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Two ministries connect

By Mary Stamp

While Lynn Riggins works as a chaplain at Sacred Heart Medical Center, he is also a missionary connecting with a hospital in Ghana.

In February, his connection with both came together when three women in the Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Church came on Jan. 29 to Spokane from Ghana, so two could receive diagnosis and treatment for chronic ailments that limit their abilities to serve.

Sister Cecilia Clare, the mother general of the order, learned that Lynn had arranged help for another sister who came in 1992, had surgery and returned able to live a productive life.

So she wrote him about Sister Scholastica Yabotsi's and Sister Esther Honugah's need for more health care than they could receive in Ghana.

She turned to Lynn to recruit help from the medical community in Spokane—a neurosurgeon, internal medicine specialists, Rockwood

continued on page 6



Sister Esther Honugah, Lynn Riggins, Sister Scholastica Yabotsi and Sister Cecilia Clare at the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary Convent.

Three grants support growth

The Fig Tree received three grants during February to assist with its website development and the rural outreach project.

For the website, *The Fig Tree* received \$700 from the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary's Mini-Grant program and \$250 from the Sisters of Providence. These grants will help to maintain and expand presence on the web at www.thefigtree.org.

The Eastern Washington Idaho Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has granted *The Fig Tree* \$500 for the expansion of circulation and coverage in the Inland Northwest.

With a \$750 January grant from the Inland Northwest Presbytery, *The Fig Tree* reached out to presbytery congregations, offering 10 or more copies to be sent by mail and communicating with congregations to encourage them to introduce it to their members. A similar approach will be used with Lutheran congregations in the synod.

For information, call 535-1813.

Institute holds conference to diminish impact of hate

By gathering people to hear testimonies, exchange research and share applications, Gonzaga University's Institute for Action Against Hate hopes to begin to change the world.

So it is planning an International Conference to Establish the Field of Hate Studies on Friday and Saturday, March 19 and 20 in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University in Spokane. The event will draw internationally recognized scholars to examine what an academic field of hate studies would include as a step to establish the field and curricula for it.

Jerri Shepard, associate education professor at Gonzaga and the institute's director, said it will be a "ground-breaking scholarly event to diminish hate in America."

Morris Dees, director of the Southern Poverty Law Center whose legal team won the lawsuit that bankrupted the Aryan Nations at Hayden, Idaho, will speak at 7 p.m., Saturday.

Ken Stern, an attorney with the American Jewish Committee in New York City and member of the Institute's board, will deliver the 8:30 a.m., Friday keynote address.

In a recent interview, Ken said there is need for an interdisciplinary field of hate studies to address hate systemically, to understand why hatred is a common human experience that "encompasses all races, countries and religions and spans human history."

Through defining hatred and understanding its causes and effects, the institute hopes to reduce recurring cycles of hate that sometimes lead to genocide.

Selected participants will present papers at 2:30 p.m., Saturday, at the School of Education in the Rosauer Center.

Conference sponsors include the American Jewish Committee, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre and the Kootenai County Task Force on Race Relations.

For information, call 323-3665 or visit www.gonzaga.edu/againsthate.

More on page 12

At Cheney Outreach Center

Volunteers act as God's hands and heart

Eleven volunteers work with the Cheney Outreach Center's director, Carol Beason, to be "God's hands and heart" to people of Cheney and the surrounding area, helping meet their basic needs.

"Often people who live in poverty live on the fringes of society and need a way to assimilate back into the community. Our center provides services for those individuals and families," Carol said.

"The number of people in need has increased dramatically," she said.

In 2003, 1,750 households with 5,069 individuals sought services, up 168 households from 2002.

Those seeking help are primarily people who work, have fixed incomes, have young children, or are elderly, disabled or ill.

The outreach center is non-judgmental and non-proselytizing. If someone requests assistance, the center tries to help. It does not decide if they are worthy of assistance. Everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

The center requires proof of income, residency, social security

numbers and identification.

In September 1988, the Spokane Diocese Catholic Family Services, under the leadership of Benedictine Sister Emagene Warren, surveyed needs, found a lack of resources in the Cheney School District and determined there was need for a local human service agency to meet those needs.

If someone requests assistance, the center tries to help.

A core group of churches formed the Cheney Ecumenical Outreach Ministries, which opened its doors as the Cheney Outreach Center on Feb. 1, 1990.

It provides energy assistance, transportation—which includes

limited auto repairs, insurance, auto registration, gas vouchers, bus passes and tokens—help with prescriptions, food, clothing, personal hygiene needs, diapers and limited rent assistance, as well as information and referral. Energy assistance includes a program in which the center buys clients 10 business days past the disconnect day. Clients pay their own energy bills. The utility department disconnects service if the bill is not paid by the disconnection date. Staff encourage people to seek

assistance early. If they wait until they owe a couple months rent or if they know they won't be able to pay their utility bill, a \$75 voucher will not go far. If utilities are cut off, there is a \$20 to \$50 fee to turn them back on, Carol said.

In addition to the general assistance program, the center has children's programs, which provide school supplies and clothing, Christmas vouchers, Cheney Toys for Tots and recreation.

After the city closed the Park and Recreation Department in March, 2003, families had few options for recreation for children and did not have transportation to activities in Spokane, Carol said.

In the past, the center wrote vouchers for swimming lessons, but with the pool closed families were limited to classes at Eastern Washington University.

"Outreach staff write vouchers for children to participate in sports activities with agencies that will accept our vouchers," she said.

Located at 626 Third St. in a building shared with the Cheney Food Bank and Cheney Clothing Exchange, the center offers one-stop assistance, rather than sending people from agency to agency to fill out similar paperwork.

"Most people do not like to ask for assistance. They feel they

Continued on page 3

Religion News Briefs Around the World

Ecumenical News International, PO Box 2100
CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: +41-22 791 6111
Fax: +41-22 788 7244 Email: eni@eni.ch

Christian building aids unity with Muslims

Jos, Nigeria (ENI). Christians and Muslims in Nigeria are reaching out to each others' communities seeking greater harmony in the country where religious conflict between them in recent years claimed more than a million lives. Recent reconciliation moves include a Christian political leader's building a mosque for Muslims, establishing places of worship for both Christians and Muslims, and more dialogue.

Kenyan churches back road-safety drive

Nairobi (ENI). Church leaders in Kenya are supporting new government regulations aimed at curbing road deaths, even though the crackdown on unsafe buses and passenger vehicles has cut attendance at Sunday services. "Although it has been expensive, this is going to reduce the deaths of our believers. We support it," said the Rev. Samuel Murigu, general secretary of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya, where more than 3,000 people die on the roads each year.

Lutheran numbers in Africa soar

Geneva (ENI). The number of Lutherans in Africa has soared nine percent in two years, but Lutheran membership in Europe and North America has declined in the same period, according to statistics of the Lutheran World Federation. "We see it as a re-awakening of the African spirit which was crushed by slavery and colonialism," said Bishop Zephania Kameeta of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia.

Churches increase stake in just trade-initiative

Vancouver, Canada (ENI). Churches in North America, one of the world's largest free trade areas, will devote more attention to fight for a just global trade system. "Current economic arrangements, financial institutions and trade and investment treaties, like the North American Free Trade Agreement, distort the rules governing trade and investment to the advantage of the affluent and powerful," a meeting convened by the Church World Service and the Canadian Council of Churches declared.

Pope's 25 years mark change in church

Warsaw (ENI). When the Vatican latest directory of the Roman curia, cardinals, and archbishops and bishops worldwide—confirms continuing global growth in Roman Catholicism with a shift of gravity from Europe to the Third World. In March, John Paul II will become history's third longest-serving Pope, heading a church that has grown by 40 per cent in 25 years—from 750 million members in 1978 to 1.07 billion or 17 per cent of the world's population.

Pentecostals inspired by 'Catholic' symbols

Copenhagen (ENI). Danish Pentecostal Christians, who long shunned symbols such as altars, crosses or candles, now are adopting them. "We have lost symbols and lost the hook on which to hang our faith," said the Rev. Rene Ottesen of Copenhagen's largest Pentecostal church. It recently dedicated a meditation room that has a cross, icons, water, candles and other symbols to give a physical, tangible dimension to faith.

Russian church issues 'Ten Commandments'

Warsaw (ENI). The Russian Orthodox Church is trying to improve the ethical climate of the country's economy through a set of guidelines for entrepreneurs, business leaders and trade unionists inspired by the Ten Commandments. "Wealth is not an end in itself. It must serve the creation of a good life for the individual and the nation," is one of the guidelines. Another states: "A human being is not a continuously working mechanism: he also needs time for relaxation, spiritual life and creative progress."

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Barton School celebrates its 35th year

Barton School, a one-on-one English language tutoring program in Spokane, marks its 35th anniversary with a program at 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 10, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

The all-volunteer staff of 65 teachers assist 25 students. First Presbyterian provides space, utilities and funds for supplies.

In 1968, Amsel Barton started the program after retiring from what is now Eastern Washington University. The program grew quickly and was named in her honor in 1972.

She believed volunteers could help without being trained teachers. The only degree they needed, she believed, was "a degree of car-

ing." She sought teachers who were "kind, thoughtful, interested in people and sufficiently flexible to adapt to the differing needs" of students. Amsel was active in the school until a few years before her death in 1989.

The school has assisted thousands of Americans and foreign-born students from 64 countries, said Mildred Scheel, the director. "It's like a mini-United Nations. We have served people from countries that no longer exist.

"Students identify goals, proceed at their own rate and take an active role in the teaching-learning process," she said. "They work on basic survival English, GED (equivalent to a high school diploma), citizenship, drivers'

license education or any other course for which we can supply an appropriate teacher."

With 75 students on a waiting list, the school needs more volunteer teachers.

A new program, "Barton Connections," gives advanced students practice speaking to prepare for jobs or education. They connect with community resources and volunteer at food banks, nursing homes and other programs, learning the concept of volunteering and that free services are for the needy, Mildred said.

Current and former students and teachers will attend the event which includes an international buffet luncheon.

For information, call 747-1058.

Congress on Race Relations is March 24

The seventh annual Community Congress on Race Relations will feature three people who contributed to research for an article, "Emotional Intelligence and Diversity: A Critical Competence in a Complex World," in California Psychologist Magazine.

The free event on "Race Matters: Walking the Talk" begins at 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 24, at the Lair Student Center at Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene St.

Lee Gardenswartz and Anita

Rowe, partners in the management consulting firm of Gardenswartz & Rowe in Los Angeles, and psychologist Jorge Cherbosque are the featured speakers.

Anita began helping organizations with diversity in 1977 when she and Lee worked with the Los Angeles school district on integration. They have co-authored articles and books on the human side of management, stress management, a model for success and managing diversity.

Jorge, who is co-director of the

Staff and Faculty Counseling Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, has also been doing research on managing diversity. He is a native of Mexico with a tricultural-trilingual background, a bachelor's degree in social work from Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Southern California.

The annual educational event is sponsored by the Spokane Task Force on Race Relations.

For information, call 625-6263.

Christian Life Impact Conference set

Youth speakers will be among the featured speakers during the Christian Life Impact Conference, formerly the Christian Worker's Conference, March 11 to 13 at the Spokane convention Center.

Monty Hipp, a former youth pastor now working for We Care America in Washington, D.C., will speak on "Securing Funding

for Faith-Based Organizations."

Mike Thompson, chair of the youth ministry department at Northwest College, will teach a session on "How to Utilize Parents in Your Youth Ministry" and another session for teens on "Life's Tough Questions."

Mark Moder of Real Life Ministries will speak on "Student Rights on a Public School Campus" and

"Can You Hear Me Now?" He is youth event coordinator.

Sessions are geared for teens, as well as for youth leaders.

There will be a Youth Rally on Friday night at the Doubletree Inn Ballroom with the bands, Everyday Sunday and Kurious Bliss. There will also be a one-man drama, "The Passion."

For information, call 487-0149.

Organizations offer nonprofit workshops

Gonzaga University, United Way of Spokane, Leadership Spokane and Foundation Northwest are offering a series of eight nonprofit board development workshops at 7:30 a.m., alternate Tuesdays from Feb. 3 through May 11.

Topics include roles and responsibilities, board and staff relationships, resource development, finances, legal issues, program evaluation, ethics and case studies.

For information, call 323-3572.

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Fig Tree schedules anniversary events

Plans are progressing for *The Fig Tree's* 20th anniversary, featuring presentations by National Council of Churches general secretary Bob Edgar and by local panels informing him of what's happening in the Inland Northwest related to poverty, communications, dialogue and human rights.

The forum on poverty will be held at 7 p.m., Thursday, May 20, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 24th and Grand.

A location is being finalized for the fund-raising breakfast for 200 at 7:30 a.m., Friday, May 21. Bob will discuss issues related to ecumenical communications and learn about *The Fig Tree's* role in the region. *The Fig Tree* seeks volunteers to host tables for this event.

A lunch gathering on ecumenical and interfaith dialogue will be held at noon, Friday, at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 1620 N. Monroe.

In the evening, the focus will be on racial justice and human rights at a 6:30 p.m., gathering at Highland Park United Methodist Church, 611 S. Garfield.

For information, call 535-1813 or 328-0822.

CROP Walks feed refugees, disaster victims

Lynn Magnuson, regional director of Church World Service/CROP, is traveling the Northwest, motivating church people to recruit walkers and sponsors for spring walks.

She has recently visited Bend, Boise, Burley, Portland, Albany, Corvallis, Monmouth, Salem, the Dalles, Grants Pass, Medford, Hood River, Othello and Spokane.

CROP Walks are the main fund raiser for Church World Service (CWS) development, disaster relief, land mine removal and education programs.

With a 2004 focus on refugees, Lynn asked participants to think of their family histories: What led their families to leave their homelands and come to the United States—famine, floods, drought,

wars or opportunities?

On CWS tours in Southeast Asia and Nicaragua, she asked people she met about their dreams. Few understand about dreams and hopes.

Recently in Costa Rica building homes with her congregation, she said Church World Service is not there because, after a 20-year civil war, the winning army and government abolished both the winning and the losing armies to prevent suffering from war. No longer spending on military security, Costa Rica has a 97 percent literacy rate, universal health care and a stable country, Lynn said.

"Imagine if African countries were not spending money on 200 armed conflicts but spent it to fight hunger and injustice. CWS helps the African Conference of Churches draw people into peace processes," Lynn said. "They come because they trust the church."

CWS provided fabric Afghani refugee women used to make 50,000 quilts. It supports efforts of social workers and teachers working to heal child soldiers, who are hardened to violence, and return them to their villages.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, CWS helps displaced people return to their land to farm, providing tools and machines.

In other areas CWS projects

feed and shelter refugees, dig wells to provide clean water, provide tools for food production to improve nutrition.

The CWS website informs people on issues like land mines, eco-justice and international treaties, so they can do more than give food to feed for a day or teach people to farm or fish to feed them long term. People also must challenge market, corporate and government policies and practices that keep people from improving their lives, she said.

"We also need to say when actions are not right," Lynn said.

In addition, Church World Services also offers blanket Sundays, health kits and school kits.

The following communities have scheduled walks for spring 2004: **Goldendale** on Saturday, April 24; **Spokane** and **Cheney** on Sunday, April 25, at Gonzaga University's Martin Centre; **Yakima** on Saturday, May 1, and **Wenatchee** on Sunday, May 23.

For information about the walks, call (888) 297-2767.

Cheney Outreach offers aid and advice

Continued from page 1
have failed if they are unable to provide for themselves and their families. It's rewarding to see them get back on their feet. Often when they do, they will repay funds," Carol said.

One woman who was out of work two years ago asked for help to pay her energy bill. When she was doing well, she repaid the money saying, "I have never forgotten your help."

Many clients are on a fixed income and have a fixed payday. They come back repeatedly for assistance to keep their energy from being disconnected, to keep from being evicted and for food to tide them over until the next payday, Carol said.

"Part of our job is to teach people other ways to deal with their circumstances. For example, if they do not have funds to keep electricity on, but have cable TV, we suggest they suspend cable or find other ways to conserve," she said. "Low-income people can have phone services for \$20, drop-

ping such options as call waiting. Some don't realize they can reject such services."

Carol told of a family who maxed out on their help. The husband needed transportation to go to court. She looked at him and suggested that if he went to court looking dirty and using foul language, he would not do well. She gave him a voucher for a haircut and sent him to the Clothes Exchange for clothes. She also advised him to avoid arguing in court. He followed her advice and won the case.

As the only paid employee, Carol is stretched thin—paid for 30 hours of work and often working more than 40 hours. The volunteers help handle office procedures, such as answering phones, filing, writing vouchers, collecting paperwork, interviewing clients and doing computer work.

Cheney Outreach is supported by a Community Development Block Grant, a grant for children's programs from Spokane Com-

munity Mobilization Against Substance Abuse, the Robert Raymond Foundation, private donors, service clubs, sororities and other organizations.

Ten churches help provide support and volunteers: the Cheney United Church of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Cheney Christian, St. Paul's Episcopal, Fellowship Baptist, Emmanuel Lutheran, St. Rose of Lima Catholic, United Methodist of Cheney, Cheney New Life Assembly and Cheney Community churches.

The center is open from 9 a.m. to noon, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tuesdays when the food bank and clothing exchange are open. It serves people living in the Cheney School District, except those in Airway Heights.

For information, call 235-8900.

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Among the 2004 faculty are: (top to bottom) Ron Falheiser, Cliff; Cynthia Mose-Lobada, Ph.D.; Richard Rohr, OFM

Hunger, health care, housing, taxes are on churches' agenda

With health and human services generally absorbing the brunt of state budget cuts, the faith community in Washington provides educational events in Spokane, Yakima, Seattle and Olympia to educate members of congregations about issues before the state legislature.

Organizers of the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference Jan. 31 in Spokane offered resources for advocacy during the 2004 session and in long range efforts for tax reform.

Kristen Rogers, public policy associate with the Washington Association of Churches (WAC), and Paul Benz of the Lutheran Public Policy Office (LPPO), reviewed major issues and encouraged participants to contact their elected officials.

"All faiths are concerned about healing," said Paul, "so health care, hunger and housing are common issues we address."

"Jesus' ministry was about healing, salvation related to the brokenness of human life, not just about after-life. Eleven percent of people living in Washington have no health care."

"Last year when we faced balancing the budget, we cut programs that help the poor first, adding premiums for low-income families and cutting dental and mental health coverage for poor people," Paul said.

In addition to those issues, Lois Canright of United for a Fair Economy discussed tax fairness.

"Legislators want to know what people in their districts think, even those who agree with them," Kristen said, giving out the toll free number—(800) 562-6000—constituents can use to call their legislators and the governor.

She said churches are actively responding to local hunger needs, with the state having the fifth highest hunger rate in the nation. The number of people food banks serve has risen 40 percent in recent years but the quantity of food available has not increased at that rate. Meanwhile, state support for school lunches has been cut.

"Lunch at school may be the only meal for some children. Nutrition is integral to children's being able to learn. Schools often provide breakfast for everyone on test days," Kristen said. "We want to help families so they become grounded in their jobs and do not cycle back onto assistance because they are unable to take care of their families."

VOICES, a grassroots organization seeking to eliminate the causes of poverty, presented a skit dramatizing their concerns about proposed cuts in Spokane Transit Authority services. VOICES pro-



Ann Keim, Louise Chadez, Nandagopol and Brian DeVries quoted social justice "prophets" Elise Boulding, Dorothy Day, Mohandas Gandhi and Walter Wink for the event's opening and closing.



Lois Canright

notes the ballot issue to increase local sales taxes by .3 percent to replace funds lost when the car taxes were eliminated.

The skit depicted who would lose transportation and how cuts would affect their lives, jobs, education, volunteering and medical care.

Then Lois discussed how taxes help produce the economic divide between wealthy and low-income people. She leads workshops to "demystify tax laws and inform people how to make taxes more fair, efficient and stable."

A psychologist who grew up Quaker, Lois learned about the economy because it's behind so many issues.

"The economy is about values, the guiding principles of societies," she said. "The economy becomes personal when we discuss the taxes we pay to receive services for the common good."

"Taxes test our sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. As Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, they are the price we pay to be a civilized society."

How the state raises revenue can be as much a problem as

its budget, Lois said, calling for churches to apply their moral influence to develop a fairer, simpler, more equitable system.

"Budget shortfalls arise in recessions—when fewer people buy fewer things—because the state relies on sales taxes. In addition, in boom years, Washington granted about 430 tax exemptions—\$65 billion a year," said Lois, "but there is no requirement that corporations report on whether those exemptions create jobs, as intended."

She calls for the legislature to look at the tax structure: Who shoulders the tax burden? What is a fair system? What system would be better?

"We want a tax system that embodies values of social justice, so everyone pays a fair share. Faith calls us to care for each other," Lois said. "In a progressive structure, in which taxes are based on ability to pay, those with higher incomes pay a higher percentage."

"In Washington, those who have less pay more. The lowest 20 percent, earning \$17,000 or less, pay 18 percent of their incomes in state and local taxes, because taxes are based on sales, property,

gas and use. The top 20 percent earning more than \$75,000 pay three to seven percent."

People in lower income brackets also buy more lottery tickets, which add to their burdens as they add to state coffers, she noted.

Lois calls for churches to engage in discussions about ways to replace the current taxes with an equitable, stable system.

"We can tax consumption (sales), ownership (property) and earnings (income). If we tax only two of the three, the system

is tippy. The problem is we are in an intense anti-tax mentality," she said. "Washington is one of 47 states facing budget crises."

"National policies that reduce burdens on the wealthy and corporations embolden them to think the tax shift is acceptable, she continued. "Bashing government and taxes is popular, rather than realizing that government has a duty to provide services."

So Lois advocates challenging anti-government, anti-tax messages by articulating the invisible ways government serves people—from the 911 emergency number to flushing a toilet. We need to change the tone of the debate to change minds and build support."

Lois urges people to sign the tax fairness pledge at wataxfairness.org and to participate in workshops she offers.

"Many people feel hopeless and discouraged. We cannot afford to be silent. Our economy does not just happen. It is the result of policies put in place one at a time—weekends off, 40-hour-work weeks, child labor laws, the social security system and Medicare are examples," she said.

Coordinating plans for the event were the Interfaith Council, Catholic Charities, VOICES, the Children's Alliance, the WAC and the LPPO. For information, call (206) 625-9790.

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Leona Bergstrom

Director of Lifetime Ministries at ChurchHealth

The Bergstroms are co-authors of *Amazing Grays: Unleashing the Power of Age in your Congregation*

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Muscular dystrophy camp transforms Twinlow grounds, buildings

Twinlow United Methodist camp on Spirit Lake near Rathdrum, Idaho, has embarked on a ministry to people with disabilities since the Muscular Dystrophy Association's Camp Fun in the Sun used their facilities last summer.

Children in wheelchairs were on the beach, in the water, in boats, fishing from docks, playing soccer and able to access the facilities other campers take for granted.

"We have begun major renovations that we hope will open a new dimension of ministry by making our buildings and grounds accessible," said Ben Moore, who is co-director of Twinlow with his wife, Claudia.

Twinlow hired an architect to design a paved trail system so that campers in wheel chairs can go between the dining and living quarters and to the lake shore.

Future designs include a woodland trail system and remodeling buildings for ramps and other elements to make them accessible.

Last summer, volunteers and staff provided labor and finances to dig the ground, build brick retaining walls and create a gradually sloped trail to the lake.

"It allows us to serve a new group of people, increasing the number of campers who can use the facilities," Ben said.

In addition to helping people with disabilities, the renovations make the camp more accessible for elderly people who find it hard to go up and down hills.

Ben said he was encouraged to see the spirit of the muscular



A muscular dystrophy camper and a leader watch staff and volunteers construct sloping path.

Photo provided by Twinlow

dystrophy campers.

"It's a debilitating disease, but the children are brave," he said. "Even though the site was not ready last summer, these children took it on."

The Muscular Dystrophy Association provided one or two helpers for each child so each could go where he or she wanted. Some caretakers slept during the day so they could be awake at night—up every two hours to turn the campers who could not turn themselves.

In addition, there were nurses and doctors. Dietary advisors

made suggestions to kitchen staff about foods and preparation. The campers needed more options because of dietary restrictions.

The 50 campers—children and youth from five to 21 years old—had varying levels of the disease.

At the end of the week, several firemen who served as caretakers were in tears as they told how the children with muscular dystrophy inspired them.

"These children are determined to live life to the fullest. Not every child with muscular dystrophy is in a wheel chair, but each has to

learn to adapt to his or her own limits. Their legs may tire, but they do not let that slow them down," said Ben.

Ben and Claudia have learned much about what is necessary to make a facility compliant with the American Disabilities Act and with the specific needs of people. For example, people who have muscular dystrophy may lack the upper body strength to lift themselves onto a toilet or into bed.

Standard specifications may not necessarily work, so Twinlow has done research to find out what

specifications will work.

"When church and other people coming to camp ask us why we made a change, we have an opportunity to explain and to educate them. We are learning to bear witness to our faith in more than just words to reach out to these people, many of whom are involved in churches," Ben said.

While the Muscular Dystrophy Association camp is designed to provide a camping experience—not teach Christian faith as many Twinlow camp sessions do—staff know that they also "teach" people in the way they treat them, allowing them to show who they are as real people, meeting their needs, listening to their stories and developing friendships.

Ben said summer staff was "deeply moved," because they rarely have the opportunity to interact with disabled people, unless someone in their own family is handicapped.

"It's hard for most to understand the challenges these children face and how hard it is for them to overcome those challenges," he said. "Often when we see someone in a wheelchair, we see the wheelchair, not the person."

The camp provided respite for families, but a number of family members also came and volunteered, taking their respite there.

"I am in awe of everything that is happening here," said Claudia. "I love what church camping does for individuals in contrast with regular camping."

For information, call (208) 687-1146.

Series addresses faith, science issues

Michael Tkacz, associate professor of philosophy at Gonzaga University (GU); the Rev. Robert Spitzer, S.J., GU president, and Stephen Barr, a theoretical particle physicist at the University of Delaware's Bartel Research Institute are the 2004 "Physics and the God of Abraham" speakers.

They will give presentations at 7 p.m., March 29, 30 and April 1 at the Barbieri Courtroom at the Gonzaga School of Law and March 31 at the Seeley G. Mudd Chapel at Whitworth College.

Brian Clayton of the Faith and Reason Institute at Gonzaga said they sponsor the annual event with Whitworth because "Christianity is under attack by our modern,

secular society for being opposed to science. Many charge that belief in God is irrational.

"The Christian heritage, however, from the beginning to now is rich with Christian men and women successfully integrating faith and reason, uniting the pair that is supposedly disjointed," he said.

Michael's doctoral research at the Catholic University of America were devoted to the history and philosophy of science. Father Robert's interests are in the ontology of physics, metaphysics and their interrelationship with faith. Stephen's research interests include the relationship between physics and cosmology.

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Chaplain-missionary links hospitals in Spokane and Ghana

Continued from page 1

Clinic, a lab, anesthesia services, imaging services, Sisters of the Holy Names and Sacred Heart Medical Center.

He considers the people he knows in Ghana part of his family, so recruiting help for them is natural to him.

Lynn, who grew up in St. Aloysius parish and now is involved at St. Charles, first went to Ghana 18 years ago for a three-year term as a missionary. He caught malaria after six weeks and returned.

"I guess God didn't want me to stay there, but could better use me to find supplies, send them and teach people there how to use them," he said.

"For me, mission work is my life, a life of constant prayer and discernment to reach out within the United States on behalf of people in Ghana," he said. "Since then, there has not been a day that Ghana has not been on my mind."

Since his first visit, he has returned eight times to train people how to use medical equipment and supplies he ships in 40-foot containers.

After high school, Lynn joined the Navy, serving as a hospital corpsman and learning about surgical equipment. He then continued to live in San Diego, as a salesman of medical equipment and supplies.

Eleven years ago, he studied to be a hospital chaplain at Sacred Heart.

At the hospital, he is alert when x-ray, suction, anesthesia, kidney machines or other supplies from beds to disinfectant, floor scrubbers, linens, needles, tape, scalpels and other items become available. People call him when something is available.

"I live one day at a time, orient-

ing my life to God," he said.

"Most of the equipment can no longer be used by the hospital. Some cannot be used because the sterile packaging has been broken. In Ghana, the equipment can be sterilized and used."

Recently he raised \$17,000 to buy a truck for the Kpando hospital. His dream is to raise funds to build a children's ward, chapel and nurses' quarters.

His commitment has made a difference at a Catholic hospital in Kpando. The secretary there told Sister Cecilia about him.

The Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Church is an indigenous order of 62 sisters, founded in 1971. The sisters are scattered over three dioceses in an the Upper Volta region of Ghana, which is 45 percent Catholic, 45 percent Presbyterian, six percent Muslim and the rest participants in other churches. In Ghana, four other indigenous orders and many missionary orders minister as teachers, health care workers and social workers.

Sister Scholastica is a public health nurse and midwife. Sister Esther is an accountant for a college. Sister Cecilia was a teacher before becoming the mother general.

Sister Scholastica, moved by the mystery of God's love for her expressed in this opportunity for medical care, is anxious to return healthy so she can help people as she is being helped here.

Although baptized Catholic, she grew up in the Presbyterian Church. During secondary school, her brother reintroduced her to the Catholic Church and she became interested in becoming a nun, to give her life to God through prayer and serving the needy.

After completing secondary school in 1986, she went to Ho,

23 kilometers from her village, attended a retreat and entered the Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Church. She completed training to be a nurse in 1995, and then studied midwifery and public health nursing.

She began noticing that her feet, legs and hands were swelling. She developed painful blisters on her ankles and hands. She hopes that treatment in Spokane will mean she can go back and make other people well.

Sister Esther was baptized a Presbyterian in the village of Anfoega-Dzana. In secondary school, she decided to give herself to God and serve people, but there were no Presbyterian nuns. So she studied the Catholic faith and was confirmed. As a new convert, she had to wait for acceptance in the order.

For three years, she studied Catholic doctrine. After completing secondary school in 1983, she worked in a hospital for two years. She entered the order in 1986. During her year of mandatory national service in 1989, she worked as assistant bursar for the Diocese of Ho. Later she transferred to be accountant at a business college in Hohoe.

Back pain has limited her ability to work for three years—especially making sitting difficult.

Sister Cecilia grew up Catholic, knowing French and Dutch sisters working at the clinic in her village, Abor. When she completed her elementary education, she joined the Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Church in 1975, completing secondary studies to become a teacher.

In 1982, she was selected as one of four sisters from Ghana to study in Cleveland with a four-year scholarship with the Ursuline Sisters. In 1986, she began teaching biology in secondary school.

From 1990 to 1993, she returned to Cleveland for a master's degree in administration. Then she began three years teaching at the St. Mary's Seminary Secondary School, followed by nine years as principal at the college in Hohoe. In November 2001, she was elected to lead the Sisters of Mary congregation.

Sister Cecilia returned to Ghana after seeing that the two sisters were settled in Spokane, taking 100 packages of seeds donated by a garden supply store.

The sisters will plant them to help feed students at the Sokode boarding school for about 400 children, aged from six to 16, at the Sisters of Mary Mother House in Ho.

"People in Ghana are so poor. They have many needs," Sister Scholastica said.

"The poor in particular need help to be educated. It's hard for families to pay fees, buy uniforms and feed their children," Sister Cecilia said. "People who come to the hospital sick do not have the money to buy drugs to cure them. Lacking resources to help people, we sometimes feel helpless."

"Most children from poor

families are unable to finish their education. We see promising, brilliant students stop school and return to their villages, continuing the cycle of poverty. Education helps move people out of poverty. When people are educated, they realize they can do something to improve their lives and use their knowledge to improve the living conditions for everyone in their village."

Education gives people tools and vision to move from feeling helpless to knowing they can do something, said Sister Cecilia, sharing her dreams for expanding the school's classrooms, dorms and dining room.

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Seminar promotes 'companioning'

Author, educator and grief counselor Alan Wolfelt will lead a seminar, "Exploring the Heart and Hope of Grief: A Companioning Philosophy of Caregiving," from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 9, at Fourth Memorial Church, 2000 N. Standard.

Alan is director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colo., and teaches at the University of Colorado Medical School's Department of Family Medicine.

Promoting a model of "companioning" rather than "treating" the bereaved, Alan is committed to helping people mourn well, so

they can live well and love well.

The seminar—sponsored by Heritage Funeral Home, the Fairmount Memorial Association, the Greater Spokane Association of Evangelicals, the Batesville Casket Company and the Forethought Group—is for physicians, nurses, social workers, counselors, clergy and lay ministers, estate planners, hospice personnel and others who

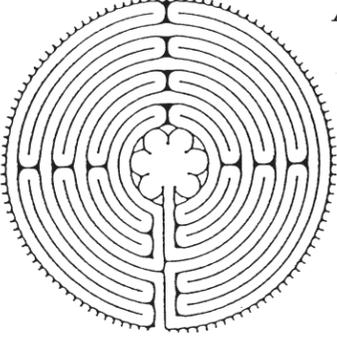
UNA plans UNICEF talk

Judith Gardner, the Spokane United Nations Association UNICEF chair, will discuss "The UNICEF Connection: Working for children Worldwide," at 7 p.m., Monday, March 8, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort George Wright Dr.

The U.S. Fund for UNICEF fund promotes the survival, protection and development of children in 158 countries.

For information, call 624-3608.

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Journey into Holy Week

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Friday, April 2 — 6 - 10 p.m.

An ancient spiritual tool, the labyrinth speaks profoundly to the journey of Holy Week and Good Friday. The journey begins at 6 p.m. with an Agape Meal in the Great Hall of Jewett House at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 12th Ave. & Grand Blvd., followed by a labyrinth orientation and meditation by Karen Robbins, a Veriditas certified labyrinth facilitator. Then walk the labyrinth to music provided by Lawrence Duncan and Michael Marsolek of "Drum Brothers" and "Mandir." Reservations are required. Please contact the Cathedral office at 838-4277. Nursery care will be provided. Freewill offerings will be joyfully accepted.



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Physics and the God of Abraham, 2004:

God & Design

Monday, 22 March 2004
 7:00 p.m. Dr. Michael Thorne, Gonzaga University
 "A Designer Delivered Creation as if Under an Open Sky"
 Barbara Cavanaugh, Gonzaga University School of Law

Tuesday, 23 March 2004
 7:00 p.m. Dr. Stephen Barr, University of Delaware
 "Modern Physics and the Bridge of the Unknowable"
 Barbara Cavanaugh, Gonzaga University School of Law

Wednesday, 31 March 2004
 7:00 p.m. Dr. Stephen Barr, University of Delaware
 "Modern Physics and Sacred Faith: Science and the Good"
 Dr. G. Scott Chapel, Whitworth College

Thursday, 1 April 2004
 7:00 p.m. Rev. Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Gonzaga University
 "Cosmology and Preparing God's Eschatological Home of the Big Bang Theory and Space Exploration"
 Barbara Cavanaugh, Gonzaga University School of Law

A free event, free of charge to the public.

Sponsorship:
 Faith and Reason Institute (Gonzaga University) / Ignite Center for Christian Faith and Learning (Whitworth College) / Holy & Mindful.

For information contact:
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Partnership model respects people facilitating local projects

High housing costs during the Silicon Valley boom led Partners International to move its headquarters from San Jose to Spokane.

Jon Lewis, the CEO since August, said Spokane's mayor and churches were eager to have this international ministry with a staff of 30 and a more than \$10 million budget resettle in Spokane.

Partners International will move again in June—from leased office space at 1313 N. Atlantic to a building it has purchased on North Nevada near Highway 2, where they will have a visitors center that is a window to international cultures.

"We will display artifacts, such as a tapestry made in Guanxi, China, where PI supports clinics, boarding schools and a program that sponsors children to attend school. We will tour children through the center to teach them about the rest of the world," Jon said.

For the dedication, PI will host events, so people know there is a "significant international ministry headquarters" here, he said.

"Partners International, founded in 1943, was one of the first mission organizations to understand the value of the ministry and vision of non-western leaders, in contrast to sending missionaries to do things for people, to teach and provide medical care," Jon said. "Most indigenous people are capable and just need someone to come alongside them."

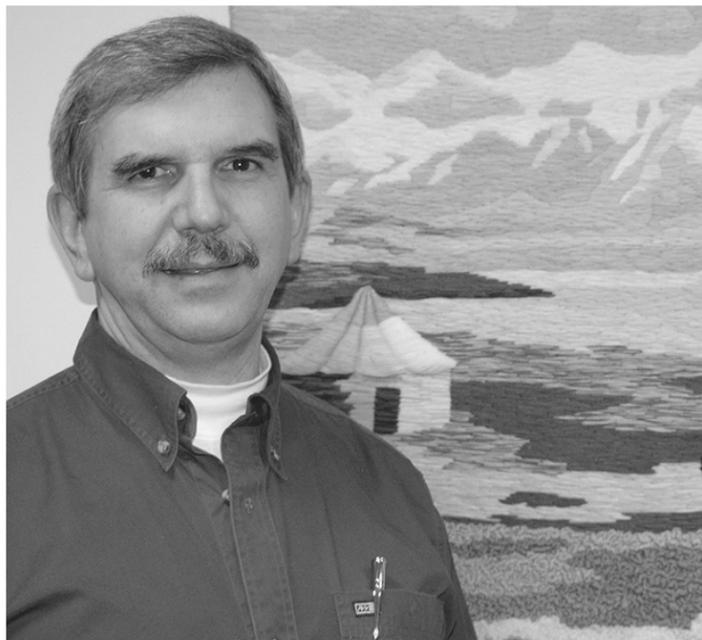
It has partner ministries in 50 of the least Christian areas of the world, working with local people, who know the language and culture, to reach their own people for God's kingdom.

When Jon says PI "creates communities of Christian witness," he means it in the broad sense of building churches, assisting development projects, HIV/AIDS clinics and schools.

According to its annual report, "holistic witness takes place when Christians care for needs of others—whether the needs are spiritual or physical—providing medical care, clean water, disaster relief, educational opportunities and other compassionate assistance."

Working with 87 indigenous Christian ministries in 59 countries in North Africa/Middle East, Islamic Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia, it has programs that provide food-for-work, milk for children, training for women to do and market crafts, Bible study and fellowship programs, and education in hygiene, health, nutrition and literacy.

PI's 2003 report says it planted



Jon Lewis beside tapestry made in Guanxi, China.

1,100 churches, drew 100,100 new believers, trained 7,500 leaders and assisted 220,800 victims of poverty and war during the year. Globally, it raised \$15.6 million in 2003, \$11.2 in the United States.

Sixteen percent of its budget is for administration and fund-raising. The rest goes overseas for ministries, Jon said. Six overseas staff partner with leaders in their regions to identify ministries.

"We have personal relationships and accountability through contracts with nationals. We have a clear reporting structure and exchanges that result in shared ownership of ministries," Jon said.

The partner mindset fosters links with other organizations and resources, such as Medical Ambassadors who do community health training.

PI sponsors an annual "Harvest of Hope" drive at Christmas to raise gift donations that provide such things as goats for poor families to raise.

U.S. churches are also partners, not only as sources of funds but also as part of the network, owning the projects.

Jon is new to PI, but not to international missions.

After completing degrees in physics at Bethel College in 1972 and the University of Minnesota in 1975, his dream was to be an astronaut. His interest in aviation took a different turn, however, when he spent a summer during graduate school with his uncle, a physician in Zimbabwe. He was assisted by Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) services.

For 26 years, Jon worked with

MAF, eight years as a pilot in Zaire, four years as Africa director and then as vice president for research and strategy planning in the Redlands, Calif., headquarters. In 25 countries, MAF supports 300 Christian and humanitarian organizations in jungle, desert and mountainous areas where transportation is difficult.

In Zaire, he worked with 40 national church and mission organizations to fly nurses and doctors to clinics, bring patients to the hospital, take teachers and evangelists to remote areas and deliver salaries for teachers.

"Out of it came a passion to enable indigenous leaders who were isolated and lacked resources to act on their visions," he said.

"God's hand led me to this role where I continue to build God's kingdom," said Jon, whose parents were Conservative Baptist missionaries in Portugal. Later, his father taught Bible at Bethel College.

Having spent a third of his life outside the United States, Jon appreciates that his worldview gives him insights on globalization.

"Trends in one corner of the world impact other corners," he said. "We can't afford not to have ties."

With economic globalization and the global spread of Hollywood media, he considers the global Christian community crucial for building understanding.

"Partnership is about more than digging a well or building a hospital," he said. "It's about holding hands and sharing the love of Christ and advancing the Gospel message. It needs to be ongoing

and cross generational."

In contrast to a colonial approach that demeans non-Westerners, he said "Christians in the West need to realize there are more Christians in the non-Western world and they have leaders who are worthy to teach us."

So PI brings partners to the United States and gives them a platform for presenting their "theology of suffering," and share Jesus' model of responding in word and deed.

Jon said many U.S. Christians neglect to teach part of the faith, because "our bias to our life per-

spectives shapes our theology."

He advocates dialogue based on Jesus' prayer that his followers would "be one" so the world would know God sent Jesus.

"'Being one' means living together in community and working in partnership. It does not mean uniformity of being in the same denomination. It means being one even with our diverse races and beliefs," he said. "That is the most powerful way to convince the world the Christian message is worth listening to and following.

For information, call 343-4000 or visit www.partnersintl.org.



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Book Parlor extends church's outreach to congregations, neighborhood

As an extension of its education ministry and outreach to the neighborhood, Salem Lutheran Church opened the Lutheran Book Parlor in a house beside the church about three years ago.

In 2004, the 250-member congregation—25 percent of whom live in the neighborhood—is providing \$24,000. The goal is for it to be self-supporting.

The parlor serves the church, the neighborhood and more. It connects with Lutheran congregations in the region, providing Sunday school and vacation Bible school resources, theological books, online sales through its website linked to Amazon, an in-house lending library, used book sales and fair-trade gifts.

When the Rev. Sonja Johnson was called in March 2000, she dreamed of a book-store ministry. She lived on the second floor of the house, at 1414 W. Broadway, which is now the book parlor.

The house is one of several buildings on the block that Salem Lutheran bought to provide low-income housing for the neighborhood, including Salem Arms apartments for chronically mentally ill people. There are 11 low-income apartments in three houses and three houses rented to families.

Sonja's bookstore idea grew from her dream that people in the congregation and larger Lutheran and ecumenical community would see the importance of "diving into their faith," reading about Martin Luther, the Reformation and such traditional Lutheran theologians as Paul Tillich and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, plus contemporary theologians like Robert Capon and Douglas John Hall.

Cheri Nelson and Corey Laughary now share management responsibilities for the venture.

Cheri's great-grandparents were charter members of Salem. Her children were the fourth generation to graduate from North Central High School. She taught after graduating from Eastern Washington University in 1972, and then was a stay-at-home mother.

While working as Christian education director at Messiah Lutheran, she entered the Lutheran process to be a commissioned associate in ministry. She was commissioned in May 1987 and worked 12 years as the assistant to Bishop Bob Keller at the Eastern Washington Idaho Synod office.

When his term ended, she volunteered at church, helping with



For Cheri Nelson, managing the book parlor means reading more.

vacation Bible school and spending time with grandchildren.

"I'm always in prayer for God's guidance in my evolving ministry," she said.

When Sonja retired, Cheri wanted the bookstore ministry to continue. So she and Corey each work half-time.

"I began reading more," she noted. "I'm growing into this and depend on Corey's expertise from his experience managing a bookstore and budgeting for it."

Corey, a Baptist who grew up in Spokane and graduated from Whitworth College, stopped at the book parlor in early 2003 while his wife was in the neighborhood applying for a job. He was intrigued because he had managed a bookstore during studies at the Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia. He helped for three months and then worked as interim at Central Baptist Church from May to December 2003.

"We have resources on everything from what Lutherans believe about baptism to ecumenical issues," Cheri said. "People tend to read less, but reading helps them think beyond 15 minutes of a Sunday sermon about what they believe."

To encourage reading and study, the book parlor also has a dialogue group from 12:30 to 2 p.m., Fridays, to discuss books they read, explore their faith and

meet neighborhood people who come for coffee. In January, the group began *Dakota: A Spiritual Journey* by Kathleen Norris.

"This is a safe, welcoming place for people to drop in," Cheri said. "Three or more neighborhood people drop in each week."

The Lutheran Book Parlor also sponsors speakers, such as Robert Slack, who spoke in February on the relationship of shame to addiction and co-dependency.

Shane Claiborne, a peace activist and organizer of the Simple Way Christian community in a poor neighborhood in Philadelphia, will speak at 5 p.m., Sunday, March 28, at the church. Shane went to Iraq in March 2003.

Patrick and Connie Copeland-Malone are starting a book club that will meet at 6:30 p.m., fourth Mondays, starting March 22, with a focus on urban mission.

Salem Lutheran's pastor, the Rev. Tom Soldener, other Lutheran pastors and lay people on the book parlor's board suggest ideas for books.

"We have space for only one or two copies of each title, but we receive books we order in two to

five days," Cheri said.

Recently, the book parlor began to supply books for a library at Grace Lutheran Church in Wenatchee.

"They want a library as a resource for their area, so they are partnering with us. We make it possible for their money to buy more, and they support us with their large orders," she said.

"We offer a 15 to 20 percent discount for curricula, Bible studies, books and Bibles," she said.

They are among books from 30 publishers on the shelves—such as *God in the Lord of the Rings*, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, *A Is for Addictive*, *The Early Christians*, *Words that Explode* and *The Irony of the Galatians*.

The mission is to encourage "respectful theological conversation with the Lutheran and other faith communities for growth in the understanding of God's continuing involvement with God's creation," Cheri said.

The goals are to provide people in the neighborhood and region access to: 1) theological resources and Christian educational materials at reasonable prices; 2) gift items that enable crafts people from around the world to achieve a sustainable living, and 3) a welcoming space for spiritual rest, personal renewal

and theological challenge.

Cheri hopes the book parlor is always "discerning the future to which God's Spirit directs us and always open to new possibilities and opportunities for witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ."

Gifts are from SERRV, a fair-trade organization created in 1949 by the Church of the Brethren to help refugees in post World War II Europe. It is a nonprofit trade organization supporting safe working conditions and equitable wages for tens of thousands of artisans around the world. The book parlor stocks baskets, jewelry, crosses, toys, purses, pottery, knick-knacks and holiday items.

In the basement, 1,000 books listed online are shelved in alphabetical order. On the main floor, one room is for children's books, and the former kitchen is the library. The front room is the meeting room, coffee shop and SERRV gift center.

"This is where God has put me," said Cheri, who also sings in the choir, assists the pastor with worship and has taught Sunday school and adult classes—whatever needs to be done.

The Lutheran Book Parlor, which is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays, is also a place where people can donate used books.

For information, call 328-6527.

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Theater and speech teacher puts her skills to work as a pastor

Tara Leininger's teaching and theatre background contribute to her skills as pastor of the Metaline Falls Congregational United Church of Christ.

Both use her skills as a public speaker who can hold listeners' attention. From teaching debate and communications, she knows how to construct a speech that goes somewhere without rambling.

From theatre, she employs diction, voice modulation, and storytelling, giving dramatic softness or loudness where it's appropriate.

Although she has not had a class in sermon writing, she approaches it as speech writing, starting with the lectionary scriptural verses, reading commentaries, researching themes and looking at life around her.

While she has outlines and themes for the next three months, she's ready to drop those ideas if something in the community or world comes up.

"As a pastor, I bring all of who I am to my call as a minister," said Tara, who is fulfilling her dream and call to be a pastor.

She and her husband, Donovan Johnson, moved to Metaline Falls 13 years ago when the Selkirk School hired Don as music teacher. A year after they settled in, the district hired her as half-time teacher for the middle and high school classes in history, geography, English, speech-communications and theatre.

Don, who studied composing at California State in Northridge, met Tara while both were teaching in St. Anthony, Idaho. Tara, who grew up in Montana, was an elder and in the choir Don directed at the Presbyterian Church there.

In college, Tara minored in history and took some religious studies courses in her master's degree work. She felt called into ministry and would have pursued it in Idaho, but put seminary plans on hold when they moved to Metaline Falls.

For a few years, they had no church home. Don was music director for Catholic parishes in Ione and Metaline Falls, and then organist for the American Lutheran church in Newport.

Tara did pulpit supply for her predecessor, the Rev. Paul Clay, and served while the church searched for an ordained interim or half-time pastor. What she started five years ago to fill the gap led to her renewed call to ministry. The church had a hard time finding someone who could live at the salary they offered.

Meanwhile, Tara completed the process to become a licensed lay minister with the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Tara now plans to work for a master's degree in theology—online and on a campus—to prepare for ordination.

"I can do it because Don's sal-



Tara Leininger turns theatre and teaching skills into pastoral skills.

ary supports us. The church pays me a half-time salary, an annuity and the parsonage," she said.

Tara continued teaching until the decline in student enrollment—from 500 to 400 students in K-12—led to her position being eliminated.

"We are in a financially troubled area, even though the zinc mine is reopening. The largest employers have been the school district and the forest service," she said.

"We see our role as the community church to be reaching out to people so they know we are here in times of need," she said. "Most funerals and weddings are for non-members."

With a graying congregation, Tara spends much time visiting and caring for people, as do other pastors in the area. Young families in town are busy, and their children are often unchurched. Most young people leave to find jobs and for educational opportunities, she said.

"How do we speak to the graying congregation who want a church to stay as it is and also speak to the younger generations?" she wonders along with colleagues in the area.

While some churches seek to draw young people by having stages, lighting and sound systems to create a high-octane, rock-show-entertainment ambience, Tara believes a church should speak to both the graying and the young.

"I want to keep the church vital by keeping the generations in the same room," she said.

"A church is a church, and a theatre is a theatre. The church needs a sense of sacredness, worship and order," she said. "Rock bands and stage lights are for theatres. Churches can provide theater relief or escape, but we do not need those things for God's presence. We need to be cautious as we speak to an MTV generation who may seek flash over substance."

Tara says theatre is for the secular and church is for the sacred, although sometimes themes overlap, such as when the Cutter Theater presented "Godspell" or "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

"The theatre, however, does not produce those musicals because of their religious message, but because they are good stories," she said. "When it does such a production, we have the singers come to sing at church, too."

"I am committed to living here. Our lives are filled with more than quiet moments. We enjoy benefits of rural community and opportunities in Spokane," she said.

Both are involved in the Cutter Theatre and school theatre.

Keeping busy with musicals in the summer, they have gone fishing only once.

"I was involved in theatre through high school and college, learning skills for acting and di-

recting. In St. Anthony, I directed high school theatre. Here I have done 20 plays at the high school and 13 plays at the Cutter Theatre—acting, directing, wardrobe, lighting or stage work.

"The Cutter Theatre was in its infancy when we arrived. The North Pend Oreille Players were purchasing a building and beginning renovation of the old Metaline Falls School, designed by Kirtland Cutter and abandoned for 20 years," Don said.

As a nonprofit theatre group seeking a home, they saw the building as a community center, as well as a theatre.

Classrooms were modified to accommodate businesses, a library, a rural schools museum, a recording studio, a massage studio, county mental health offices, an art gallery, a beauty shop and hospital district offices.

The Cutter Center is full of activity with people going to the library, renting space for meetings or parties, attending after-school art programs and rehearsing school or community drama.

"The art, drama and music we do bring statewide recognition to our area," Don said. "They also bring the community together."

Along with supporting the community center, Tara encourages the congregation be active.

"It's fulfilling to watch the church become re-energized, ask questions, pray for someone, confirm youth, participate in the joys of weddings and the tears of funerals," she said.

The Metaline Falls Congrega-

tional UCC has existed for 93 years as the community church. The building was planned and money was raised from the community, as well as by the church.

"We are here for people who do not have a church when they find they need a church," she said.

She spends time with people who have no church home, as well as with church members.

"They need God's presence in their lives, too. Our church's doors are open to everyone," said Tara, who visits people on street corners, in the cafe or at the bar.

About 30 people attend on an average Sunday, including a few children or teens.

Just as she is ready to "go to bat" for anyone in the community, Tara finds residents of Metaline Falls and Ione "there" for people in the community—including the few mixed racial, Hispanic and Native American families who make it their home.

"We stand with them and will not tolerate harassment because they are part of the community," she said.

For information, call 446-3301.

International Women's Day
4-6 pm, Monday, March 8
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Faith communities relish visibility given by media, movie attention

Before major studio productions comes the hype, the media-fed controversies that draw crowds to movies. Lacking studio support, "The Passion of the Christ," has relied on churches to market the film.

This time—just in time for Easter—faith portrayed in today's art and media format becomes popularized and is being promoted by Christian churches in hopes that it will draw converts, raise questions and lead to deeper faith commitment. So churches have been promoting attendance and buying blocks of tickets.

Historically, art has had a symbiotic role with religion. "The Passion of the Christ" is one more such expression.

Any time the mass media of the day give attention to faith, it's easy to rally churches, as they hope to encourage more coverage and visibility.

How much of the movie's proceeds will be raised free by churches to increase profits for the mega-million-dollar movie industry profit?

Imagine if each Christian who attends gave a matching amount to support our church's outreach to serve the poor.

Imagine if the already wealthy movie

producer donated a substantial portion of profits to ministries around the nation and world, in gratitude for the blessing of producing the movie and for the financial windfall expected because of church promotions.

Imagine, churches promoting that members go to an R-rated, gory, violent film *during Lent*, a film with the capacity to incite hate, pathos, faith, love, anguish and perhaps understanding.

Sharing faith is not limited to church institutions, so there is cause to celebrate when media produce insightful pieces. Art has long been a tool to convey the stories of faith—stained glass windows, paintings, music, sculptures, recordings, films and video.

Faith is controversial because people interact with the same message in different ways—as they are ready and capable of grasping it.

Media and art are powerful conveyors of faith, and as much as political and religious leaders—sometimes divisive and sometimes uniting.

Churches have been patrons of the arts that depict truths to help people progress

in their faith journey.

What will viewers see? What is presented about Jesus? What is not presented? What understandings will be advanced? How will it affect faith? What does it say about the power of fear, hate and mobs? What does it say about the church and state dancing together? What does it say about justice? What does it say about loving our neighbors? What does it say about loving God? What does it say about Jesus' love and compassion, suffering and sacrifice?

There are more questions about Jesus' crucifixion than the murder mystery media are pursuing: Who killed Jesus?

Producer-director Mel Gibson answered that: "We did!" The "we" is in every age, those caught up in the groundswell of mobs, caving in to popular pressures.

Each person is capable of violence, hate, torture and abuse. We are all capable of deluding ourselves to believe our actions are right, just, popular, appropriate or righteous.

How much violence or sex do we need to see in movies to know how human beings treat each other in the name of

love, hate, justice, security, terrorism, or fear? How much fantasy and reality shape our beliefs, our perception of truth or our commitment to personal and prophetic faith?

Would we follow Jesus on the path to the passion Jesus endured? Would we forgive those who torment and torture us?

Jesus' life, ministry, teachings, love and sacrifice have long been controversial. They also call people to turn around their lives to love each other, overcome differences, reconcile and raise challenges in their communities, societies and nations that have led followers on the path to suffering.

As with all faiths, does understanding the message of faith lead to love or hate, compassion or blame, understanding or fear, reconciliation or division—and what shades in between?

So religion hits media screens and pages—from the movie passion to same-sex marriage, from terrorists of all religious claims, from sex abuse to intolerance. The caution is that with religion a popular topic today, will depth understandings and commitment that

Lent invites soul-searching, spiritual housecleaning and a movie

Lent is here with the annual countdown to Easter. The symbol of Ash Wednesday heralds the beginning of 40 days when we are more deeply aware of Jesus' suffering for all humankind, and for us, personally. We inevitably glide from the gloom of the cross to the bloom of Easter and the Resurrection.

This is a time for prayer, meditation and soul-searching, and for asking God's forgiveness for personal and corporate sins—our own and our sins as a nation—for the many times we have missed the mark.

During Lent, we often take to heart Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a right spirit within me."

Many associate this season with the mundane tasks of spring house-cleaning. It is often a time for cleaning trash and garbage from closets, cupboards and the fridge. Our

grandmothers used to beat rugs in the backyard and aired long lines of winter clothes for storage.

In this yearly routine, there is a "homey" relationship to the cleansing practice of Lent. Lent begins for many Christians with the ancient Roman Catholic ritual on Ash Wednesday, when a priest draws the sign of the cross on each worshipper's forehead with a finger dipped in ashes from the previous year's Palm Sunday branches.

For the next 40 days, faith communities prepare for Easter in prayer or ritual. It is a special time for Christians to put our "spiritual houses in order." God is asking us, along with our housecleaning, to throw out the trash that has accumulated in our minds and hearts during the past year. It is a time to get rid of anger and resentments, petty quarrels with family or friends, bit-

terness from things over which we have no control, guilt trips, fears and anxieties, and prejudices we secretly carry.

God tells us to throw them out during Lent. We will be healthier in body and soul. A loving, merciful Savior has taken on our sins great and small in redemptive grace. This is the Easter message—unparalleled—but one that is incomprehensible to the vengeful, belligerent, power-seeking world in which we live.

A new dynamic for Lent has occurred this year—in movie houses, no less.

"The Passion of the Christ," produced and directed by the seasoned actor, Mel Gibson, opened on Ash Wednesday. According to promotional clips, it is a startling portrayal of Christ's passion—the incomprehensible suffering, crucifixion and resurrection. The horror and torturous scenes shown in the

clips have resulted in fierce opposition from some Jewish communities.

They consider it "Jew bashing" and anti-Semitism. I thought we had put that prejudice in a trash can years ago.

Mel Gibson, a professed Catholic, said in an interview that the film may turn some secular humanists to Christ. He believes that "nothing ever happens by chance."

The question has surfaced in the media: "Did the Jews kill Christ?"

The reply by Gibson and many in the faith community: "No, the Jews alone did not crucify our Lord. We all did and still do in many ways."

Jesus on the cross vicariously assumed the guilt of all humanity in an act of forgiveness and redemptive love.

Jo Hendricks
Contributing editor

Newsletter Excerpts

Sounding Board

Letters to the Editor

The February issue was great, full of so many important items. I read it from cover to cover.

My town is a small residential town. We have to go to Sacramento to have contact with organizations like you have in Spokane. We get information from them to encourage our little town.

Ruth Ross
Cameron Park, Calif.

I recently started exercising at a health club. With my busy schedule, career and family, I decided to make the fitness program a priority. I am less stiff, winded and exhausted during the day. It's worth the money. Thousands in Spokane agree, because the club is rarely quiet or empty. Day and night, it hums with activity.

Americans support health clubs, trainers, diet and fitness programs into billions of dollars each year. We seek youthfulness, fitness, beauty, energy, stamina and health, and we are willing to pay for it, repeat workouts that make us sore, sweat, pull muscles and do the aching work suggested by professional trainers. We recognize the benefits.

Can we admit that our Christian life and spirituality demand as much? Unless we wish to have flabby spiritual lives, we must commit to the work of the Christian life. It needs the same and more determination than our exercise programs get. Our spiritual lives must include hard work, repetition, soul stretching, sweating

and struggling.

We cannot go to church, read and study, struggle and pray for a few months and then decide we are done with spiritual growth.

Our faith must always be stretching, learning and willing to do the hard, sweaty, sometimes monotonous work for spiritual health.

The Rev. Andy CastroLang
Westminster Congregational United
Church of Christ

Note: In the Opportunity Christian Church newsletter, the Rev. Gail Davis quoted Johnny Wray, director of the Disciples of Christ's Week of Compassion, part of One Great Hour of Sharing and similar to offerings many churches collect for global ministries.

In a typical year, the offering receives about \$2.5 million. For most of us, this seems like an enormous sum of money. In light of the multitude of hungry people before us, however, this does not seem like much—for displaced people in Liberia, refugees from Afghanistan, drought survivors in southern Africa, unemployed coffee workers in Nicaragua and children in Iraq.

Many times in face of enormous humanitarian needs in the world, what we have is little more than a drop in the bucket. The remarkable things about the Week of Compassion is how God continues to take these gifts and multiply them over and

over again to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Sometimes the multiplication of our gifts is nothing short of miraculous. For example, a Week of Compassion grant of \$20,000 enabled Interchurch Medical Assistance to facilitate a donation of 660,000 doses of vaccines valued at nearly \$15 million. Another grant of \$35,000 provided 35,000 Zimbabwean families with enough seed packets to produce an adequate family food supply for a year.

A \$1,000 grant is matched by a \$1,000 grant from an urban church which provides the input for a Disciples farmer to grow beans, corn or wheat. The harvest nets about \$4,000 for the Week of Compassion's account in the Food Resource Bank, which then is matched dollar for dollar by a USAID grant, all for food relief or security projects around the world.

What we give brings honor to our God and much joy and relief into the lives of suffering people around the world.

Johnny Wray
Week of Compassion

Lent is related to an Old English word meaning "to lengthen." It refers to spring and the lengthening of days. The practice of fasting during Lent was not only for spiritual reasons, but also for necessity. In the last days of the northern European winter, hunger was a close companion between the end of winter and the first fruits of the fields.

Another Old English word related to Lent means "to bend." Lent is the season when we bend our lives to God through worship, devotions, study and giving up something—like sugar or TV—or the taking up of something—like devotional reading or a daily walk and reflection. Even a small relinquishment or "taking up" will be a reminder of prayer, which will cause enough friction for you to grow in discipline and prayer.

The Rev. Leslie Ann Knight
Audubon United Methodist

Davenport couple return from Haiti

Paul and Joan McLain, members of First Presbyterian Church in Davenport who have been serving with the Presbyterian Church USA at an Episcopal hospital in Mombin Crochu, Haiti, returned to the United States on Feb. 20.

Rebels had entered the community, burned the police station, roughed up the mayor, scared children and left in two hours, they reported to the church. They are with family in Florida.

The Davenport church's nine-member Haiti Mission Team has cancelled plans to go during March.

Marchers mourns loss of lives in Iraq War

A W.M.D. March will start at 1 p.m., Saturday, March 20, at Franklin Park. "WMD" in this case stands for "War Means Death."

Along with presentations by musicians and speakers, participants will set up a mock cemetery, using white cloth on dowels.

On flags will be the names of

Novena services held in March

"Letting God Be God" is the theme for the 77th annual Novena of Grace led by Father Gary Uhlenkott, S.J., and Father Rick Ganz, S. J., from Saturday March 6, through Sunday, March 14, at St. Aloysius Catholic Church, 330 E. Boone.

The novena is a nine-day period of prayer, a tradition that began in 1615 in Goa, India, when a crippled boy was healed by the intercession of St. Francis Xavier, who was canonized March 12, 1622, with his friend, St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits.

According to organizers, the novena at St. Aloysius is the largest in the United States.

During the nine days, there will be services at 12:15 (12:30 on Sundays), 3:30 and 5:15 p.m. The sacrament of reconciliation is offered after each service, and the sacrament of anointing the sick is offered at all March 12 liturgies.

Father Gary grew up in Colton, entered the Jesuit Order in 1969, graduated from Gonzaga University in 1974 and has graduate degrees in broadcasting from Syracuse University and in music from Berklee College in Boston. He taught at Seattle Prep and served as associate pastor at St. Francis Xavier parish in Missoula.

For 17 years, he has taught music theory, music in film and television, and jazz piano on at Gonzaga University and at Gonzaga's study abroad program in Florence, Italy. He is a resident chaplain and helps with retreats.

Father Rick grew up in St. Augustine parish in Spokane, graduated from Gonzaga Prep in 1972 and Gonzaga University in 1978, entered the Society of Jesus in 1972 and was ordained in 1984.

He has studied and taught philosophy and theology at high school and university levels, worked in formation of Jesuits in the Oregon Province, parishes and as a retreat and spiritual director. He is an administrator, trustee and superior of the Jesuits at Jesuit High Portland. During his 2004 sabbatical at Gonzaga University, he is writing a book on friendship and the Trinity.

For information, call 323-5896.

500 Americans and Iraqis who have died in the war in Iraq.

Before *The Fig Tree* went to press, the U.S. deaths were at more than 549.

"Human rights organizations and press reports estimate up to 10,000 Iraqis civilians and more than 20,000 Iraqi soldiers have died in the war. Those figures are hard to determine, because of problems counting bodies during a war," said Mike Kress, who is doing research on the number of deaths for the Peace and Justice

Action League of Spokane.

The number of American soldiers wounded—hostile and nonhostile—is more than 3,120. They are among 11,000 U.S. troops evacuated from Iraq for medical reasons—from disease to psychiatric illnesses.

There have been 21 officially recognized suicides in Iraq and Kuwait, said Mike, who has no figures on the number of Iraqi wounded, but estimates it is in the 10s of thousands.

For information, call 838-7870.

Calendar of Events

- Mar 2-Apr 7 •Journeying in Lent through Art and Movement, St. Joseph Family Center - call 483-6495
- Mar 4 •"Media and Foreign Policy," Jim McPherson, assistant professor of communication studies, Whitworth Music Recital Hall, 7:30 p.m.
- Mar 6 •"Women Leading for Social Justice," Spokane Area Women's Leadership Conference, Lairat Spokane Community College, 7:30 a.m. - call 533-7030
- Sr. Helen Prejean, Washington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty Benefit Dinner, College Club of Seattle - call 838-7870
- "We Are All Different. We Are All the Same: Healing Discrimination through Dialogue, Wisdom, Understanding: Aman Motwane, author of *The Power of Wisdom*, Cataldo at Gonzaga University, 1:30 p.m. - call 838-6518
- Mar 7 •"Wisdom of Gandhi" series begins, Unity Church of North Spokane, 6116 N. Market, 10 a.m., with discussion the next Wednesday evening
- Mar 8 •Spokane Women Organizing for Peace and Reaching Across Borders, International Women's Day, Women's Club, 9th and Walnut, 4 p.m.
- "UNICEF Connection: Working for Children Worldwide," United Nations Association, p. 6
- Mar 10 •PAX Christi, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 1503 W. Dean, noon
- Mar 11-13 •Christian Life Impact Conference, Spokane Convention Center - call 487-0149, p. 2
- Mar 12-14 •Contemplative Prayer Retreat, Monastery of St. Gertrude - call (208) 962-3224
- Mar 14 Koshers Dinner, Temple Beth Shalom, 30th & Perry, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. - call 623-0372, p. 9
- Mar 17 •Women's Justice Circle eight-week series begins, Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center of Seattle, YWCA, 829 W. Broadway, 6 p.m. - call 326-1190, ext. 139
- "Celebrating the Celtic Spirit," Jane Comerford, St. Joseph Family Center, 1016 N. Superior, 9:30 p.m.
- Mar 18 •VOICES, Salem Lutheran Church, 5:30 p.m.
- Mar 18-20 •International Conference to Establish Hate Studies, p. 1, 12
- Mar 20 •War Means Death March, p. 11
- PAX Christi, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 1503 W. Dean, 9 a.m.
- "How Flowers Can Change Your World: Ikebana as a Spiritual Practice," Cliff Evans, St. Joseph Family Center, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Mar 24 •"Race Matters: Walking the Talk," Community Congress on Race Relations - 625-6263, p. 2
- Mar 27 •"The Trials of Henry Kissinger," 95.3 KYRS Film Night, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m.
- Mar 31 •Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9 a.m.
- "Forgiveness and Family Relationships," Sacred Heart Providence Auditorium, 7 p.m. - call 474-3008
- Apr 1 •Fig Tree Board, 1323 S. Perry St., 8:45 a.m.
- Great Decisions: "Revisiting the U.S. War on Terrorism," Michael LeRoy, professor of political science, Whitworth Music Recital Hall, 7:30 p.m.
- Mondays •PEACH Safe Food Orientation - call 455-2552
- Tues-Sats •Habitat for Humanity work days - call 534-2552
- Fridays •Peace Vigil at Army Recruiting Office, Colville - call 675-4554
- 1st Sats •Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship Union, Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, 312 E. 3rd, 10:30 a.m.
- 2nd Suns •Sacred Harp Shape-Note Singers, 2929 Waterford Dr., 7 p.m.
- Stevens County Fellowship of Reconciliation, First Congregational, Colville, 6:30 p.m. - call 738-4962

Mission Spokane sets fasting, prayer days

For the seventh year, Mission Spokane has organized 40 Days of Fasting and Prayer to prepare pastors for Holy Week.

"We call the church to spiritual focus during Lent—Feb. 25 through April 4," said Glen Weber, of Spirit of Grace Fellowship

on behalf of Mission Spokane. "Prayer, walking, local and international missions and prayer for ministry leadership are some of the ways people will be led to focus their prayers each day."

For information, contact www.missionsspokane.org.

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CROP Hunger Walk

SUNDAY, April 25

Noon - entertainment & registration at Martin Centre
Gonzaga University
2 p.m. - Walk on Centennial Trail



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Hate experienced in homes, schools and societies requires resilience

The resilience Jerri Shepard sees in some abused children, Holocaust survivors and hate victims convinces her that education can reduce hate.

As a school psychologist and then as a juvenile probation court officer in Phoenix, she encountered the effects of violence in homes—hate in familial settings manifested as child abuse.

After completing doctoral studies in psychology at the University of San Francisco, she came to Gonzaga University's psychology program and then worked with the School of Education to develop a master's degree in teaching at-risk children. That program was developed in response to Educational Service District #101's mandate that teachers understand the impact of child abuse and hate.

Jerri teaches students and teachers—both on campus and in Canada—about at-risk children.

In school, children may be marginalized because they are in special education or are from different cultures and races, she commented. They may be bullied, ostracized and abused by peers. That affects their ability to learn and to use opportunities open to them.

"Understanding hate is complicated," said Jerri. "It may start with abuse in the home—victims and victimizers—and turn into bullying in school, so it's important for schools to have non-violence pacts."

In addition, she believes that resilience is key.

Testimonies of people facing and overcoming hate can be powerful teaching tools, helping people change their lives, explained Jerri, who wants to help targets of hate help themselves.

Two effective teachers, who are her personal friends, are Holocaust survivors Noemi Ban of Bellingham and Eva Lassman of Spokane. Jerri met them while she was training teachers for the Ann Frank Exhibit in 2000. She led 10-hour workshops to teach teachers who would bring their classes to the exhibit.

Noemi and Eva had healthy childhoods, said Jerri, who be-



Jerri Shepard

lieves that is important to understanding the basis for resilience.

"They were young adults when they entered the concentration camps in Hungary and Poland. They were hardy and healthy both physically and emotionally because of the initial love they had experienced in their families."

Eva visits middle-school and high-school classes to tell of her experiences.

"It's mesmerizing because it's far away—across an ocean—and long ago—more than 50 years," Jerri said. "It's not right in their back yards."

Growing up in New Jersey in the midst of a large Jewish population, she never studied about the Holocaust in school. Only students in European history or some language arts classes did. It was too close, she thinks.

When Eva shares with street kids or people in the Criminal Justice Center's Victim Awareness Program, they readily relate to the Holocaust.

Not all Holocaust survivors or hate crime victims have the resilience to speak of their experiences, Jerri explained.

She believes resilience is key for confronting and overcoming hate, because many people resist the idea of dealing with hate.

"Resilience is a quality that develops over time. It arises from a combination of inner strength, family relationships, friendships, job and education opportunities, and high expectations of the recipient of hate.

"I'm most interested in what we can do to reduce hate through education, research and advocacy," she said. "I believe that can make a difference in the world."

She advocates teaching inclusion early, to counteract the many ways society, families and schools teach children, youth and adults that some people are "the other," people who can be hated, hurt and abused.

Jerri, who attends Unity Church, has been part-time director of the Institute for Action Against Hate for two years.

Founded in 1997, the institute combats hate as part of the university's Jesuit, Catholic and humanistic commitment to promote social justice.

Faculty, staff, students and community members founded the institute in 1997 as an outgrowth of their efforts to support African-American law students who were victims of a series of racist, threatening phone calls and letters during three spring semesters beginning in 1995. They have

also supported gay and lesbian students who have experienced intolerance.

Formed to eliminate hate from the campus, community, region and nation, it seeks to increase diversity and improve cultural understanding.

Helping in that mission are members of the institute's board,

which includes representatives from local universities, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the American Jewish Committee and community representatives.

One tool the institute has developed is its annual *Journal of Hate Studies*, which publishes interdisciplinary manuscripts on ideas and research relating to what hate is, where it comes from and how to combat it. Papers from the upcoming Conference to Establish the Field of Hate Studies will be included in the journal's third edition, which will be published in 2004. The first edition was general and the second focused on religious issues.

"Moving toward a global community full of diversity and difference requires a universal effort," said Jerri, noting that the journal and institute are venues ultimately to prevent hate, expressed as bias, discrimination, stigmatization and marginalization of people.

For information, call 323-2665.

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