

Monthly newspaper covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest

The Fig Tree
1323 S. Perry St.
Spokane, WA 99202-3571

DATED MATERIALS

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SPOKANE WA
Permit No. 1044

Fasting sharpens senses

By Mary Stamp

During the Lenten Great Fast, Orthodox Christians dropping meat, fish, olive oil, dairy products and alcohol from their diets find many alternatives today.

Along with a mainstay of lentil or bean soup in many families, soy products offer substitutes for dairy and meat. Access to fresh, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables also lend variety.

Eleni Schumacher, an iconographer who lives in Rathdrum and attends Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Spokane, finds that keeping to that spiritual discipline means the first egg—the first food to break the fast with the celebration of Pascha, or Orthodox Easter, on May 1 this year—“tastes heavenly.”

Some Russian families in the church have shared how cutting out meat once reduced their diet to primarily potatoes and cabbage.

Even with Lenten Fast cookbooks offering hundreds of simple, nourishing and appealing meals, Eleni said that it's hard to follow the fast completely. Some years she follows the vegan diet better than other years.

Continued on page 5



Eleni Schumacher eats a bowl of lentil-carrot soup, taking a break from helping with preparations for Holy Week at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church.

South African offers perspectives on common issues

The former prison chaplain for Nelson Mandela who later helped the first leader of apartheid-free South Africa organize the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will speak at three events on Friday, June 3, in Spokane.

Peter Storey will speak for The Fig Tree's 2005 Faith in Action Dialogue, “Through South African Eyes,” looking at media responsibility, the role of truth in healing, and issues of church-state relations.

Peter is the former president of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, past president of the South African Council of Churches and Methodist Bishop of the Johannesburg Soweto area for 13 years.

“Where in the World is the Media?” is his theme for the Deepening Our Roots Benefit Breakfast at 7:30 a.m., at Central United Methodist Church, 518 W. Third. During the breakfast, he will give a short presentation, as part of setting the tone for raising funds for The Fig Tree. At 8:30 a.m., he will expand his discussion of the topic.

For the lunch presentation, he
Continued on page 2

Becoming a grandmother inspires connection with faith part of heritage

Becoming a grandmother led Louisa Rose to reconnect with the faith aspects of her Jewish heritage.

When her daughter married a Catholic, the couple agreed to rear their children as Jews. Both felt that bringing them up in both faiths would be too confusing.

For when her daughter's family would visit, Louisa wanted to be part of a Jewish community.

Now Louisa is so connected that she often receives phone calls for “Beth,” because she answers the phone for her congregation, Beth Haverim.

The group's name comes from “Beth” or “Beit,” meaning house and “Haverim” linked to “chavura” which means fellowship or group of friends.

The Jewish Reform congregation was one of two that started in Spokane about five years ago out of a chavura, an informal meeting of friends in the Jewish community.

The small congregation has been lay-led, because they cannot afford a rabbi, but this year they were able to bring in a stu-

dent rabbi, Deborah Marcus, who has come every two months from Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles.

For Louisa, the small Jewish community in Spokane differs from her experience growing up in Hartford, Conn., in a large Jewish community where her family belonged to a Reform synagogue. Her father was part-time cantor.

After earning a bachelor's and then a master's degree in theatre at Sarah Lawrence College, she moved to New York City.

The interest of her husband, Henry Berman—a specialist in adolescent medicine—in the health maintenance movement led them to move from Manhattan to Spokane in 1981.

“My ideal was to live five minutes from a major metropolis and five minutes from a vegetable farm. When I was 41, we moved here and I the vegetable garden I wanted. I am also able to do theatre work,” said Louisa, who has written comedy for local causes and some books on health insurance and health care resources.

Henry, who grew up in a Con-

servative synagogue, had an overdose of religion and withdrew for many years, but is he now president of Beth Haverim.

Although they had lived in large Jewish communities with synagogues, they were primarily secular Jews who celebrated only Channukah and Passover, two home holidays.

“We were typical secular Jews, as are many in Israel and in major U.S. cities, feeling the strong thread that runs through Judaism of a commitment to tikkun olam, the responsibility of Jews to heal or repair the world.”

That commitment is why many Jewish people have been active in the labor movement and social causes, she commented.

“It's like there is an ethos in the Jewish archetypal memory bank that we must do something to make the world better,” she said. “Rather than just lighting candles, we focus on what we do now, here.”

Louisa recognizes different religious sensitivities.

She keeps brass candelabra that
Continued on page 3

Sisters initiate campaign against trafficking women

The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary Washington Province have initiated a campaign of education and action in response to the order's stand opposing the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation and forced child labor.

“According to the U.S. State Department, about 4 million women and children are trafficked across international borders each year—about 50,000 into the United States,” said Margaret Ames, SNJM associate and Seattle-area project coordinator. “After arms and drugs, trafficking women and children for sexual exploitation is the third most lucrative business in the world for organized crime.”

Because Washington is one of the international gateways, the Holy Names Sisters decided to begin the efforts here. Smuggling East of the Cascades rose in 2004 because of increased security on the Western Washington border, said Sister Linda Haydock, SNJM, director of the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center in Seattle, which is working with the Washington State Anti-Trafficking Task Force Coalition.

In Spokane, the Sisters of the Holy Names are providing educational opportunities on the issue, along with striving to meet needs of vulnerable populations through participation in such ministries as Women's Hearth, Educare and Our Place, said Sister Marcia Schrapps, SNJM.

Holy Names Sisters Phyllis Taufen and Karen Conlin, and SNJM associate Sally Duffy have visited several travel agencies and the police in Spokane to educate them about what to look for. They are also visiting health and human service agencies to inform them.

Continued on page 3

Religion News Briefs

Around the World

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Orthodox hope for ecumenical progress

Rome (ENI). Orthodox church leaders praised the newly elected Pope Benedict XVI and predicted interchurch ties would improve under him. "John Paul II's initiatives for bringing the churches closer in dialogue and peace have aroused hope," said Patriarch Bartholomeos I of Constantinople.

New pope emphasizes church unity

Rome (ENI). Newly-elected Pope Benedict XVI has pledged to do all in his power to promote the unity of churches and reach out to other religions. In an address to cardinals after his election, he said his "primary task" would be "working—sparing no energies—to reconstitute the full and visible unity of all Christ's followers."

Jewish leaders expect dialogue

Jerusalem (ENI). Jewish leaders expressed confidence Pope Benedict XVI would continue to forge closer relations between Jews and Christians, Israel and the Vatican. "He provided the theological underpinnings for Pope John Paul II's decision to open relations with Israel. In the last 20 years, he has changed the 2000-year history of relations between Jews and Christians," said Israel Singer, chairman of the World Jewish Conference.

Hungarians reminded of Holocaust

Budapest (ENI). Hungarians recently remembered the role their parents and grandparents played in the annihilation of most of the country's 800,000 Jews in the last months of World War II. Christian leaders also commemorated priests and nuns who defied Nazi special forces units to protect Jews on the run from deportation to gas chambers.

Indian court ruling on discrimination hailed

New Delhi (ENI). Churches in India are elated that the federal supreme court has decided to accept hearings on discrimination against low castes embracing Christianity. "This is a positive development. We see a ray of hope," said Y. Moses, an executive secretary of the National Council of Churches in India.

Kenyan vice-president urges Bible reading

Nairobi (ENI). Kenyan Vice-President Moody Awori urges citizens to read the Bible and use the word of God to battle corruption, a scourge that he said continues to blight the East African nation. He spoke at the dedication of a translation of the New Testament into the Pokomo language.

Religious leaders urge fair trade

Geneva (ENI). World Council of Churches general secretary the Rev. Samuel Kobia recently presented to the World Trade Organization a petition signed by more than 180 religious leaders seeking a change to the rules that govern world trade. "We seek a world where global trade systems give priority to people who live in poverty," he said.

Christian unity should serve peace, justice

Hong Kong (ENI). Churches need to find new ways to show unity in a world of change where the focus of Christianity is shifting to the Southern Hemisphere, Kobia said recently in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The purpose of promoting closer Christian unity "is not to serve its own interests and those of institutional church structures, but to serve the causes of justice and peace in the world," he said.

Some U.S. churches grow

New York (ENI). While Protestant churches continue to dwindle in numbers, the rolls of Pentecostal churches, some with mostly African-American adherents, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) are growing, according to the 2005 "Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches."

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

WCC head prays for ecumenical openness

In congratulating the new pope, World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary the Rev. Samuel Kobia prayed for "renewed commitment" to "ecumenical openness" and "a dialogue of conversion."

Describing Benedict XVI as a man "known for his theological integrity and ecclesial loyalty, his evangelical simplicity and pastoral sensitivity," Samuel expressed his hope that his pontificate will "constitute a time for the Roman Catholic Church to apply the teachings and the spirit of ecumenical openness exemplified in the Second Vatican Council to the life of the faithful and the whole Church."

In an April 20 letter to the pope, Samuel emphasized that the ecclesiological vision of the Second Vatican Council has been "open to all ecclesial values present among Christians of other traditions," and therefore "has prompted, encouraged and strengthened the commitment of the Roman Catholic faithful to the journey towards encounter-

ing their sisters and brothers in Christ and experiencing the real, though imperfect, communion with them."

"We pray," he said, "that your pontificate becomes a blessed time of dialogue between churches, of dialogue in truth and love, of dialogue as an exchange of gifts among Christian churches, a dialogue of conversion."

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of 347 churches in more than 120 countries. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member church but works cooperatively with the WCC.

Noting that Benedict XVI's election coincided with the 40th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, "the great beginning of the modern ecumenical journey within the Roman Catholic Church," Samuel commented that the council's document spoke "courageously to the faithful and to the world."

They emphasized the restoration of unity among churches as a priority and opening new ways of common Christian witness to

the modern world.

Samuel hopes cooperation between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches will continue to be strengthened through the Joint Working Group, and through full membership of the Roman Catholic Church in the Commission on Faith and Order and in the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

He added that in today's world, where violence, injustice, poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are devastating so many lives, the concern for transmitting the spiritual resources of the churches to the world has become an ecumenical pastoral priority.

"We are ready to share spiritual resources and bring to the suffering world a message of healing and hope. We are ready to journey with you to seek responses to the burning questions of our times, to witness together to the saving, liberating, healing and transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ," he wrote.

For information, see wcc-coe.org.

South African challenges American churches

Continued from page 1

will explore the story of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, using its motto as the theme: "Without Truth, No Healing; Without Forgiveness, No Future." The lunch will be held at noon at Highland Park United Methodist Church, 611 S. Garfield.

"From the Fringe of an Empire: Issues of Church and State" is his evening theme, following a 6 p.m. dinner at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 24th and Grand.

Peter, who is in the United States as professor of the practice of Christian ministry at Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C., has been reflecting on the issues of mainline churches' relative silence in the American public life—after his years of involvement in the church struggle against the powers in Southern Africa.

A native South African, he worked 30 years in urban ministry, serving as director of a 24-hour crisis intervention service in Sydney, Australia, as senior minister of the inner-city Methodist Mission in Cape Town and of the Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg.

In the 1960s, Peter founded a network of crisis intervention centers in South Africa, and was chaplain to Mandela and other



Peter Storey and Nelson Mandela political prisoners on Robben Island.

He has traveled to the United States regularly since 1966, seeking help in the struggle against apartheid and gaining the support of United Methodists. America's story of democracy and its civil rights movement inspired South Africans, he has written, noting that now "it may be our turn to speak a word of challenge."

In the 1980s, Peter worked with then Bishop Desmond Tutu in the church struggle against apartheid. He was co-leader of a 1984 ecumenical delegation to the United Nations, the U.S. Congress and European governments, urging them to pressure the apartheid regime.

Committed to non-violence and reconciliation, he founded the Methodist Order of Peacemakers and Gunfree South Africa, an anti-gun lobby.

In addition, he co-chaired the regional Peace Accord structures to intervene in political violence

before South Africa's first democratic elections.

After the election, President Mandela appointed him to help select the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

For nine years, Peter edited the South African Methodist newspaper, *Dimension*. His publications include *With the Crucible: Preaching Costly Discipleship* (2002), *And Are We Yet Alive? Revisioning our Wesleyan Heritage in Southern Africa* (2004) and *Listening at Golgotha* (2004).

In the 1990s, he was a columnist for South Africa's *Sunday Independent*, a national newspaper.

He and his wife, Elizabeth, former personal assistant to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, have four sons and four granddaughters.

His bachelor's degree is from Rhodes University; his LLD, Albion College, and a doctor of divinity, Ohio Wesleyan University.

"In the developing world, we sense what it must have been like to live on the fringes of the Roman Empire, dominated by its power, controlled by its values, subjected to its wars, contributing to—but not sharing in—its prosperity," he wrote in the November/December 2004 *Circuit Rider*.

For information, see ad on page

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

Deadlines:

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

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Practicing faith builds sense of responsibility to community

Continued from page 1

her great-grandmother brought when she emigrated from Odessa in Russia. Her generation was religiously observant but, after the Holocaust, her great-grandmother completely rejected the idea that there was a God.

"She wondered if there was a God how could God have let the Holocaust happen?" Louisa said.

In that question, she sees the need many people have to redefine God in face of such suffering.

"When I was about nine years old, I asked my mother if she believed in God. She did not know how to answer. She hedged and coughed. My father said, 'Of course there is God,' but he didn't feel it was a subject that needed discussing. The consistent message was that you could struggle with theological problems, but you still had to behave. Just because you lost your faith did not take you off the hook," she said.

For Jews not part of the Conservative-affiliated Temple Beth Shalom, Louisa said, the chavura offered a place to celebrate and share Shabbat and other holidays. Some came for the group experience. Many were interfaith couples, not expecting the spouse to convert. Some were actively practicing and identified more with Reform Judaism.

From that group two congregations formed—Beth Haverim and Ner Tamid, both affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism.

Now Beth Haverim has 40 families in a wide age range, couples and singles. Some are converts. The first year, the group, which started with 20 families, focused on writing bylaws, forming a board, building their structure and applying for admission to the Union of Reform Judaism.

Members of the congregation share the responsibilities for leading services, planning educational events and preparing meals.



Fran Snavely, Patti Barber and Louisa Rose set tables for their celebration of Passover in April.

Sometimes the Sabbath gatherings are for worship and sometimes they are for education.

For example, Elnour Hamoud recently spoke about genocide in Darfur, a situation the Union for Reform Judaism, the national organization of congregations, has begun to work on, in order to raise awareness and to generate letters to the United States and United Nations for action to end the genocide.

"The first step is to be educated," Louisa said.

"Most Americans live sheltered lives. We have lost our sense of participation in politics and in the world. Our country is in a desperate situation spiritually, torn by fear and anger, and lacking a sense that we can do things to make a difference, to make life better.

"When I graduated from college in 1963, I believed I could make a difference and I could make the world better," Louisa said.

While Beth Haverim has found values in being led by laity, they have also found limits.

"Input of a rabbi with training can open eyes and hearts," Louisa said. "She brings us more knowledge about Judaism."

"The student pulpit allows a small congregation to have someone to officiate at events—anything but a wedding—funerals, conversations, spiritual counseling, teaching classes. It provides practical application of what we learn in classes," said Deborah, whose college studies included speech, religious studies and music. She worked as youth coordinator for a synagogue, taught a year in Milan, Italy, and worked in retail before entering the five-year rabbinical training program.

With her presence, Beth Haverim started a Saturday morning class for children. There is an adult education session in the afternoon and a B'nai Mitzvah class on Sunday morning. People also can come to her for anything from

grief counseling to conversations about work on the Holocaust.

Louisa said that "a student rabbi has a certain gravitas in the community, an expertise beyond what I may share in leading a talk on the

Torah. She helps us find ways to talk, pray and study together. A rabbi is a teacher."

Louisa has found that by becoming involved with Beth Haverim—starting with the motivation of providing a religious community for her visiting grandchildren—she now has a way to help "provide a welcoming place for other unaffiliated Jews."

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Sisters are collaborating globally

Continued from page 1

Internationally, the sisters are collaborating with 800 other religious communities to eradicate "this outrageous and growing epi-

demic of trafficking in women and children," said Sister Mary Pat Leroy, the order's leader.

For information, call 328-7470 or see www.ipjc.org.

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Through South African Eyes

featuring

Peter Storey



- retired bishop in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa
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- was chaplain to Nelson Mandela at Robben Island Prison

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**'Without Truth, No Healing;
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Health for All project informs people of health insurance options

By Deidre Jacobson

Expressing his faith through service to community, Ralph DeCristoforo uses his skills to bring health-care access to all, opening connections even for people above the poverty level.

As the project coordinator for Health For All, he supervises efforts to connect uninsured people with health-care services.

Health For All provides information, referral, connection and follow-up to those without health-care access, negotiating the maze of state programs, health care resources and bona-fide insurance options.

It is one of four organizations statewide addressing community health needs.

"Everyone looks at income differently. We try to weed through the programs," Ralph said. "We send out an application, review it and continue to assist an applicant through the process, advocating if necessary with calls to state financial workers."

Community advocacy has been a common thread in Ralph's life.

"When asked as a kindergartner what I wanted to be when I grew up, I said, a garbage man, a policeman or a priest. Even then I wanted to be someone who supports the community."

Reared Roman Catholic, Ralph studied for the priesthood, but changed course to earn a bachelor's degree in psychology. He entered the Air Force, working in various positions, including resolving personnel issues in large units and as a community advocate. He married and is now a member of Manito United Methodist Church in Spokane.

In 1995, Ralph retired from the Air Force and was looking for a second career. He began at the Northeast Community Center as a volunteer while working on his master's degree in health policy



Ralph DeCristoforo

administration from Washington State University.

The Health Improvement Partnership was a fledgling program at that time, he said. In a discussion of Basic Health of Washington at a meeting Ralph attended, he learned that the state was thinking of closing the program for lack of participation.

Ralph put a small piece in the Spokesman-Review and opened the floodgates. Applicants began to pour into the Northeast Community Center in search of Basic Health. In his last class at WSU Ralph developed a five-year plan for the Health Improvement Partnership and applied for a state grant. In 1998, Health for All became a reality.

Ralph's team consists of four members who provide screening, referral and advocacy service to those who call.

They contract with cultural and ethnic groups, provide community education and have trained more than 800 people throughout the state to assist with health care information and advocacy.

Problems he encounters often involve misunderstandings.

"People self-eliminate when wordings imply extreme poverty, such as the federal poverty level or medical indigent programs. People think because they work or have an income, they would not qualify. This is not the case for many programs," Ralph said.

"About 10 percent of the people

in Washington State are uninsured. Of those, 50 to 75 percent are working. The hardest person to insure is a single low-income person without a disability."

"Our dilemma is based on a change in moral obligation. Health care has become a business commodity, employer-based and insurance-centered," Ralph said.

"The charity system is not organized, not cost effective. People who have no health insurance go to the hospital emergency room (ER), the most expensive service we have. We formed the Partners for Care Program to connect people who use ER services for primary care with a primary care provider and health education.

"Dental services for those without insurance are also an ongoing problem. Most dental plans are employer-based," he said. "Services for children are better than those for adults. Some clinics

provide sliding-fee services, complete for children, but for most adults without insurance, exams and extractions are all that is available."

Ralph would like to connect the program with people who think they have no option for health care coverage, because there are more choices than most people realize.

"I would also like to connect with churches as outreach centers. We can come to congregations and speak, training people to screen and refer. Churches are a logical link to reach those who have not heard, but who are in need," he said.

When it comes to faith, Ralph said he "sees God in the community and in the earth. Serving the community is serving God." So he believes that there should be no one without health care.

For information, call 444-3066.

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Big Brothers/Big Sisters launches mentoring program

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Inland Northwest (BBBS) is launching a mentoring program in partnership with the State Department of Corrections and Educational Service District 101.

"Mentoring Children of Promise" (MCP) is for children with one or both parents incarcerated.

BBBS will match adults and children, said Brusan Wells, development director. The Amachi Program, a component of MCP, involves members of faith-based organizations who volunteer to become MCP/Amachi Big Brothers and Big Sisters to children in

Spokane and Kootenai Counties. BBBS identifies nine zip codes in Spokane with the highest incarcerated population: 99027, 99201, 99202, 99204, 99205, 99207, 99212, 99216, and 99217.

About 7.3 million U.S. children have a parent in jail or under state or federal supervision, Brusan said, adding that about 70 percent will follow in their parents' footsteps. Amachi/MCP programs seek to break the cycle.

Greg Haley of Open Arms Community Church recruited five mentors from his congregation in one week after the MCP/Amachi

program began in March. His volunteers have begun the training and screening process.

For information, call 328-8310 in Spokane or (208) 667-0975 in North Idaho, or visit www.bbbsa.org.

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Fasting and prayer practiced together heal people's lives

Continued from page 1

She explained that must be about both prayer and fasting: Merely fasting without prayer is only a dietary exercise, she said.

Prayer, she finds, helps heal relationships.

"I feel closer to God. I can forgive myself for being less than perfect. Through fasting and prayer, I realize God's love," she said. "It's living as we should live for the 40 days of Lent, putting God foremost, rather than our own desires."

Sometimes Eleni may feel too tired to pray in the evening, but she goes ahead and prays, rather than giving in to her desires. Because others in her family and church are also fasting and praying, she finds it easier to follow the dietary and prayer requirements. It's a group effort.

The Great Lenten Fast is part of a cycle, comprising about half a year of times for fasting and prayer: most Wednesdays and Fridays, the post-Pentecost Peter and Paul Fast June 27 to 29, the Aug. 1 to 15 Mary Dormition Fast and the 40-day Nativity Fast from before Thanksgiving to Christmas.

Father Stephen Supica of Holy Trinity said fasting and prayer are more "tools than rules." The fast is one tool. Worship is another.

"Fasting is conditioning, like the North Central football team—in the field behind the church—does when they do push-ups and sit-ups to warm up for practices and games," he said, noting that the disciplines are personal commitments, not something to enforce. "They are opportunities for people to learn that we do not have to be slaves to our desires."

"Canon law is about standards. We do not change standards because some do not keep them. We keep them because they work."

"Pascha means Passover or passage," he said. The Feast of Passover is for the Jews the annual commemoration of their history of salvation—their passage from slavery in Egypt into freedom, from exile into the promised land," Father Stephen said.

For Orthodox, he continued, it is "the anticipation of the ultimate passage into the Kingdom of God, with Christ as the fulfillment of Pascha. He performed the ultimate passage from death into life, from this 'old world' into the new world, the new time of the kingdom, opening the passage to us."

People can take their age and other health considerations into account as they decide to fast.

"A fast heightens awareness and the senses. It detoxifies and purifies the body. I feel lighter and clearer mentally," Eleni said, noting that it's important to reintroduce foods gradually after a fast, rather than with a feast.

"By combining fasting and



Eleni Schumacher holds a cross made with a palm frond, with pussy willows and bay leaf—plants more common in the North.

praying, I gain ears to hear and eyes to see," she said. "I may have said or heard a prayer or hymn a million times, but I hear and understand it better when I am fasting. When I follow the rules, the parts of worship fit together like a Rubik's cube, helping me to become a better person."

The Holy Trinity newsletter recently included reflections on fasting by Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh, Penna. He said that abstinence from food and from sin helps people "establish the proper priority between the material and the spiritual."

Eleni said that for people with jobs, it can be "hard to step out of the secular society, in which we live, to concentrate on what Christ did for us."

During Lent, she finds secular pressures more intense.

"It's like Satan tempts us," she said, "making relationships, health and organizing our time more difficult."

She experiences such pressures often when she goes to paint icons in her basement studio. The phone doesn't ring all day, but as soon as she goes to paint and pray, the phone calls her away from "doing God's work."

Secular pressures sometimes can create tensions and arguments in the family, too, she said.

"Satan does not want us to focus on God," she said, "but when we defer our desires and gratification,

it's much sweeter when we return to our regular diet."

For Eleni, fasting leads experientially into services in Lent and Holy Week, so they complete her walk through the faith story, like a pilgrimage into the past or bringing the past into the present.

This year, she noted, Orthodox and western Christians had a wide discrepancy in the dates for celebrating Easter. Western Christians celebrated on March 27 and are now preparing for Pentecost. The Orthodox date relates to the Jewish celebration of Passover, which was April 23 this year.

The Sunday before Lent begins is Forgiveness Sunday, when Orthodox Christians are to take time to forgive everyone in their families and congregations as a starting point for Lent and fasting.

"We start the journey fresh, in good relationships. It makes our church family grow closer, more forgiving and accepting of each other. We are aware we are all sinners in the same boat and each can be aggravating to others at times," she said.

During Holy Week, Holy Trinity offered three, up-to-three-hour services every day:

- Lazarus Saturday before Palm Sunday includes liturgy, church cleaning and vespers.

- In addition to regular services on Palm Sunday, there is an evening Bridegroom service, as well as Bridegroom services on Holy

Monday and Tuesday evenings.

- Holy Unction on Holy Wednesday this year brought together St. John the Baptist Antiochian Orthodox Church in Post Falls, Christ Antiochian Orthodox in Spokane Valley and St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox at Holy Trinity.

- Vespers Divine Liturgy and the Twelve Passion Gospels on Holy Thursday prepare for Royal Hours, Vespers of the Unnailing and Lamentations services on Holy—or Good—Friday.

On Good Friday, the cross behind the altar with an icon of Christ on it is brought out. The icon is taken down in the evening service of praise and lamentation, during which a wooden funeral tomb decorated with flowers is taken outside for a procession around the church.

For the Good Friday lamentation service, Eleni said, "we chant and sing hymns that are 1,500 years old. Time becomes irrelevant. It's like we are worshipping with the saints."

Eleni said the fast, prayers, hymns, psalms, and worship services help the congregation receive Christ and experience "a resurrection in their own hearts, so they put aside their sin."

Holy Saturday services include



Gilded tomb is used for a Good Friday procession.

the Vespers Divine Liturgy, the Paschal Vigil and the Resurrection Services. The Paschal Vigil begins at 11 p.m. and continues past midnight into Pascha.

For information, call 328-9310.



Icon of Jesus hanging on cross is taken down on Good Friday.

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Coeur d'Alene religious leaders agree on call to care for earth

A Methodist, a Catholic, a Native American, a Baha'i, two Buddhists and a fundamentalist Christian chimed in agreement that people, especially followers of their faiths, are to care for and be stewards of the earth, of all creation.

They presented their views in "Environmental Crisis?" a panel discussion on religious perspectives on the environment, co-hosted by Earth Day Coeur d'Alene, Diakonia and the North Idaho College (NIC) Diversity Events Committee on April 20 at NIC.

One panelist, Pastor Paul Van Noy of Candlelight Christian Fellowship, said that to prepare for the event, organizers asked him to recruit someone who believed the rapture would be soon, so believers could trash the earth.

"I couldn't find anyone, and if I knew someone who believed that I'd set that person straight," he asserted. "We will be judged on how we treat God's creation."

The speakers gave statements on their faiths' positions, answered questions from the audience and gave closing statements.

In addition to Paul, panelists were the Rev. Bill Brackett of Community United Methodist church, Father Roger LaChance of St. Pius X Catholic Church, Merle SiJohn, Native American Traditionalist from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, George Mark of the Baha'i faith, Tom and Joan Holland of the Buddhist faith.

Bill expressed his passion for caring about the environment. He read "The Natural World," a United Methodist Church statement on social principles. The document says all creation is God's and people are responsible for the ways they use or abuse all parts of creation—air, water, soil, fish, birds, animals and people.

"All are to be valued," he said, noting that the document recognizes that economic development has led to human advances and also to defoliation of forests, the disappearance of species and a consumptive spirit that has destroyed the "heritage God entrusted us with."

Bill said Christians are responsible to change economic, political, social and technical lifestyles to support ecological sustainability by reducing and recycling industrial, nuclear, municipal and personal wastes, by preserving forests and plant species, by sup-



The Rev. Bill Brackett, Father Roger LaChance and Merle SiJohn

porting alternatives to chemicals for growing and producing foods, and by other actions "to maintain the integrity of the earth."

Father Roger read from Pope John Paul II's January 1990 World Peace Day pronouncement that "peace comes from God the Creator and is for all creation." Peace is threatened by the arms race, conflicts and injustices among the nations. Those threats come from a lack of respect for creation.

"We face widespread destruction of the environment and cannot keep using it as in the past," he said, calling for a new ecological awareness and awareness that people and creation are interdependent, so coordinated solutions are necessary.

The foundation for ecology and for respect of the environment is in Genesis 1, that God saw what God created and said it was good, he said, pointing out that when God told the human family to be stewards of creation, God did not "give us a blank check to do with nature as we wish. You cannot interfere with one part of the ecosystem without having impact on other parts of it and on future generations. We are in a global village."

Father Roger believes in teaching the moral principles and the theology of ecology to the young.

"We are to respect and have reverence for all of life, from the unborn to natural death, from beasts of the field to the whole earth," he said. "When we are at peace with God we will build peace with all creation and with all peoples."

Merle denounced how poor care of the environment and land is ruining the water on the Coeur d'Alene reservation. Because trees have been cut for agriculture, the soil runs into streams, so the water is no longer cold enough to support fish.

Tribal members can no longer dig plants for medicines along the streams. Short winters change conditions in the mountains, so people have to go higher and farther for wild berries, fruits and plants for food and medicine.

"Global warming is destroying things, but human beings can do something to restore the environment for future generations. We can plant trees along rivers and protect the atmosphere."

"Indians all over the country are suffering from global warming. The human race needs to get together and care for Mother Earth. She is crying," Merle said.

George shared Baha'i understandings that the universe reflects God's glory and all existence depends on God.

"Bahullah outlines the relationships between humanity and the earth. Awe and gratitude to the earth are part of spiritual maturity. The creation is a divine trust," he said. "The new epoch will bring peace and enlightenment, but to achieve that humanity must recognize its unity and that there is one God."

Bahullah saw that one day all religious traditions would cooperate in the harmony needed, and earth would be one commonwealth of nations with global citizens.

He sees that new order as based on economic justice, racial equality, gender equality, universal education and harmony of science and religion.

Conflict between spirituality and materialism, war and unmoderated human consumption arise from "sickness based on materialism and self-centeredness," he said, calling for breaking the human barriers to fruitful relationships and a worldwide society with diverse peoples.

Tom said that Buddhism offers the perspective of perspective. If he held up a coin, he said, some would see the head and some the tail: "Our views differ. It's not that I'm right and you're wrong, but that we have two views of the same thing," he said.

While many think environment and human beings are separate, he

said each depends on the other.

"For people to be happy, we need to care for the environment or it will not exist," Tom said. "The industrial world has turned to science to control things in ways that have consequences and disrupt the food chain."

"We need to learn to live together in the environment, to unite and work together in one of many non-governmental or grassroots programs to support the environment while it still supports us."

"I hope that we of all religions can unite our hopes, so we can improve the environment and our lives," Tom said.

Paul described himself as a Bible-teaching, right-wing fundamentalist Christian who believes in the rapture. In doing so, he dispelled some stereotypes.

He asserted that people are to care for the earth created by God, as described in Genesis, and to relish that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," as described in Psalm 24.

"If you believe in the Bible, it is there. We are entrusted with the care of the earth, for all creation," he said, reminding of the scripture in which Jesus said that the sparrow that falls to the ground has God's attention.

"God holds us responsible if we destroy the earth," he said. "Sin is putting self ahead of God's plan for us."

From Ezekiel, he read about God sending a famine when people disregarded God's standards.

"If people humble themselves, pray and turn," he read in 2 Chronicles, "God will heal the land."

Continued on next page

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What are religions doing about the environmental crisis?

Continued from page 7

“Bible-believing Christians know the earth belongs to God, so we are to care for all creation—men, women, children, fish, birds, animals, plants, land, water and sky,” Paul said.

Is the environment in crisis? If so what is your religion doing about it?

Merle: Mother Earth is crying. Something needs to be done. People have a responsibility to care for Mother Earth.

Bill: The crisis boils down to a matter of the heart and a matter of justice. Our hearts are out of sync with the needs of people all over the world. Our priorities are out of whack. When part of the family hurts, we all hurt. When the earth and environment hurt, we also hurt.

How is the religious community taking leadership to promote public policy to protect the environment?

Father Roger: The Pacific Northwest Catholic Bishops prepared a pastoral letter on the Columbia River Watershed, “Caring for Creation and the Community of God.” Religious communities have held hearings to raise public consciousness that God entrusts the resources and creatures of creation to our care. We need to share resources equitably. We need the many statements of churches to reach the ears of legislators. So write and phone them.

George: Baha’i are not involved in politics, because politics is divisive or results in compromise. We must act from the grassroots, from the bottom up, getting people together to talk about their lives and the environment. The more we consult with each other the more truth will come forward. We work with NGOs to help change the world.

Tom: We must work from the bottom up. A new president or pope will do little. We need to clean up our neighborhoods, as our neighborhood does. From gathering a few people to clean up yards, we now have had up to 300 involved, helping clean up the nearby park and stream. Helping can become infectious.

Paul: It’s both top down and bottom up. To go after the heart, area pastors will meet at noon on May 5 at the Coeur d’Alene City Hall to celebrate National Day of Prayer. When hearts change, everything changes.

Does the religious right want to destroy the environment so the rapture will come more quickly?

Paul: Some think Christian fundamentalists believe they are to welcome environmental destruction to hasten the Apocalypse. I believe in the imminent return of Jesus Christ for his people, but I know that in the interim we are to care for the earth and we will be accountable. God will judge those who destroy the earth.

How does population control affect the environment?

George: Baha’i believe we have enough resources for everyone, but disparities prevent equal distribution of resources. So we are back to spiritual issues and human barriers. We need to undo racism and other barriers. The earth has enough to support human lives. Through ignorance, we stop the flow of bounty. Through our intelligence, we can create a world in which everyone has shelter, men and women have equal opportunities, and we have economic justice.

Father Roger: The greatest gift is life. The Gospel calls us to respect life. It is not respecting life for parents to have as many children as they want if they are unable to care for them. We all need to take responsibility.

Merle: We need to take care of everyone in the world. Water is the giver of life, so we need to keep water clean. To do that, we need to keep the air and ground clean. If we care for water, we will all be able to live.

Do you teach your followers to be responsible stewards?

Father Roger: Whenever we open the Word, we talk of stewardship, which is discipleship. How are disciples to live? We are to live as children of God, as brothers and sisters. We teach about disciples’ responsibility to care for one another and for the earth as part of their moral, emotional, physical and spiritual lives.

Paul: The Bible mentions the earth 987 times. To teach through the Bible as we do, we teach of stewardship of the earth. The Bible teaches us to love God with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength and to love our



Tom Holland and Pastor Paul Van Noy

neighbors as ourselves. To teach that is to teach stewardship.

As the environment degrades, what will result? Is there a solution?

Paul: The Bible says our days are numbered. Times and events will change. We believe in the rapture of the church through history and prophecy. We are assured of a millennial reign of Jesus Christ, and that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. We may destroy earth because of sin, but God has a remedy for sin and for the consequences of sin. Lack of stewardship is a sin, so we will have consequences, but Jesus paid the price for our sins and will provide us with a beautiful world.

Tom: We are trashing the earth. We see people miserable, and damage continuing to spiral. We have to raise interest in the environment, so people become involved.

George: Jews expected a Messiah to come as a king, but Jesus came as a carpenter and Mohammed came as a goat herder. God gives us choice, so it’s up to us. Advances in civilization often come from martyrdom, imprisonment and suffering. Bahullah says men and women are equal, but it’s

difficult for us to live that way. He said that religion without science is superstition and science without religion is monstrous. For God’s kingdom to come, it will take the hard work of followers of Judaism, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Bahullah and others. If we follow God’s messengers, we can do it. If we ignore them, nothing will happen. When we unite and work, something will happen.

The following is a summary of the closing remarks:

Bill: I am touched by the unanimity of spirit here. We are standing on holy ground. Because it is holy, we are responsible for it and for all those we love all around the world. We have both personal and social responsibility for the world in which we live. No holiness is separate from the social holiness of how we treat other people. Caring for the environment is a social, moral, spiritual and ethical issue, not just an environmental or economic issue.

Father Roger: There is no solution to ecological problems without looking at our lifestyles of instant gratification and consumerism. We are insensitive to the damage we cause. We need a conversion of the heart to value human persons and life. Simplicity, moderation, discipline and sacrifice are actions that need to be part of our daily lives lest we all suffer from the careless habits of a few. Caring for earth is not just a sentiment or political action to create paradise lost.

Through education to change hearts, we can change thoughts and behavior. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers. We need to respect nature and love neighbors. In Coeur d’Alene, we are in contact with the healing power of nature and its beauty. We are responsible for how we relate to the beautiful world God has given us.

Merle: As a child, I remember stopping to buy pop and candy. We threw candy wrappers out the car window. My dad told us not to litter. He taught us to work in harmony with Mother Earth. If we all thought about doing that—people all over the earth—it would change much. Mother Earth is crying and we need to do something about it.

George: A prayer of Bahullah reminds us to bless this spot, house, place, city, land and sea—everywhere. God made it, and we need to praise and glorify God for it.

Joan Holland: When I was young, I did not worry about the environment. I thought I would be dead before there would be any problems. When I became Buddhist, I realized that if one person makes an inner reformation it can change the environment for all time. Buddha respects all human life. If we can engage in dialogue, we can change the environment for the better.

Paul: Psalm 24 sums up that the earth is the Lord’s, so we can change the destiny for everyone by letting the “king of glory” come into our lives.



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Baptist team gives out food to homeless people

Spring-break trip introduces student to harsh life in poverty

On a spring-break mission trip to Vancouver, B.C., Baptist Student Ministry (BSM) student Jeslyn Lemke from Eastern Washington University came face to face with the harshness of big-city poverty and discovered some truths about loneliness and God.

The group included 30 students and BSM leaders from Columbia Basin College, a student from the University of Washington and Jeslyn, a junior majoring in journalism with minors in anthropology, French and women's studies.

On the first day in Vancouver, the students worked with the Lifeline Outreach Society, a nonprofit organization that aids homeless people in the city.

Jeslyn and others on the team prepared food to take to homeless people in downtown Vancouver. According to city statistics from 2001 to 2003, there were from 500 to 1,200 transients in downtown Vancouver on any given night. Students and Lifeline staff loaded a school bus with two vats of stew, a bin of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and numerous bags of groceries. That night they met the rest of the mission group downtown.

"We passed out gobs of food in every direction to the crowd of homeless people," she said.

Jeslyn was leaning in the doorway of the bus, handing out groceries to the people, when suddenly, a large man loomed at her in the darkness.

"He was shaking and sweating, drugs were perhaps pulsating throughout his

body. He took the bag of groceries. I smiled at him," she said. "He didn't seem to hear me when I asked him how he was doing, and I had almost turned around when I heard this voice whisper, 'Where do the sick and the homeless go?' I didn't know what to say. What do you say to something like that?"

Before she could answer, his shadow was lost in the darkness as he sank away into the night. Loneliness was rearing its ugly head.

When the "supply of hungry transients" in that area ran out in an hour, before the food supply ran out, the Lifeline Directors called all the missionaries together. They huddled in a bay of a dirty parking lot at the foot of these dark skyscrapers and listened as the directors told them there was some food left. They would take it to East Hastings, one of the most dangerous streets in Vancouver. Any student wishing to go home could do so. No one volunteered to leave.

According to Jeslyn's Eastern Washington mindset, "mayhem and havoc ran amuck along the frozen howling corridor of East Hastings St.," she said.

Homeless people, prostitutes and drug addicts lined the sidewalks, hunched over, screaming at each other, rocking

back and forth, dancing in circles around their feet, she described.

She ended up being funneled into a prayer walking line, which involved leaving the warm vans and her BSM leader, Arlett Coumbs.

"I was freezing and shocked," Jeslyn said. "All I could pray as we trudged up

the hill was 'Jesus, Jesus, Jesus' amidst the screams, and cries, and wild-eyed stares."

At the end of two blocks was a police car. Held in the grip of two officers, a man was smashing his head on the hood of the car. The hood was denting. He was moaning and screaming, "his movements like some trapped animal," she said.

Jeslyn was moved by the look on the man's face.

"It was like he was far away, in some terrifying cold place, incredibly alone," she said. "Immense fear and loneliness had him by the throat."

It made her think of a sermon she had heard about Jesus struggling with loneliness but continuing to put his faith in God.

"One of the greatest benefits in knowing Jesus Christ is that God is perpetually with you," said Jeslyn, who grew up in Cheney and attended a Presbyterian

church.

Jeslyn and the other students were planting seeds for other people to find companionship.

"Through us, God was leading others to a place where loneliness dies and love blooms eternal," she said. "Loneliness has been identified as one of the great struggles faced by humans. Human companionship can carry us only so far.

"With God we can ultimately lay down our burdens," Jeslyn said. "We are never alone because God is always with us."

For her, the encounters with lonely people in Vancouver and the message of a sermon preached during a worship service there came together.

"God promises always to be with us," she said. "So as someone who believes, I know in my loneliness I am not alone."

For spring break last year, she went on with the Baptist Student Ministry to build a church in Las Vegas, Nev.

She also volunteered four months with the former Downtown Women's Shelter, Hope House, in Spokane.

Her goal with journalism studies is to "work for rights for women in Africa," Jeslyn said.

"Seeing humanity in its many stages is incredibly important. Working with the homeless in Vancouver introduced me to solidarity of the poor, people I must feel comfortable with when I work with and write about women in developing countries," she said.

For information, call 920-3698.

Story submitted by Jeslyn Lemke

We can never be alone because God is always with us.

'On Golden Pond' benefits Our Place

West Central Ministries Players will present a Readers Theater performance "On Golden Pond," at 2 p.m., Sunday, May 15, at Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway.

Director Valerie Harper-Mur-

doch of the West Central Community Center said it is a benefit for Our Place Community Ministries.

Our Place provides emergency food and clothing.

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Media alliance grants funds to Fig Tree

The Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media recently granted The Fig Tree \$300 to support its ongoing coverage of the faith and nonprofit communities to break through divisions that impede cooperation and to provide alternative media that challenge some media's reliance on sensation, sex, violence, polarization, scandal and prejudice to draw readers and viewers.

In addition to support for modeling responsible media guidelines, the funds help cover costs of preparing a "Writers Guide" and training Whitworth public relations students how to write articles on nonprofits

for the website and newspaper. Funds also supported work with two Gonzaga public relations service-learning students to help them understand how to promote Fig Tree media.

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Young adults step out of mainstream culture into multicultural reality

In contrast to other young adults swept into the mainstream message to grab as much as they can and hold onto it, Kerrie Yarnell has devoted the last year to living simply in community, offering hospitality and reaching out to the mixed-race community surrounding Campbell Farm in Wapato.



Kerrie Yarnell plays with Zuleika Sanchez.

Her year as a Young Adult Volunteer with the Presbyterian Church USA has set her in a cross-road of cultures.

The surrounding community on the Yakama reservation has a near-equal mix of Native Americans, Hispanics and Asians.

"The farm sits in the midst of the communities and cultures that carve out a life here," she said.

Kerrie works with the Native American Youth Group at Wapato Presbyterian Church and with Lutheran pastor Jillian Ross of the Yakima Valley Hispanic Outreach in Kingdom Kids, an after-school program for Latino children.

After graduating three years ago in music at Columbia College in Columbia, S.C., Kerrie worked two years with a campus ministry at University of South Carolina.

At Campbell Farm, she uses skills in music and arts as "a way to walk with people to help them express themselves," she said.

Part of the hospitality is gathering people and facilitating conversations, part is engaging in community outreach, and part is in living simply in community with others, respecting the need to share the resources of the earth.

"The mainstream approach of grabbing what you can for yourself pushes people out. Community living means walking with people, rather than pushing them aside and watching out for yourself," said Kerrie, an Episcopalian, who is applying for another year with the Presbyterian Church's Young Adult Volunteer Program in Tuscon.

The church started the program to provide national and international opportunities to help young adults—from 18 to 30 years old—in the church find ways to serve and have a part in church life by plugging them into missions, service and advocacy.

Kerrie said the application process asks applicants to reflect on why they want to volunteer and to present what gifts they bring, to help discern the best place for each to serve.

This year, there are 30 volunteers. Next year, there will be two new U.S. sites. Through Campbell Farm, four volunteers have worked since September, living in community with the farm directors David Hacker and Sheri Noah.

They assist community pro-

grams led by Corey Greaves, David Norwood and Cheryl Rohret, as well as Jillian, discovering what ministry in the community is like and sharing their gifts.

"We have been surprised that ministry does not easily fall into place. There are challenges and conflicts, but we are all at the table and care about the direction of the ministry. We strive for the grace to hear and work through the conflicts," said Kerrie.

That honest interchange of ideas is new for her. Growing up in Southeast U.S., she is familiar with a culture of communication that is often indirect in expressing needs and intentions.

"We have grown to trust each other and benefit from our vulnerability and authenticity," Kerrie said. "I have learned that trusting people builds the common good."

"I am amazed at the stories I hear and things I see in the community and on the reservation," she said. "Being here has opened my eyes to realities in which people live and the reality that it tends to be okay with the people around them. People live in substandard housing that is cold in the winter and hot in the summer while they try to make a living and survive with their children."

"I have learned about how in living simply, the Yakama people have traditionally lived abundantly without a sense of rush and with a clear sense of what is central in life: family and creation."

Kerrie sees how people in the Yakama nation respond even now, 150 years after treaties were signed with European-Americans who settled there. Some are angry or depressed; some joyful or nonchalant. Those who settled on the land changed their way of living, she said. It is a struggle for them to protect their heritage and values.

Kerrie finds that the Hispanic community in Wapato lands on the bottom of the social structure because they are the newest arriv-

als and lack access to resources.

About two-thirds of the 4,000 people in Wapato, which is on the Yakama reservation, are Hispanic—first or second generation Mexicans.

Because schools have bilingual Spanish/English classes, Kerrie said some Native Americans ask why schools don't teach Sahaptin, the main Yakama language. Indian children learn it at the tribal school and in Indian clubs, along with dancing, clothing and bead traditions that have been preserved for generations.

With the farm a place for dialogue, speakers who come explore such issues as loss of language and the role of language in culture.

The young adult volunteers will stay for the summer, when the farm shifts to be like a camp, with young people coming from different parts of the country to learn about cultures and to work with the Northwest Harvest Food Bank, Union Gospel Mission or Volunteer Chore Services.

"By learning about the history and life in this place, these youth will begin to understand how breaking down cultural stereotypes can help us all experience the abundance of grace that exists in community. After our time in Wapato, we are able to help them unpack what they experience each day," said Kerrie.

"Jesus talked in the Sermon on the Mount about what brings happiness and blessing. He called us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give drink to the thirsty and visit people who are sick or in prison," she said. "Jesus shows us who our neighbors are."

"This year made my neighborhood bigger. Loving my neighbor has global reaches for me," she said. "It also makes me aware that my walk on earth should not step on someone else's dignity."

"God created everyone with

deliberate care, with gifts and with dreams," she said. "I hope that the way I walk will open doors so other people will feel empowered to use their gifts and the way we help does not subject others to dependency. We need to love our neighbors in more ways than charity. We must also work for social justice."

Community living includes morning devotions, in which the volunteers, Dave and Sheri have read the book of Luke and are now reading *Food and Faith*, a book on the abundance of food and meals as a source of joy. They pray and discuss what they have read.

Cheryl meets with the volunteers as a group and individually for spiritual direction, helping them discern where they are in their journeys of faith and life, and what it means for their calling.

Kerrie also is chaplain, organizing the spiritual element for their life on the farm. One focus has been on water as a symbol of faith and water as a resource.

"Water is a rich symbol in the Bible. That contrasts with the reality here that we expect the worst drought in the summer," said Kerrie.

"Cutting usage in this drought year will change the landscape. It will also make people realize what a gift water is. The land is dry and hot like a desert, but a river

runs through it bringing water as a source of life," she said.

On the farm she has become aware about the need to conserve water. She has begun to think about how many times people flush, run water when they wash dishes or take long showers.

"If we realize what a gift we have, we may consider how we use and waste the resources. Water is a spiritual as well as a physical reality," Kerrie said.

Kerrie shared comments from two other volunteers:

• **Linda Pak** of Ogden, Utah, also discovered "how to be a good steward of God's creation and to learn more about what my role is in the scheme of everything."

"I have become more aware of places, people and situations, insights I can apply to other contexts, whether designing architecture or working with community organizing," she said.

Linda now realizes that the opportunity for ministry happens anytime and anywhere.

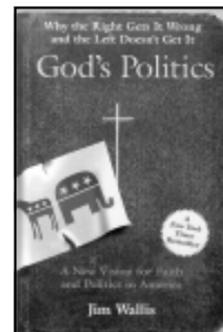
• **Craig Hay** of Asheville, N.C., sees the mission at the Campbell Farm as: 1) to practice hospitality and 2) to teach life skills.

He has discovered that hospitality fosters life skills.

"It seems that if you pay attention you'll see that God's presence is everywhere," Craig said.

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What role may media play in making the new pope a 'pop pope'?

Coverage of the papal transition has been a refreshing focus on some issues of faith that often take the back burner in mainstream media. Many hours and inches were devoted not only to mourning but also to the beginning of the new pope.

Pope John Paul II was a like pop celebrity—out with people, kissing babies, traveling throughout the world and speaking to millions of people—as well as a being world leader. Perhaps media realize a pope leads one-sixth of the world's population.

As if in a moment of self-realization, one pundit commented that John Paul II had fostered dialogue, peace and openness, contrary to usual media focus on religion as narrow-minded, divisive and inciting violence, and therefore as suspect.

As media turned to the new pope, Benedict XVI, they first eyed him with suspicion for his apparent doctrinal rigidity. How could media have a pop pope who would be a "hardliner"?

As media create their image of the new

pope, we can watch media choices related to space, page, headlines, pull quotes, photos and article flow—each of which speaks of importance and value.

An Associated Press report on page three of the April 26 Spokesman-Review offers an opportunity for analysis and reflection.

The photo is friendly. The headline invites rethinking first impressions—be it out of reality or media need—recognizing the pope will be a media personality, whoever he is, given the number of followers. The headline said: "'Stern' pope reveals playful nature." He may be okay after all.

The pull quote picks a sensational image the pope used: "Benedict felt like a guillotine was coming down on him" when it looked like he would be elected.

The lead paragraph includes the pull quote image and words that connect to everyday people: "I prayed to be spared," but God "didn't listen to me." These words express humanity, humility and humor.

How equalizing to realize even this per-

son being set apart resisted and said, "not me," rather than assuming power with an assumption he should be in power. He had to say "yes" to God, as each of us.

Thus came a break from the initial focus on his firm stance on abortion, celibacy, homosexuality, ordaining women and abuse by priests—the sex/scandal issues media tend to see as the "religious" issues.

Buried at the end of the article was the note that he will continue to build friendship with Muslims, Jews and other Christians, in order to foster peace in the world. In the religious world, that has more play.

Will reporters hearing these comments shift their assumptions about religion, assumptions that have made faith commitment unpopular in American media?

News play decisions as well as media word choices—along with what the pope does or says—will influence the image.

The faith community knows new roles can make new people, and God is at play. Benedict XVI will be who he will be, or

who God wants him to be. Will media have eyes to see? Will media see the church's consistent pro-life ethic beyond politicized arguments that limit "pro-life" to a conception- to-birth focus and sideline the full ethic of valuing each person's worth and needs for food, shelter, nurture, love, mercy, health, meaning, dignity, peace and justice throughout life? These are moral issues intersecting with politics, too.

Pro-life related to sex draws popular media, while pro-life related to peace is often ignored by a society enslaved to a military-dependent economy.

Popes—and surely Benedict XVI who chose his name to signify a call to peace-making—repeatedly call for a consistent ethic and for discipline—accepted in sports but unpopular when it comes to religion.

Observing what media choose to print and air, we can see how they create a superstar or even just allow or hinder credence for a new religious leader.

Mary Stamp - editor

Pope John Paul II leaves a legacy of teachings and a witness for peace

Pope John Paul II's legacy is framed by his challenge for people to live in peace.

The world tearfully mourned the passing of this giant of the faith this spring, while also celebrating his Christ-like journey in the footsteps of Peter, the fisherman. The mile-long line formed in St. Peter's Square in Rome represented emotionally charged people from almost every nation, all walks of life and a myriad of religious persuasions.

The out-pouring of love for Pope John Paul II was overwhelming. However it is doubtful that most, in their affection for this godly man, understood the deeper yearnings, convictions and passion for peace that consumed this pope. Analysts studying his speeches, proclamations, and writings found a defining "legacy for peace and tolerance."

His legacy, conforming to the mandates of Vatican II reforms, may well change the Vatican and the direction of the Roman Catholic Church for years to come. This and the unrelenting support for the State of

Israel were his real legacies both in spirit and in truth. Some of this radical change in confronting a world beset with bellicosity brings new insight and deliberation to St. Augustine's "just war" theory.

There was new thinking about the Crusades and the hundred years of European warfare against the Muslims, which was vigorously promoted as being fought as "the will of God." This pope felt that this was all wrong. In his interpretation, war against Islam, today, is equally wrong.

Can the church and the world absorb this radical thinking about peaceful co-existence? What about the American church?

It has been a certainty that Pope John Paul II hated Communism but his strong opposition took the form of non-violence, not war. Along with world peace, the pope was anxious to heal the breach with the Jews. He supported the State of Israel and Judaism. These two principles—world peace and tolerance for Israel constituted his preferred legacy.

Among the 67 million U.S. Roman

Catholics and many of the 1.1 billion in the world who loved him were those who perceived this pope as set apart from his speeches, encyclicals and proclamations against war and intolerance. They heard what they wanted to hear.

What did Pope John Paul II have to say about the United States? He loved our people but was critical about our succession of wars that followed the demise of Communism. He opposed our invasion of Panama, Kuwait, Afghanistan and now Iraq.

He called for countering the war on terrorism with efforts to heal the world of hunger, poverty, disease—including AIDS—and the hordes of impoverished refugees, particularly in Asian countries and Africa. He also challenged the United States about its use of the death penalty.

Pope John Paul II was the most traveled pope in history, having visited not only western nations, but Nigeria, the Sudan and many other areas of the underdeveloped world with a message of hope, help

and peace. He is noted for penetrating many Islamic areas with suggestions for peaceful negotiations through United Nations channels. He continued, often with a burden of ill health.

It is important for the faith community to know that this pope celebrated with other faiths in the spirit of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. In the promotion of development needs worldwide, we may agree or disagree with many of the positions of Pope John Paul II—his opposition to the ordination of women and abortion, his moral certitudes of the faith, his view of celibacy for priests and other issues that became "hot-button" issues in media.

The war-peace controversy divides us and many others in God's world. It will be interesting to see if some of the changes this pope initiated will carry over to his successor as the new pope emerges and the "old order changes, giving place to new." This pope left us a legacy of peace and tolerance. Thanks be to God.

Jo Hendricks - Contributing editor

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

Thank you for your editorial on the media. So much has become politicized, biased and twisted. Where is truth?

I am especially appreciative of the piece on Father Simon Harak, SJ. This is a war we started without just cause. Its effects on the Iraqi people and on this nation are beyond measure.

Joyce Watts
Newport

The tradition of Jewish rabbis to answer questions with questions was part of Jesus' method. It is unfortunate when we limit questioning in favor of excessive certitude. Easy answers have a tendency to stunt both our spiritual and our intellectual growth.

Even when we attempt to make positive statements, it is good to do so in a way that there always remains room for dialogue with others who may have different insights. By retaining our ability to both ask and receive questions, we can discover more about ourselves and our relationships with the divine in and through our neighbors.

The Rev. Steve Eriksen
Shalom United Church of Christ
Richland

I believe God gives each one of us a particular message to speak. That means I don't have the whole message and neither do you. Only through listening to each other and creating an atmosphere where all can speak do we get a grasp on the whole Gospel. Thus, each one of us, from the

newest Christian to the Christian with the most longevity, from the most conservative to the most liberal, has been given a message from God which we all need to hear. The place for speaking and hearing those messages is in the community of faith.

As disciples of Jesus, we simply don't have the right to give up on other people, because God in Christ has not given up on us. Jesus gave his life for the Sadducees who rejected him just as much as he gave his life to save each and every person that I'm having problems with as much as he gave up his life to save me. If Jesus responds with love and forgiveness to those who hurt him, as his disciple can I do any less?

The Rev. Betty Krafft
St. Peter Lutheran - Spokane

In the last desperate hours of fighting in and around Berlin in May 1945, a few German units sought to escape from the encircled city. A 17-year-old German soldier, Helmut Alter, describes the scene: "We are still almost 500 men, several determinedly carrying heavy packs. Despite all their misery and fatigue, they would rather fall down under the weight of them than lose them. It is uncanny how, at the moment when the curtain is beginning to fall on the biggest tragedy of all, these people can hang on to their wretched possessions and will not let them go."

Even when we know we should give up some of the ballast of our lives in order to be transformed to really live, we cling to certain patterns of behavior that beset us.

This is true not only of us as individuals, but also for families, for churches and for whole communities. The familiar is hard to let go of in order that the new may take root.

The Rev. Gary Starkey
Westport United Methodist - Yakima

In these days when our lives are constantly exposed to the news of conflict and war, of terrorism and genocide, of murder and rape, of famine and disease, the risen Christ's greeting to us, "Peace be with you," is not an offering of idle words.

For as with the disciples in the upper room so with us. Wherever we are, our risen Lord invites us to share, in companionship with him, his compassionate response to all forms of suffering, his unchanging declaration of God's love for all people and his resolute endeavor to overcome evil with love. He offers us his peace, not that we might withdraw from the world's pain and distress, but so that we may be strengthened faithfully to follow wherever he chooses to lead us.

Father Michael West
St. Paul's Episcopal - Kennewick

Could it be that we homo sapiens are not yet sapient (knowing) enough? Scientists tell us that as a species, we have the capacity to know our thoughts, to observe our thinking process, but like the rest of creation, we are an evolving species and perhaps we are only now beginning to glimpse what this awareness means. In Unity, we say we are not just human

beings, but spiritual beings, so how does the observation of our thinking help us feel connected to the infinite, experience a more fulfilling life and contribute to a better world for all beings?

Clare Austen
Unity Church of Truth - Spokane

In 1905, the then unknown Albert Einstein submitted a paper which shook the world of physics. He concluded light was a particle as well as a wave. It was a revolutionary discovery in physics.

More than 2,000 years ago, a then unknown man walked on the earth and challenged the established understanding of how things worked. He preached and revealed a message that was revolutionary, confusing and for many downright dangerous. It threw established precedent out the window. It threatened to destroy order.

In Jesus, God revealed how things work, what God's will truly is—God's heart's desire. The dead in all forms are raised. Lost people are sought and found. Outsiders not only are considered part of the family but also are told they have belonged since the beginning. Those that have been considered least are now equal in stature. Sinners find the forgiveness they need and the broken find the healing they only dreamed of receiving. Barriers of all sorts are shattered. In Jesus, God reminded all creation that "if God is for us, who (or what) can be against us." God is for us—all of us!

The Rev. Matt Goodrich
American Lutheran Church
Newport

Business leader speaks to UNA

Ben Cabildo, founder and director of AHANA Business and Professional Association, will speak on "Economic Development and Diversity: Building Our Social and Cultural Capital" at the United Nations Association meeting at 7 p.m., Monday, May 9, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort George Wright Dr.

AHANA is a grassroots organization of African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American businesses and professionals in the Inland Northwest. It works to empower member businesses through counselling, training, accessing capital, and creating networks and partnerships as it advocates for the inclusion of minority businesses in the economic development of the region.

For information, call 624-3608.

Interfaith Council presents a dialogue

The Interfaith Council of the Inland Northwest and the Gonzaga Prep Diversity Club are sponsoring a program on "Jewish, Christian and Muslim Teachings on Justice" at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 10, at the Gonzaga Prep Student Center, 1224 E. Euclid.

Adie Goldberg of Temple Beth Shalom, Scott Cooper of Catholic Charities and Mandouh El-Aarag of the Spokane Islamic Center are the speakers.

For information, call 329-1410.

Holy Names Sisters provide a grant

The Sisters of the Holy Names Washington Province has granted The Fig Tree \$1,000 for its Interactive Website Project and its Rural-Urban Connections Project.

The grant is part of its Ministry Mini-Grants Program to assist ministries of Holy Names sisters. These funds will support the work of Sister Bernadine Casey, who is associate editor of The Fig Tree.

For information, call 535-1813.

Caritas plans sale

The Caritas Center, sponsored by 12 Northwest Spokane churches, is holding a fund-raising rummage sale from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday and Saturday, May 6 and 7, at St. David's Episcopal Church, 7315 N. Wall.

The center provides volunteer chore services, emergency help, utility assistance, transportation and a necessities/food bank.

For information, call 326-2249.

World Fair Trade Day set

The 2005 World Fair Trade Day Celebration will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, May 14, at the Community Building, 35 W. Main, in Spokane.

Northwest Fair Trade Network and Global FolkArt will present fairly traded arts, jewelry, textiles and crafts as part of a celebration that includes education, live Cuban music, traditional Thai dance, face painting for children and ethnic cuisine.

Items from Chile, Guatemala, Laos, Mexico, Nepal and other countries are offered by INDRA Trading, Ganesh Himal Trading, Singing Shaman Traders, Moonflower Enterprises and Global FolkArt. For information, call 838-0664.

Calendar of Events

- May 2, 16** • Peter Storey Planning, 611 S. Garfield, 4 p.m.
- May 4** • Public Meeting on Hanford Cleanup, Spokane REI, 1125 N. Monroe, 6:30 p.m. - call (206) 382-1014
- May 5** • National Day of Prayer, Spokane City Council Chambers, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Holocaust Remembrance and Memorial Dedication, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th, 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- May 6-7** • "Exploring Your Spirituality," and "Midlife Spirituality," Margaret Guenther, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th - 323-6782
- Caritas rummage sale, see this page
- May 8, 15, 22** • "Talking With," Monologues on Women's Experiences, benefit for YWCA's Alternatives to Domestic Violence, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort George Wright Blvd., 7 p.m. (8 & 22), 3 p.m. (15) - call 893-1356
- May 9** • Living Wage Meeting, 35 W. Main, 5 p.m.
- United Nations Association - Ben Cabildo, see this page
- May 10** • Building Bridges between City Leaders and Churches with Mayor Jim West, First Assembly of God, 828 W. Indiana, noon
- "Jewish, Christian and Muslim Teachings on Justice," see p. 11
- School of the Americas Watch, 35 W. Main, 6 p.m.
- May 10, 24** • The Fig Tree Show on Health for All with Ralph DeChristoforo, Comcast Cable Channel 14, 8:30 p.m.
- May 11** • Pax Christi, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 1503 W. Dean, noon
- Colville National Forest Recreation Plan, 35 W. Main, 6:30 p.m.
- Fig Tree Interactive Website Advisory Team, Gonzaga University Journalism and Broadcasting Building, 205 E. Boone, 7 p.m.
- May 12** • "Support the Truth-Start the Peace," Scott Ritter former UN Weapons Inspector in Iraq, The MET, 7 p.m. - call 838-7870
- May 13** • "Leadership for Volunteer Motivation & Effectiveness," DOVIA Spring Workshop, Joe Albert of Gonzaga Organizational Leadership, Southside Senior Center, 3151 E. 27th - call 299-4280
- May 13-14** • Spokane Building Owners and Managers Association Kid's Day, using Salvation Army Red Kettles in benefit for the Salvation Army Family Resource Campus Playground - call 329-2732
- May 14** • World Fair Trade Day Celebration, see above
- May 15** • Whitworth Urban Ministry Pentecost Service, Westminster Congregational UCC, 411 S. Washington, 4:30 p.m.
- "On Golden Pond," Our Place Benefit, see p. 8
- May 17, 31** • The Fig Tree Show on Westminster Presbyterian with Sandy Brockway and Ardyce LaBrie, Comcast Channel 14, 8:30 p.m.
- May 18** • Colville National Forest Recreation Plan, Spokane Meeting, BLM Office, 1103 N. Fancher Rd., 6 p.m.
- May 19** • VOICES, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 5:30 p.m.
- May 20** • Annual Leadership Prayer Breakfast with Ravi Zacharias, Spokane Convention Center, 7 a.m. - call 777-4568
- May 22** • CROP Walk in Milton Freewater - call 527-8407
- May 28-30** • "Swords Into Plowshares," American Friends Service Committee Conference on learning peace-building skills and exploring urgent topics at Gonzaga University - call 838-7870
- June 3** • The Fig Tree Faith in Action Dialogue, "Through South African Eyes" - call 535-1813, p. 1-3
- June 7** • Interfaith Council Annual Meeting, St. Ann's, 2120 E. First, 6 p.m.
- June 1** • Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9 a.m.
- June 2** • Fig Tree Board, 1323 S. Perry St., 1 p.m.
- Tues** • Sign vigils to end occupation of Iraq, Mission & Hamilton, 4:30 p.m.
- Tues-Sats** • Habitat for Humanity work days - call 534-2552
- Fridays** • Colville Peace Vigil - call 675-4554
- 1st Sats** • Ministers Fellowship Union - call 624-0522

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Campus ministry brings Taizé worship and action to Pullman and Jubilate

By Jeannette Solimine

Each week during the summer months, 3,000 to 6,000 Protestant and Catholic young people from 75 countries flock to Taizé, France, for an ecumenical experience of simplicity and worship.

"At the heart of the Taizé Community is a belief that the ascent of the soul to God goes hand in hand with serving others," said the Rev. Robert Hicks, United Methodist campus minister at Washington State University (WSU) in Pullman. "This is not an asceticism that removes us from expressing God's love to others.

"The brothers of Taizé go to desperate places on earth to live alongside of and to serve the poor. They have ministries in many impoverished areas in the world.

A ministry of prayer and presence leads to economic and political dialogues and commitments to seek to work on behalf of the poor in concrete ways. The balance between devotion and action that we found at Taizé was what we were looking for as a new model for campus ministry," Robert said.

In the fall of 2004, Koinonia House, where the Common Ministry at WSU is located, began to offer Monday night Taizé services, based upon the actual Taizé style.

Students sit on the floor facing a worship center with many candles. The musicians—guitar, keyboard, violin, flutes and cantors—sit in the back to lead singing.

Each week they experience a period of silence. While many students have said they loved the singing, they have also said they found the silence exceptionally meaningful. It connected them to God in a way they had never experienced.

After the Taizé service, the students gather downstairs in the café to reconnect with the community over tea or a latté and a dessert, usually chocolate.

They also offer a service on Tuesdays at noon.

This Taizé worship experience began as a trip. In May 2004, the Common Ministry took the first group of students to Taizé, France.

The Rev. Gail Stearns, the Presbyterian campus minister and director of the Common Ministry, and Robert traveled with the students.

It readily became obvious to Gail and Robert that this experience of singing, silence and simplicity would become an important part of their ministry at WSU.

Taizé is an ecumenical community of brothers, under the leadership of Brother Roger, who

lives a life of prayer and service. The community was started by Brother Roger as a place to serve the many refugees coming out of Eastern Europe following World War II.

Over time, the community developed a unique worship style that began to attract young people from all over the world. The words of the music are written in the languages of the people of the world.

Consequently, in Taizé worshippers sing in harmony in many different languages. The songs are repeated many times becoming a form of prayer.

They often say in Taizé, "To sing is to pray twice."

During this past year, Gail and Robert learned much about the music and spirituality of the Taizé worship style. They began taking students around to the supporting congregations to give them an experience of Taizé worship.

During Lent this spring, the Simpson United Methodist Church in Pullman offered a Taizé Lenten service on Sunday nights. About 100 people came from all over the Palouse and from a variety of churches.

One woman said, "After that first worship service, I felt like I'd never worshiped before. It

took me so deep."

After the success of these services, the Common Ministry Council decided to sponsor an ecumenical Taizé service on Sunday nights this upcoming fall, following the WSU academic calendar.

They will begin at Simpson United Methodist Church in September and see where it goes from there. Worship will be at 7:30 p.m. Child care will be provided.

Another program component they will add this fall is an hour of instruction and discussion prior to the worship, at 6:30 p.m. They will teach about contemplative prayer, meditation and healing, simplicity, social action and the devotional life, as well as discussing the rich tradition of Christian devotional writings from such people as Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, Julian of Norwich and contemporary writers on prayer like Thomas Keating.

The ministry goal at the K-House is to direct students into areas of mission, driven by their experience of God in prayer. Next year's program will explore the relationship between contemplative prayer and social-missional engagement.

Currently, students are par-

ticipating in a farming venture, working alongside poor families to help them grow fresh produce for themselves and to contribute to the food bank.

"We would like to expand this concept of working alongside the poor, not just doing things on behalf of the poor. To be present with the poor and marginalized in Christ's name is itself a form of contemplative prayer," Robert said.

The Common Ministry is returning to Taizé this year with a new group of six students. Most of them have been involved in the Monday night Taizé service. They already know many of the songs and are comfortable with the silence.

They are looking forward to meeting young people from all over the world who are finding in the prayer, the simplicity and the community, something that satisfies them deeply and gives them hope, Robert said.

This is more than just a tourist trip to France.

The Rev. Kristine Zakarison, pastor of Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Pullman, who is also going as a chaperone this year, said, "We are currently meeting weekly and discussing what it means to go on

a pilgrimage, which is how the trip is understood for the students."

Robert's knowledge of Taizé is in demand in the Northwest.

Taizé worship will be offered at Jubilate! a worship arts retreat that will be held July 18 to 23 at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma.

Robert will lead a week-long workshop on Taizé.

His sessions will introduce participants to the historical and theological background behind the Taizé movement and also give them an experience of the music and contemplative silence as well as equip them for utilizing these resources within their own churches.

His wife, the Rev. Tori Hicks, pastor of Colfax United Methodist Church, is this year's Jubilate! chaplain.

For information on Jubilate! call (360) 479-9043 or visit www.gbmg-umc.org/jubilate!/index.html.

Robert will also facilitate a Taizé weekend for students and adults at Camp Cross on Lake Coeur d'Alene, Sept. 9 to 11. For information, visit www.campcross.org.

For information on the Common Ministry, call 332-2611 or visit www.wsu.edu/~commin.

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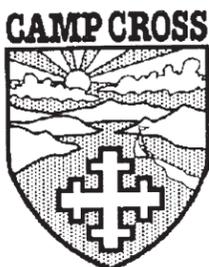
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