 1930s,” said Episcopal Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. “Today’s farm policy has abandoned those values. We need to put fairness and opportunity back into U.S. farm policy.”

“Our country needs a fresh approach to the farm bill to help U.S. farmers of modest means, struggling rural communities, hungry people and farmers in developing countries,” said the Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World.

“The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is concerned that payments go to the largest, wealthiest farms, leaving behind the majority of farm families,” said the Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, stated clerk of the assembly.

“If we fail to provide real reform to trade distorting commodity programs, then our subsidized export is not food, but poverty for the developing world,” said the Rev. Earl Trent Jr., executive director of mission for the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

“We can and must do more to address the plight of struggling family farmers,” said the Most Rev. Ronald Gilmore, president of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

As part of its Sow Justice campaign, CWS has educational resources and updates at www.churchworldservice.org/Educ_Advo/farmbill/.



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Calendar of Events

- Nov 1

• “Theology, Ethics and Agriculture,” Mark Graham, Villanova University, Catholicism and the New Millennium, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 7:30 p.m. - 323-6715
- Nov 1, 2

• “Strengthening the Statewide Religious Voice for Justice,” Friday at 6 p.m., St. Paul’s United Methodist, 1620 N. Monroe, and Saturday at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway - 206-390-4133
- Nov 1 & 15

• PeaceWorks, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m. - 838-7870
- Nov 2

• “United Nations: Voice of Women Religious Makes a Difference,” Convent of the Holy Names, 2911 W. Ft. Wright Dr., 4-8 p.m. - 474-2300
- Nov 3-4

• Fall Folk Festival, Spokane Community College, Saturday - 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Sunday - Noon-5 p.m.
- Nov 7

• “Stewards of Children: Adults Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse,” Michael Jay of Stewards of Children, Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 12th, 5:30-9 p.m. - 624-4550
- Nov 8

• “Explore the World of Coffee Beyond the Cup,” Lands Council at Thomas Hammer Coffee, 210 W. Pacific, 6 p.m. - 209-2407
- Nov 9 & 10

• Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation Fall Retreat, Resisting the War Machine, Gwinwood Conference Center, Lacey - 206-789-5565
- Nov 9

• Soul Food Dinner, Black Student Union Club, Hixson Union Building, Whitworth University, 6 p.m. - 777-4568
- Nov 9-10

• “An Emergent Mainline Dialogue: Listening to Generations Past, Present and Future,” Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University - 777-4263
- Nov 10

• “God’s Presence in Our Life Experiences,” Mary Garvin, SNJM, Ministry Institute
- Nov 10

• “The Vision—Moving from Good to Great,” Willie Brown, NAACP, Northern Quest in Airway Heights, 5 p.m. -
- Nov 11-17

• Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, Gonzaga University Center for Community Action and Service, 617 E. Boone - 323-6824
- Nov 12

• Veterans Day Funeral March to Spokane congressional offices, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane and Veterans for Peace, 35 W. Main, noon - 838-7870
- Nov 12

• “Safe Food and Fertilizer,” Patty Martin, director of Safe Food and Fertilizer, Jepson Center Wolff Auditorium, Gonzaga, 5:30-7 p.m. - 323-5951
- Nov 12

• Universal Children’s Day, “United Nations Actions in Support of Children’s Rights and Welfare,” Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr., 7 p.m.
- Nov 13

• Free Thanksgiving Dinner, Women’s and Children’s Free Restaurant, 1620 N. Monroe, 4-6 p.m.
- Nov 13

• “Carl Maxey: Gonzaga’s Type-A Gandhi,” Jim Kershner, critic and columnist for The Spokesman-Review newspaper, Globe Room of Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga, 7 p.m. - 328-4220
- Nov 14

• Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Fair, SCC Lair, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. - 533-8221
- Nov 14

• “The Post-Industrial Eater: Aligning Ethical Values and Food Choices,” Ellen Maccarone, Jepson Center, Gonzaga, 7 to 9 p.m. - 323-5951
- Nov 16

• Whitworth International Banquet, Hixson Union Building, Whitworth, 6 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. entertainment - 777-4509
- Nov 17

• Energy workshops, St. Paul’s Episcopal, Walla Walla, “Save Your Congregation Energy and Money,” 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m., “Energy Stewardship,” 1 p.m.-4:30 p.m. - (503) 221-1054 x203
- Nov 17

• KYRS Community Concert by Big Red Barn, Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main, 9:30 p.m. - 747-3012
- Nov 19

• International Orthodox Christian Charities, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox, 1703 N. Washington, 6 p.m. - 328-9310
- Nov 22

• Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, “Compassion, Community and Caring,” Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 12th, 10 a.m. - 838-4277
- Nov 26-30

• AIDS Awareness Week, Gonzaga University Center for Community Action and Service, 617 E. Boone - 323-6824
- Nov 28

• 92.3 FM film, “Thirst,” Magic Lantern Theatre, 25 W Main, 7 p.m. - 747-3012
- Nov 29

• “Torture: Religious Ethics and National Security,” John Perry, S.J., professor of ethics, Arthur Maura Center for Peace and Justice, St. Paul’s College, University of Manitoba, Canada, Barbieri Moot Court Room, Gonzaga School of Law 7:30 p.m. - 323-6701
- Dec 1

• World AIDS Day, Gonzaga University Center for Community Action and Service, 617 E. Boone - 323-6824
- Dec 1-8

• Christmas Creche Exhibit, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1620 E. 29th, 4-9 p.m., weekdays, noon-9 p.m., weekends - 951-7288 or 533-0613
- Dec 5

• Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark’s Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m. (may be Nov. 28)
- Dec 6

• Fig Tree Board, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 9 a.m.
- Dec 6

• Martin Luther King Outreach Center Benefit, Davenport, noon
- Weds-Sat

• Habitat-Spokane work days - call 534-22552
- Thursdays

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

• Colville Peace Vigil - call 675-4554
- 1st Sat

• Ministers’ Fellowship Union and Minister’s Wives/Widows Fellowship, 806 W. Indiana - 624-0522
- 3rd Mons

• NAACP - call 467-9793

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Buddhist monastic community relies on generosity of those they teach

Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron's search for life's meaning led her from Los Angeles around the world to Nepal, where she studied Tibetan Buddhism with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and others.

In 2003, she founded and now is abbess of Sravasti Abbey near Newport, a monastic community learning and practicing the Buddha's teachings to cultivate peace in the hearts of residents, visitors and, by extension, the world.

The abbey offers retreats, meditation and classes for lay people. It also prepares men and women for ordination.

The abbey is named for Sravasti, where the Buddha spent 25 "rains retreats" and spoke sutras, teaching and training monastics. It is an abbey because male and female monastics train as equals.

The resident community of seven—three monastics and four in training—live on donations of people who find their teachings nourish their spiritual lives.

Chodron grew up in a Jewish family and culture that often talked about suffering in the Holocaust.

"As a child in the Vietnam War era, I wanted to know why I was alive and what the meaning of life was," she said of her years in middle-class Covina, Calif., a small orange-growing community.

Despite her comforts, she heard often about the Holocaust and did not understand how humans could treat other humans that way. Neither could she accept that fighting a war in Vietnam would ever bring peace nor understand the prejudice that led to the Watts riots in Los Angeles.

"I could not figure out why adults had such prejudices when they taught us to love our neighbors as ourselves," she said.

Studying history at the University of California in Los Angeles, she learned that in every generation people kill each other in the name of God.

After graduating in 1971, she thought she could help people by teaching. Perhaps that was the purpose of life.

She taught a year in Los Angeles and then traveled with her husband around the world using mostly local transportation to go through Europe, North Africa, Israel, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nepal, where she first encountered Buddhism.

Returning to the University of Southern California for graduate school, she studied education and taught in an inner city school.

For her summer vacation, Chodron went on a retreat led by two Tibetan lamas and "the rest is



Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron blesses a dog in a "blessing of the animals" at the Buddhist Relics Exhibit.

history," she commented.

"They opened my mind to the importance of transformation of the heart and mind," Chodron said. "I had thought I was unhappy because of the external world and other people."

Through Buddhism, she realized she was unhappy because she continued to cling to anger, jealousy, resentment, self-centeredness, arrogance and attachment. She realized that it was the source of unhappiness for her personally, as well as for groups and nations.

"I found that when I wanted to solidify my identity and how others should treat me, problems ensued," she said.

"Buddhism penetrates the nature of reality so we dissolve the false sense of self, and cultivate love and compassion through meditation," Chodron said.

Instead of returning to the classroom in 1975, she went to Nepal with her husband and practiced under the guidance of Lama Thubten Yeshe and Zopa Rinpoche at Kopan Monastery. While her husband was also taken with Buddhism, she decided she wanted to be ordained. That meant she was to be celibate, so

their marriage amicably ended. She took novice vows in 1977 and full ordination in 1986.

Chodron was ordained by the Dalai Lama's senior tutor and trained by other Tibetan masters.

She lived in India, Nepal, a Dharma Center in Italy, a French monastery, and later in India, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Returning to the United States to live in Seattle in the late 1980s, she wondered what had happened in the country. Despite problems, she found that Buddhism had spread.

For 10 years before founding Sravasti Abbey, Chodron lived in Seattle, teaching at the Dharma Friendship Foundation. A Dharma center is for lay people.

"At the abbey, we live a life of generosity and hope others will see the value in that and support us. We do not buy our own food but rely of donations of food, clothing, shelter and medicine by laity. "We depend on the generosity of others to stay alive, developing gratitude in our hearts. When we have extra, we give it to the Carmelite nuns and the food banks in Newport and Oldtown," Chodron said.

Gender equality and social

service are key elements of life at Sravasti Abbey.

Chodron does prison work, corresponding with inmates around the country, sending Buddhist books on request and visiting prisoners in many prisons, including Airway Heights.

She also travels around the United States and world, leading classes and retreats.

Courses help people develop compassion, handle stress and reduce anger in hope that by creating peace in the heart of its residents and visitors that peace will extend through them throughout the world, she said.

"We function as a community, working together and learning about each other," she explained, describing that "like rocks tumbling and rubbing together, we

smooth our rough edges."

The abbey, which models communication and conflict resolution skills among its practitioners, also promotes interfaith dialogue to spread love, compassion, wisdom and inspiration for society.

Chodron enjoys engaging in Christian-Buddhist, Jewish-Buddhist and other forms of interfaith dialogue, believing that entering dialogue with an open mind, respect and willingness to learn benefits those who participate.

"While philosophically there are differences between religions, by recognizing those, we can appreciate our similarities. We are freed from the need to agree on religious beliefs in order to have meaningful and mutually beneficial dialogues," she comments on the website at Sravasti.org.


With religious institutions run by imperfect human beings, problems arise, she said. Some turn their religion into an "ism" or dogma unrelated to its teachings.

She believes that by coming to know each other in person, people of different faiths can recognize and respect similar aims through differing rites and philosophies.

Some she encounters ask her to help them learn meditation or practices to enrich how they live their religious values.

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