

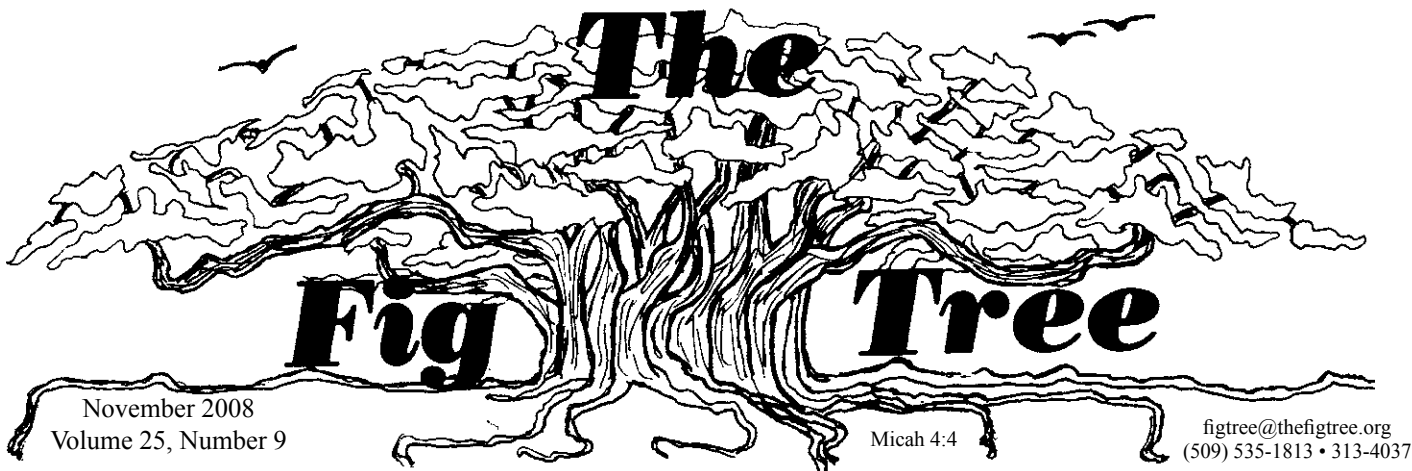
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*Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest*

*online in color at [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org)*

# Church retains Pacific traditions

**By Mary Stamp**

Marshall Islanders, who are among nearly 900 Pacific Islanders and native Hawaiians living in Spokane County, turn to their church to help them retain their culture, language and community.

Those who have moved to Spokane for educational and job opportunities face adjustment to a different economy and different values, said Shem Mito, deacon at the Jaran Radrikdron Congregational United Church of Christ in Spokane.

As they mix U.S. and Marshall-ese cultures, they try to keep two essential values of their culture: respect and sharing.

Shem, who came in June 2007 from Hawaii with his wife Lise to live near their daughter and grandchildren, described some of the differences:

In Spokane, Marshallese rent housing, but in the Marshall Islands, many own their land and do not have to pay for housing.

Only four islands have electricity. People living on outer islands have no electricity, cook food in underground ovens and do not have utility bills. Many fish and grow



**Lise and Shem Mito are active in a Marshall Islands church in Spokane.**

food on subsistence farms. When someone goes fishing, he shares the fish he catches with relatives and neighbors.

Because Marshall Islanders here need to have jobs to pay for rent, utilities and food, they help each other find employment.

Marshallese can migrate freely to the United States under the 1986 Compact of Free Association. About 20,000 live in Arkansas and 5,000 in Hawaii.

Because about 55 percent of the 60,000 Marshall Islanders are in the Congregational United Church of Christ (UCCMI) and 26 percent in the Assembly of God Church, Marshallese in Spokane have started churches of those denominations.

The UCCMI church rents space Sunday afternoons and Wednesday evenings at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1725 E. Bridgeport. The Assembly of God church meets on occasion at Center Pointe.

Recently, Shem shared his story in the context of the history, culture and church life of Marshall Islanders.

The Marshall Islands include  
*Continued on page 12*

## Dialogue will explore challenges and opportunities for ecumenism today

Four bishops and an ecumenical leader will discuss “Bread Broken and Shared: Challenges and Opportunities for Ecumenism Today” at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, November 6 at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave.

They are Christ Holy Sanctified Bishop Walton Mize, Catholic Bishop William Skylstad, Episcopal Bishop Jim Waggoner, Lutheran Bishop Martin Wells and Alice Woltdt of the Washington Association of Churches (WAC).

In a recent conversation planning their input, they shared a few glimpses of their thoughts on ecumenism:

- The beginning point of ecumenism is to keep talking with and loving each other.
- Ecumenism is a journey. There is no exit from it.
- Ecumenism contrasts to the

prevailing mentality that “you’re either for us or against us.”

The event is part of the Fig Tree newspaper’s annual Faith in Action Dialogue and launches its 25th anniversary celebrations.

The evening opens with fellowship and displays of ecumenical and interfaith ministries. After brief comments from panelists, there will be discussion and a worship service led by other area church leaders.

“We will have a procession of different breads, visually representing our differences, brokenness and unity,” said Mary Stamp, editor.

The Faith in Action Dialogue focuses on ecumenical understanding and global issues affecting congregational life.

Each panelist shared some biographical background.

- After graduating from high school in 1947 in Gary, Ind., Bishop Mize entered the university there before being drafted and serving six years in the Korean War. Encountering Jesus and marrying Blanche in 1952, he entered Mt. Zion Full Gospel Church’s Bible College and Seminary in San Francisco.

Ordained in 1958 he served Mt. Zion Church until 1963, when he went to Nigeria as a missionary, serving there periodically until 1985. In 1975, he was consecrated bishop of the Nigeria Section. He came to Spokane in 1989 as pastor of Lighthouse Tabernacle and bishop of the Pacific Northwest Regional Diocese.

- Bishop Skylstad left his home in Omak at 14 to attend seminary. After training for the priesthood at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Ohio, he was ordained in the Diocese of Spokane in 1960.

He served as assistant pastor in Pullman, principal of a high school seminary in Colbert, pastor in St. Joseph Parish in Colbert and pastor at Assumption Parish in Spokane. He became chancellor in the diocese in 1976, Bishop of Yakima in 1977 and Bishop of

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## Walla Walla coffee shop connects people, faith

**By Bronwyn Worthington**

The Walla Walla Roastery serves more than a good cup of coffee.

An icon of the Virgin Mary hanging on the wall in the kitchen reminds the brother and sister who own the coffee shop that their role in life is to serve people.

Co-owners Thomas Reese and Mary Senter invite conversations with and among staff and customers, foster interest in coffee growers and their countries, and help coffee drinkers raise funds for nonprofits.

Integrating their family legacy of service and their Orthodox faith, which they adopted as adults, these siblings’ influence extends beyond the doors of their business.

As the coffee shop grew, Thomas and Mary dreamed of expanding it into an environment that fostered conversations among members of the community.

They consider it part of their job to encourage people to share views on faith and justice as they converse about life and community events.

Thomas and Mary describe their business as part of “the third wave of coffee.”

The first wave viewed coffee only for the sake of consumption. The second wave focused on creating specialty coffees for enjoyment. The third wave appreciates coffees for the unique attributes they offer, for their countries of origin and for the farms that produce them.

When considering which coffees to purchase, Thomas and Mary consider how those in charge of coffee plantations treat their workers and how they sustain the land.

Thomas describes a model coffee farm as one that leaves an inheritance for its grandchildren.

While the business sells some fair-trade certified coffee,  
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