

## STORIES INSIDE

**Iraqi student dispels misconceptions** - p. 4

**Chef cooks for, dines with homeless** - p. 5

**Prophetic dancing brings healing** - p. 7

**Christ Kitchen empowers women** - p. 12



Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest  
online at [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org) and The Fig Tree Facebook Page for news and links

# Urban farming improves access to food

By Mary Stamp

As a fifth generation member of his family in agriculture in Eastern Washington, Brian Estes brings a different face to farming from his maternal grandparents who operated the farm their grandparents started in the 1880s for herding sheep.

"I have begun to rediscover farming. It did not occur to me that farming was anything other than what my grandparents did. I didn't realize I would want this career," said Brian, who became interested in social justice and environmental issues during college. "I fell in love with food, good food and eating well," he said.

Along with promoting urban farming, community gardens and farmers' markets as parts of urban food production, he has his own small, for-profit farm in Vinegar Flats with a half-acre vegetable garden, a perennial garden, a pasture and experimental projects.

Brian sells to small, local grocery stores, like Main Market in Spokane, and as far away as Leavenworth, where he recently delivered 100 pounds of sunchokes—also called Jerusalem artichokes.

He likes what he's doing, from simple, mundane tasks of working



Brian Estes with greens a vendor is selling at the Thursday South Perry Market.

with his hands, weeding, harvesting, hauling and selling, to dealing with agriculture policies. He finds a quality of life in working on building his own farm enterprise to add to the conversation about food systems from personal experience.

Brian also encourages discussion on the justice of food systems in terms of how food is produced, distributed and consumed.

Growing up in Richland, he often visited his grandparents on their wheat farm near Walla Walla and after they moved into town during his teenage years. Attending Christ the King Catholic Church in Richland, he became interested in philosophy, contemplation and values for living well in the world.

Brian came to Spokane nine years ago to study psychology and environmental studies at Gonzaga University. After completing his degree in 2007, he decided to stay.

His one-year Jesuit volunteer position with St. Margaret's Women's Shelter, part of Catholic Charities of Spokane, grew into his role on staff as garden program coordinator for the shelter's Vinegar Flats Community Farm.

Vinegar Flats Community Garden of St. Margaret's Shelter was

*Continued on page 8*

## Long-term commitment and giving from abundance aids Haitian school

Giving from a sense of abundance and from a long-term commitment, supporters from five congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane are helping educate children in a Haitian village so they can rise out of poverty and help their community.

Their goal is to add one grade level and one teacher each year to St. André's Episcopal School, so that children can graduate from high school in their community. To support more teachers, purchase school supplies and increase classroom space requires involving more congregations in

the Diocese of Spokane.

The Haiti Project benefits more than Haitian children. Church members here are also finding benefits for their faith and lives.

Trish Newton, who visited Cazale, Haiti, in the mountains 30 miles northeast of Port-au-Prince, in May 2009 with the Very Rev. Bill Ellis of the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, knows the need first hand. She saw tears in the eyes of parents she met when they learned the crumbling school building would be renovated so their children could go to school to learn from trained teachers and

have access to books, pencils, paper and other school supplies.

Now nine teachers teach 170 students in preschool through sixth grade, "with plans for students to complete 12th grade with skills that give them a chance to find employment, stay healthy, help others and worship God," Trish said.

With funding from supporters throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, the Cazale church's vestry has repaired and expanded classrooms, paid the teachers on a regular schedule and provided three meals of rice and beans each week.

"New life also happens in the school's supporting friends here in Washington," Trish said. "It's exciting to receive news and photos. We are encouraged and thankful to see how God multiplies our gifts so the students can flourish.

"We're astounded when financial gifts arrive by mail from people who heard about the school and want to be part of the work there," she said. "We learn about patience. Our prayer life deepens

*Continued on page 6*

## Ecumenical leader joins faculty at Seattle University program

The Rev. Michael Kinnamon, former National Council of Churches general secretary, has accepted a three-year post at Seattle University beginning in August. He will be a visiting professor in ecumenical collaboration and interreligious dialogue at the Jesuit university's School of Theology and Religious Studies, which is accredited to grant master of divinity degrees and works in partnership with 10 Protestant denominations.

"Teaching is one of his many gifts," said Clare Chapman, NCC interim general secretary. "His knowledge of the history of the ecumenical movement, and his skill in communicating ecumenical theology and trends were assets to the council and its member communions."

Michael has written on the ecumenical movement, most recently, *The Vision of the Ecumenical Movement and How it has Been Impoverished by its Friends* (Chalice Press).

He wrote the official report of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), and is co-editor of *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, regarded as an essential tool for students of ecumenism.

He headed the Consultation on Church Union, which became Churches Uniting in Christ, from 1999 to 2002; headed the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order from 1980 to 1983 and helped draft the WCC's document, "Toward a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC."

Michael was a professor at Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., from 2000 to 2007 and at Lexington, Ky., Theological Seminary from 1988 to 2000. He was assistant professor of theology at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, from 1983 to 1988. He was a visiting professor at United Theological College and South Asian Theological Institute, Bangalore, India, in 1987 and 1997. For information, call 206-296-5330.

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## Religion News Briefs

### Around the World

World Council of Churches News, PO Box 2100  
CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: +41-22 791 6111  
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#### Review looks at mission assumptions, activities

The new issue of *International Review of Mission* (IRM) presents the latest draft of a new WCC mission statement and invites wider participation in developing it for presentation to the WCC 10th Assembly in 2013 at Busan, South Korea.

As the first new statement on mission in 40 years, the draft reframes the area of mission and "is intended to bring new issues to the 10th Assembly, because the context of mission and evangelism has changed over the last three decades," said the Rev. Jooseop Keum, journal editor and secretary of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME).

Composed in a process that has involved Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical input, the statement was also the subject of a recent CWME meeting in Manila, Philippines.

At that gathering, participants discussed new perspectives, which include greater emphasis on the role of the Spirit, seeing mission as primarily about affirming life in all its fullness, understanding creation and spirituality as at the heart of mission, and placing an evangelism of humility and respect at the core of the church's identity.

#### Churches campaign for treaty on arms sales

After July, arms used to commit atrocities and serious crimes may become harder to buy and harder to sell internationally if governments can agree on a treaty that covers all conventional weapons. Diplomats from nearly 200 countries will spend July at the United Nations to negotiate the proposed Arms Trade Treaty.

Their challenge is keeping the arms trade open to militaries, police forces and other groups who are judged to use arms legally and responsibly, and closing the trade to those who don't. Arms manufacturers, gun enthusiasts, civil society organizations and churches are seeking to influence the outcome.

The human impact of the arms trade is the galvanizing factor for churches. A campaign led by the World Council of Churches (WCC) seeks to ensure the treaty protects people and communities at risk by current arms trade practices. Churches from more than 30 countries are involved. Some are from countries that profit from the arms trade and others are from countries that suffer as a result of it.

Millions of lives are shattered or lost in armed violence each year and "badly regulated exports, imports and transfers of weapons must bear part of the blame," says a WCC policy statement issued recently to guide the campaign.

The policy affirms that 153 governments have agreed to adopt "the highest possible common international standard" for how conventional arms may be traded, but it warns that the treaty must work to stop arms for governments that "pose a threat to their own people or to other states" and to block shipments likely to be diverted to armed groups, organized crime or smugglers.

The ecumenical policy says the treaty must prohibit arms sales where there is a "substantial risk" of serious violations of international human rights or humanitarian law, where there is a pattern of gender-based armed violence or where work in development efforts will be seriously impaired. These positions are shared with civil society organizations in a coalition known as Control Arms.

The WCC-led campaign bridges a north-south divide. Churches from major arms producers like the United States, Sweden and Norway lobby beside churches from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Sierra Leone, where imported arms fuel violence. Churches want stricter controls. Lives and communities will be spared to the extent that sellers, middlemen and buyers are all held to higher and more consistent standards.

More than 100 religious leaders—Christian, Muslim, Jewish and others have signed an interfaith declaration to governments supporting an Arms Trade Treaty.

## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

### Network hires co-director, plans benefit

Jackie O'Ryan, the new co-director of the Faith Action Network (FAN) state interfaith partnership, will be in Spokane with the FAN leadership team for the first annual Spokane Fundraiser, at noon, Wednesday, May 16, at Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway.

FAN formed last year when the Washington Association of Churches and the Lutheran Public Policy Office united.

Among the local community and religious leaders who will speak about FAN at the compli-

mentary lunch are the Rev. Deb Conklin of St. Paul and Liberty Park United Methodist churches; Episcopalian Bishop Jim Waggoner; Shar Lichty of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, and State Rep. Timm Ormsby.

FAN will give an award to Senator Lisa Brown for "her tireless work to reform the state's regressive tax structure and preserving WIC and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program," said the Rev. Paul Benz, co-director.

Jackie will guide FAN's mission to mobilize interfaith com-

munities statewide.

"We'll draw on theological, cultural and ethnic roots in each faith tradition to unite people in compassion and inclusiveness, building a movement of the faithful in the state," she said.

Jackie, a longtime member of Seattle's St. James Catholic Parish, has served as communications director and as a consultant for many advocacy organizations and campaigns.

To attend the lunch, call 483-8449, 206-625-9790 or email alex@fanwa.org.

### Tonasket plans peace festival, veterans forum

The Ninth Annual Peace Festival in Tonasket from 2 to 10 p.m., Saturday, May 5, will feature Seattle activist, Kit Kittredge, who will tell of her recent work on peace and justice issues in the Middle East.

Kit has been to Gaza five times in the last three years with Code-Pink and other peace organizations working with doctors, farmers and children's groups. She was in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, during the Egyptian Revolution in January 2011, and also in Cairo for the Gaza Freedom March in January 2010.

Kit was imprisoned by the Israeli government for being in a flotilla of boats with Europeans bringing food and medicine to Palestinians, said Stuart Rick Gillespie, one of the organizers.

Peace Festival events will be held at the Community Cultural Center in Tonasket, 411 Western Ave.

Other presenters include storyteller Dayton Edmonds of Omak, a veteran; Bill Dienst of Veterans for Peace and Shane Barton, a Veterans Administration Services counselor.

There will be an opening circle

with songs, poems, stories and presentations.

The Veterans for Peace Forum will feature local veterans sharing their ideas on work needed to establish a world of peace and justice.

A 6 p.m. Peace Family Dinner will raise funds for the cultural center.

There will be music throughout the day, plus, at 7:15 p.m., music by the band, Broken Arrow, and an 8 p.m. concert and dance by Hippies on Vacation.

For information, contact rickg@columbiana.org.

### West Central 'Convergence' gatherings set

West Central Spokane is planning a "Convergence" of people and ideas from May 13 to 19 to address creative local, community-based solutions for promoting neighborhood resiliency through sustainable food, water, energy, exchange and transportation systems.

The opening celebration and block party will be from 5 to 9 p.m., Sunday, May 13, at Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway, with speakers, prayer, music, dance, a resource fair and the video, "The Greening of Cuba."

"As neighbors in West Central, we are worried about rising costs, the growth of big government and big business, the loss of local control and foreign countries deciding oil process," said Pat Malone, one of the organizers.

"We are also hopeful, empowered to act, gaining knowledge on local options and inspired to work together to bring about change through neighbors helping

neighbors," he said.

During the week, there will be opportunities for people to learn new skills, make new friends and apply lessons to benefit the neighborhood through individual self-reliance and neighborhood empowerment.

Events will help people learn to grow their own food in household gardens, community gardens or in a greenhouse.

There will be trainings in how to conserve and save water through recovery systems, and even in producing electrical energy through solar, wind and biofuels.

From 3 to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, there will be community service work projects including a lawn-to-garden conversion and compost bin construction at 1229 N. Hollis.

At 5 p.m., there are Community Kitchens on Monday at Salem

and on Thursday at Holy Trinity Episcopal, 1832 W. Dean, and a presentation on food preservation on Friday at Holy Trinity.

There are 7 p.m. talks, Monday at Salem on time exchange and community investing; Tuesday at Project Hope, 2605 W. Boone, on residential energy efficiency; Wednesday on eating local, community gardening, composting and seed saving at Holy Trinity, and Thursday at Project Hope on shopping for healthy food and chicken keeping.

On Saturday, work projects will be completed and there will be Plant-A-Row Greenhouse Tours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be a closing gathering noon to 2 p.m., Saturday, at Holmes School with music and presentations on "Perma-Culture Design."

For information, call 703-7433 or email communitybydesign@hotmail.com.

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**Cup of Cool Water will train volunteers**

Cup of Cool Water is holding a volunteer training from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, May 12 and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, May 19, at 1106 W. 2nd Ave. Volunteers with Cup of Cool Water reach out to Spokane's youth who are homeless. The training is for community members interested in volunteering with homeless youth or those who want more education on street culture and street ministry. For information, call 747-6686, email [Kathy@cupofcoolwater.org](mailto:Kathy@cupofcoolwater.org) or visit [www.cupofcoolwater.org](http://www.cupofcoolwater.org).

**Ecumenical gathering explores future partnerships**

The Faith Action Network and The Fig Tree are planning a Spokane Area Ecumenical Gathering at 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 16, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Blvd., following the benefit lunch for the network. This gathering of area clergy, laity and nonprofit leaders is planned to discuss future ecumenical partnerships in Spokane. For information, call 535-4112.

**Catalyst Project offers day of building self-esteem**

The Salvation Army Community Center's Catalyst Project is holding the second annual Butterfly Affair for self-esteem building for teen mothers on Saturday, May 5. More than 70 volunteers from nonprofits and business will offer speakers, lead team building and offer hair styling, make-up, artistry, prom dresses and photography. "The day is focused on helping girls see their true value and beauty in God's eyes," said Jenny Weddle, executive director of the Catalyst Project. For information, call 258-4257 or visit [www.butterflyaffair.org](http://www.butterflyaffair.org).

**LaCasa Hogar plans Connecting Communities Fiesta**

La Casa Hogar in Yakima is planning its Connecting Communities Fiesta from registration at 3:30 p.m. through a silent auction and dinner program ending at 7 p.m., Sunday, May 6, at the Mighty Tieton Warehouse, 608 Wisconsin Ave. in Tieton. Proceeds will help provide a safe, welcoming environment for the 1,200 women and children served each year through La Casa Hogar classes in English, driving, computer, citizenship and more. For information, call 457-5058 or visit [www.lacasahogar.org](http://www.lacasahogar.org).

**NW Coalition for Human Rights meets June 9**

The Northwest Coalition for Human Rights is planning a meeting from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, June 9, at St. Augustine's Catholic Center, 628 S. Deakin St. in Moscow, Idaho. The meeting will finalize the coalition's structure and mission, and be an opportunity for participants from groups engaging in human rights and social justice in the Inland Northwest to share about their work. For information, call 208-882-4285 or email [kristine@uidaho.edu](mailto:kristine@uidaho.edu).

**Small, growing church plans building expansion**

As a growing church in a small building—a former pool hall and a house—New Hope Baptist Church plans to celebrate its 55th anniversary by launching the first phase of a building expansion and renovation program. The celebration will be at 3:30 p.m., Sunday, June 3, at the church, 409 S. Greene St. The Rev. Lonnie Mitchell of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church will preach on "A Big Church in a Small Building." New Hope Baptist and Bethel AME choirs will sing.

The church moved several times since the Rev. Jesse Jones founded it in 1957. Members bought the hall and 1909 house in 1988, and remodeled it over the years. The church, which recently grew by 30 members to 70, anticipates more growth to exceed the 90-seat capacity of its current building. "Our goal is to raise \$50,000 of a total anticipated cost of \$150,000," said Etta Watkins, the wife of the Rev. Happy Watkins. The new building will accommodate 150 for worship and include a multipurpose room and larger kitchen for doing more for the community. In addition, the building remodeling will make the

structure look like a church.

The plan is to knock out the east wall of the sanctuary, and to rebuild the house. The buildings will be handicap accessible. On March 4, Happy, who is senior pastor, ordained James Watkins, his youngest son, as assistant pastor.

"Many people who come are drawn by Happy's ministry in the

community. They come and stay," Etta said.

Even though the congregation is small, members have taken on serving a meal once a month at Crosswalk, the downtown center for homeless teens. They also supply food to people in the neighborhood who come for assistance. For information, call 443-6440.

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**PJALS Auction will be May 31**

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane's Spring Soiree and Benefit Auction will be held from 5:30 to 9 p.m., Thursday, May 31, at the Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave.

The event will feature food, entertainment, a silent and live auction and gift certificates.

For information, call 838-7870 or visit [pjals.org/2012\\_auction](http://pjals.org/2012_auction).

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# Iraqi student's presence helps dispel misconceptions about his country

Media images of tanks and trucks stirring dust along desert highways, armed conflict among shelled out buildings and the aftermath of suicide car bombs form the ideas most Americans have about Iraq.

To broaden understanding, the Iraqi Student Project (ISP) brings university students to study in U.S. communities and campuses where they share about their families, communities and religion, and about their hopes to return and restore Iraq's infrastructure.

Mustafa Mahmood has been studying at Gonzaga University since August, living near campus at the Ministry Institute. He is studying civil engineering with the hope of using those skills to help rebuild Baghdad.

**He is among 48 Iraqi students** at Jesuit universities and other private and public universities across the United States.

Many Iraqis came alone or with families to Damascus for safety, because Syria accepted more than a million Iraqi refugees in the five years after the 2003 invasion.

The war destroyed their hopes of a college education. Iraqi colleges were destroyed and Syrian universities are too expensive.

**Founded in 2007**, the Iraqi Student Project follows a model the Fellowship of Reconciliation used after the Bosnian conflict for bringing Bosnian students to the United States.

Tom Webb, who is the Iraqi Student Project's Spokane coordinator, said his friends Gabe Huck, former editor of Liturgy Training Resources, and his wife, Theresa Kubasak, an elementary school teacher, founded the project. They were active in Voices in the Wilderness, a faith-based group that took groups to Iraq to challenge the U.S. sanctions.

Tom met them when he was involved in Voices in the Wilderness in Chicago, while studying for a master's in pastoral studies at Catholic Theological Union. Gabe and Theresa have since moved to Damascus.

**Mustafa said that after the war** started in 2003, his family left Iraq for Syria, where he attended high school. Life was hard because his father, who had taught physics in Baghdad, couldn't work because he wasn't a resident.

"A friend told me about the program for students who knew enough English, so I studied English for a year and applied to U.S. universities. I had to wait two years to be accepted," he said.

After being accepted at Gonzaga, he had a long wait before he received his visa. It came just two days before his flight.

When he arrived on Aug. 2,



Tom Webb and Mustafa Mahmood meet at the Ministry Institute.

he stayed with ISP supporters in Seattle until classes started Aug. 26 at Gonzaga.

**Tom, who has been working at** L'Arche Spokane, just two blocks from the Ministry Institute, since April 2010, learned in the fall from Gabe and Theresa that there was an ISP student in Spokane. He met Mustafa in November, and since then has been working to build a local support group.

He hopes that members of that group will identify speaking opportunities for Mustafa and help introduce him to different aspects of American life and issues. They also hope to raise \$15,000 a year for his housing, books and food.

Tom taught in Catholic high schools, was a nonprofit administrator and did justice and peace work in Northern California, Pittsburgh, Pa., and Chicago for 30 years. He also studied theology at the University of San Francisco and studied at Duquesne University's Institute of Formative Spirituality in the 1990s prior to his studies in Chicago.

**Mustafa finds life in Spokane** different from Damascus and Baghdad, cities of more than 6 million people, where many people are on the streets at night. The Gonzaga campus and Spokane's streets are empty most nights.

A short course he took on adapting to American culture helped, but did not prepare him for everything. He lives with other international students and his studies take much of his time.

"The education system here is different from the Middle East,"

Mustafa said. "Here, students have to be independent learners. There is more thinking involved, rather than memorizing information."

**Mustafa, who is Muslim**, has gone to the Spokane Islamic Center for Friday prayers a few times. On campus, he has met other Muslims—mostly from Saudi Arabia.

He is glad the Jesuit university offered him a scholarship based on his potential, even though he is not Catholic.

"Jesuits work in Syria with refugees and raise money for Iraqi refugees to study in Syrian institutions," he said. "Muslims would do the same for Christians."

He is also concerned about misconceptions of Islam as a violent religion.

**"There are many similarities** between Islam and Christianity. For example, both religions prohibit killing and stealing," he said. "Christians and Muslims have co-existed in Iraq for centuries."

"I consider myself religious, living my life by what my religion teaches. My being here is a religious mission because Islam tells people to be educated and informed about the world and to help people," Mustafa said. "I'm educating myself not only to help rebuild my country but also to inform people here about my culture and religion."

He spoke at a recent Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane conference, as well as in classroom discussions.

Because his family is now in

danger with the uprising in Syria, they may move soon to northern Iraq, where it is safer.

"While there is now less violence in Iraq, the government is

corrupt and limits freedom," said Mustafa, who returned to Baghdad in April 2011 to visit relatives and friends before coming to Spokane. "Now the neighborhoods are more sectarian."

In his childhood in Iraq, he said he had a good life, despite limited access to electricity and water. Now there is even less electricity and water.

**Mustafa has had to respond** to many misunderstandings of U.S. students. Some wonder about what he wore at home, if he rode camels and what food he ate.

"People in the Middle East are more informed about life in the United States and Europe," he said. "I would have assumed that with tourism and the military, people here would know more."

For information, call 483-0550 or email mmahmood@zagmail.gonzaga.edu.

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# 'Chef Gus' prepares meals for, dines with homeless people in Spokane

John Olsen—Chef Gus—knows that as people chew on food they chew on thoughts. “The best conversations people have are around tables with a good meal,” he said. “Good food makes things happen, like Jesus gathering people to hear the Sermon on the Mount, telling stories and then feeding them.”

John has been cooking for homeless people on and off for 26 years.

He said he uses the name Chef Gus to honor his grandfather, who left being a camp cook in the gold fields of Alaska to set up a café in Hillyard.

In the 30 years of operating that café, his grandfather often served hobos from the nearby railroad yards in the early 1900s. Because his mother grew up knowing hobos, John said she often invited them for meals in their home during his childhood years.

“I’ve dined with the homeless all my life,” he said.

“Christ said feed me, clothe me and house me,” he said. “I believe in direct action. When I cooked at the House of Charity and Shalom Ministries, I met Jesus every day as people came up and talked with me.”

He spends about 12 weeks each summer—between May and September—cooking at Holden Village, which he considers his parish. He has also attended St. Mark’s Lutheran and St. Ann’s Catholic in Spokane.

John shared some of his life journey. After high school in Spokane he completed a five-year program in optometry at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Ore., in 1968. He served as a captain in the army and practiced optometry in the Canal Zone while living in Panama City, where he continued to meet “the real world”—with children going through garbage he put out and when he drove through slums to work.

John began working at Group Health in Seattle in 1971 and worked there until he retired 30 years later—except for 12 months off in 1982 to be at home with his newborn daughter, Britta.

Despite having little church in his life, he wanted to have Britta christened. About that time, he met the minister at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church, and decided to take a membership class. John was baptized on his 40th birthday in 1985 when Britta was baptized.

John became involved as a youth group leader, with church council and in other roles. He helped build Habitat for Humanity houses one week each year for five years. He also went with the youth group to Denney Place Youth Shelter and Emmanuel



John Olsen (Chef Gus) in his favorite place: a kitchen.

Lutheran Church, where they ate and talked with homeless men and teens on the street.

After retiring, he volunteered for five years with the King County Crisis Line and Teen Link suicide crisis line, where he said he learned how to converse with people who are struggling.

“I wasn’t good at solving the problems for those who called. I would listen to their stories. Then I’d say, I know things are hard. I’d have them contract with me not to take their lives,” he said. “Then I’d ask if they were me and had just heard what they told me, what would they tell themselves.”

The callers would then talk about creating their own solutions.

“Everyone has their own answers,” John said.

John said he learned to cook from his mother and from cooking for five years for 200 children with disabilities at Camp Casey on Whidbey Island through Kiwanis, while working with Group Health.

In late 2003, he took a year in culinary studies at Edmonds Com-

munity College. As part of their externship program, he cooked 12 weeks at Holden Village, the Lutheran and ecumenical retreat center in the Cascades in the Glacier Peaks Wilderness near Lake Chelan.

John returned to Spokane, where his mother still lives.

In Spokane, he became involved with the Odyssey Youth Center for gay and lesbian youth, volunteering once or twice a week for five years as a mentor, providing an adult presence.

For six years after returning to Spokane in 2004, he also cooked at Shalom Ministries, serving about 100 breakfasts a day early in the month and up to 200 a day by the end of the month, plus a dinner on Mondays for up to 300.

Until this January, John volunteered for several years to help the cooking staff at the House of Charity, turn federal, food bank and individual food donations into meals to serve up to 350 meals a day.

In contrast with hobos he met in his youth who were people who

moved from place to place on the trains, John said that nearly 40 percent of the chronic homeless whom he has met in downtown Spokane are veterans, about 80 percent are drug or alcohol addicted, many are suffering mental illness, and nearly 20 percent are gay, bisexual or transgendered.

“People are now younger than a few years ago when the average age was 40 to 45. It’s now 28,” he estimates.

Shalom Ministries provides meals, and the House of Charity and Crosswalk provide temporary shelter and social workers to help those who want help, he said.


“The people are on their individual walks, bearing their crosses,” John said.

“I look at life daily through the metaphor of Holy Week events leading to the crucifixion,” he said, seeing hope as possible for people. “I recognize people com-

ing into my life asking who they may be in that analogy—Peter? Pilate? Simon of Syrene? It gives me a context to see how I can help or be helped in relationship to people I encounter.

“I’m blessed to have the resources I have that allow me to take care of myself and do this calling,” he said.

For information, call 220-4534.



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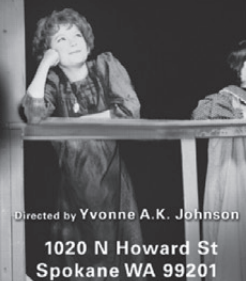
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## New conveyor line makes sorting and packing food more ergonomic

Second Harvest's new Asuris Northwest Health Volunteer Center provides a safer and more ergonomic setting for volunteers to sort and box food donations for distribution from its warehouse at 1234 E. Front Ave.

They will sort and pack food as it passes on a conveyor belt at a convenient height in new space named after a major donor. A \$160,000 pledge and multi-year commitment of support from Asuris put Second Harvest in the position to finish the volunteer center and other major upgrades ahead of schedule.

"The renovations will enable us to accept more fresh food," said Rod Wieber, chief resource officer.

There is also space between the front entrance and volunteer center, where people who donate their time can socialize during breaks. Staff meets with volunteers in that room for orientation.

Groups come from businesses, agencies, churches, schools, universities, civic clubs, youth groups and Fairchild Air Force Base. Many volunteers are seniors. Some volunteers come regularly and others come occasionally. Last year, more than 2,500 volunteers assisted.

Volunteer hours are 1 to 4 p.m. and 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. There is a capacity for 30 volunteers in each shift.

The volunteer center is a 3,200-square-foot enclosed room inside the



**Kathleen Rounds, Kimberly Thielman and Jan Kincaid, volunteers from Asuris Northwest Health, sort apples.**

Photo courtesy of Rod Wieber

85,000-square-foot warehouse. It's a climate-controlled work room, so volunteers no longer have to wear coats and gloves in the winter, as they did in the past, or be hot in the summer. Plus, the space is separated from moving forklift trucks.

Second Harvest held a campaign for just over \$2 million in interior and exterior capital improvements and new equipment, in addition to \$1 million being raised for capacity building operating costs. Improvements also include upgraded dock doors.

Canvas prints of apples, grains and beef decorate one wall.

The new equipment, which was set up in February and put on line during March, provides a more ergonomic setting for

sorting and packing food.

In the warehouse, a hydraulic bin dumper loads onions, apples, potatoes or other donated produce onto a conveyor belt that takes the product through clear plastic curtains, which keep the sorting room insulated.

Sorters pull out bad produce and put it in a separate chute. Then the remaining produce moves down the line to the packing stations. Each packer has a cart on wheels that can be raised to a level so the packer does not have to bend over to load boxes.

Volunteers can sort and pack more quickly with this system than they did before.

For example, Rod said that a group from Fairchild sorted 20,000 pounds of

potatoes in more than four hours in the old process last fall. Now they can do the same amount in less than two hours.

The sort line can be set up to receive and box food drive donations of shelf-stable food products and federal commodities for senior food boxes.

"Thanks to community and state help, we brought in 7 million pounds of fresh produce in 2011. We had the opportunity to be given more, but could not process it quickly enough in the warehouse. Now we can reach more people and more donors with our capacity to sort and package at least 14 million pounds of produce a year," Rod said.

By the end of the fiscal year on June 30, Second Harvest expects to have distributed 22 million pounds of food, up from 20.5 million last year. The goal is to distribute 28 million pounds annually by 2016.

"Our local food banks indicate that the economy has not yet turned around," Rod said.

"There are still people coming who are employed, unemployed and under-employed—unable to earn enough to meet mortgage or rental payments and utilities," he said.

"The day our services are not needed will be a good day, but we do not expect that day to come in the foreseeable future," Rod said. "In the last four years, our distribution has risen 60 percent."

For information, call 534-6678.

## Celtic worship moves to traditional hour

The 11 a.m. worship at most churches is the traditional service, but St. David's Episcopal Church in Spokane shifted its Sunday morning schedule in September, offering the traditional Episcopal liturgy at 9 a.m. and its Celtic Eucharist at 11 a.m.

Previously, the Celtic service was only at 7 p.m., fourth Thursdays, and Sunday services were at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. The monthly Thursday service continues.

It started in 2007 after the Rev. Elaine Breckenridge, rector since 2004, visited Ireland and found that Celtic traditions meshed with her spirituality and philosophy.

About 40—including more young adults than the traditional service—attend consistently. Some are otherwise unchurched.

"It's an alternative spiritual approach that gives flexible doctrine and artistic expression," she said.

Elaine describes the worship as "Christ centered, creation-filled and community-oriented."

The semi-circular configuration of the chairs is conducive to conversations, in contrast to the priest preaching a sermon from a pulpit.

Instead, Elaine asks questions to invite participation and interaction through discussion. The music is also participatory, with people playing percussion instruments, and accompaniment by keyboardists, an Irish drummer and violinist for creative, often Celtic, jazz and new age music.

Participants also take turns making artistic arrangements of symbols and elements of creation—air, fire, water and earth in front of the lectern.

Celtic Christian spirituality was influenced by cultural traditions as Christianity spread in Celtic areas, she said. Prayers used today come from contemporary Celtic spirituality and earlier traditions.

"It's important to continue the traditional worship, as well as to be open to new things," she said,



**Barbara Bley designed this Celtic altar for a worship service.**

Photo by MaryEllen Rodda

"and to offer varied ways to worship God.

"Discussions allows people to reflect on their personal spirituality. It gives me an opportunity to teach through discussion, engaging people with the Gospel in a

more proactive way," Elaine said. "I say something, and people respond out loud, which deepens their participation."

For information, call 466-3100 or email mother-Elaine@com-cast.net.

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# Prophetic dancing in worship helps bring healing, raises self-esteem

**By Heather Kennison**

While some people pray or sing to communicate with God, Mona Martin dances.

Dancing in God's presence helps liberate women and teenage girls, providing a release when they feel torn down or broken, she said. It also enhances their self-esteem and body image.

Mona said she has always been a dancer, but it was not until recently that she found her calling in establishing and directing the Christian Dance Academy.

The academy is just a part of her ministry.

She also dances for her own church, Jesus is the Answer, teaching a group of young girls ages five to eight. Mona aims to help other churches start their own dance ministries.

Her goal is to be a role model and to ignite people's dreams and passions.

The academy opened in January 2012 at the Emmanuel Family Life Center. Instructors offer ballet, hip-hop and prophetic dance lessons to adults and children ranging from ages five and up.

"We want to equip people to go to their local churches and places of worship and apply what they've learned here for the Kingdom of Christ," she said.

The idea for the Academy came to her in October 2011 while she was working as a receptionist at Rockwood Clinic. After six-and-a-half years in that job, she felt God was leading her in a new direction.

"I was at my desk, and God began to 'download' to me the blueprints for the Christian Dance Academy," Mona said. "I would go home and jot down the idea on some scratch paper. Those ideas became my business plan."

During her lunch breaks, she would learn about starting a business and eventually she filed for a for-profit organization under a sole proprietorship, since that was the quickest route.

Needing help, she turned to her former ballet instructor Stacie Collins. When Stacie heard about Mona's vision, she joined the team as an instructor. Other members of the team include hip-hop instructor and prophetic dancer



**Mona Martin demonstrates dance movements she teaches.**

Ashley Douglas and administrator Stephanie Courtney.

Mona specializes in prophetic dance, which she describes as a way of bringing God's presence to the congregation and clearing the atmosphere in order to prepare the way for the Word of God to enter into people's hearts.

"It's tapping into the Holy Spirit and into the music—tuning your ears to find the sound and how to move with the music," she said.

While the dance is choreographed, Mona said, it is not too rigid, because the dancer needs to make room for the Holy Spirit to change it.

The movements need to be effortless and natural, like those of a swan, she said.

"Every body movement can be conveyed in a dance when you're tapped into the Holy Spirit," she said.

Mona has been dancing as a ministry for 10 years, since ordained minister Carol Cartwright from Texas visited Spokane and prophesied to her about dance.

Carol had said to her "Your name is no longer Mona, but you're called Miriam."

Miriam, Moses' sister, was a prophetic dancer in the Bible, Mona said. After the delivery from Egypt, she led a group of women with tambourines in a dance of victory.

Dancing was traditionally a part of Jewish customs, but is stressed less in Christian worship, she said.

She began to look for ways to serve through dancing. The Christian Dance Academy is the fulfillment of that goal.

"The goal is to allow the free-

dom and liberation of the dance to come back into the church," Mona said.

Prophetic dance, in particular, aims to "bring those things which have been broken back to God, allowing God to resurrect them," she said.

Mona grew up in Los Angeles in a family that did not attend church.

She had been attending a Baptist church there before moving to Spokane in 1984 as a sophomore in high school, but did not give her life completely to Christ until 1994.

"Before I found the Lord, I was a dancer in a club," Mona said. "Little did I know that God was planning something greater for me even through my doing that."

She worked in the medical field for 16 years as a dietician and receptionist before being inspired by the Spirit to dance.

Dancing for Mona is a way to bring something relevant from this generation into the church.

"We are a visual generation," she said. "We love music and we love to dance—we comprehend that way."

"What is more relevant than to dance in the house of the Lord?" she said.

As a single mother, Mona said she has been through some tough financial times. She is grateful for the support of her two sons, Marcus and Xavier.

Mona gives the credit for the Christian Dance Academy to her staff and God.

"I couldn't have thought this up on my best day," she said. "I didn't know anything about business."

The Christian Dance Academy offers five classes, with participation varying from 10 to 30 students.

"It's been slowly growing, a progression of people finding out who we are and what we are," Mona said.

Most of the dancers are women, but a couple of men have come with their daughters, and the academy is open to people of both genders.

Mona said that as a minority, African-American single mother herself, she tries to cater to the underprivileged community.


"It is not too late to do what God has called us to do," she said. "We have a purpose and destiny for our lives."

"As we keep our relationship with God, then God will bring us eventually to what we were called to do from the beginning of time," she believes.

The theme of the Christian Dance Academy is "Dancing for an Audience of One," said Mona, explaining that the key is dancing for God's glory, instead of dancing for entertainment.

For information, call 217-8025 or visit [cdaspokane.vpweb.com](http://cdaspokane.vpweb.com).

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# Community gardens, farmers' markets are part of urban food system

*Continued from page 1*  
 established in 2002 near 27th and Oak close to Latah Creek on a third of an acre pasture behind the home of a family who offered the land to St. Margaret's.

**It started as a vegetable garden,** where some of the 18 shelter residents worked to provide food for the emergency shelter.

Vinegar Flats serves as a community farm for the shelter residents, a place where they may grow and obtain fresh fruits and vegetables. It is a space for women to learn about gardening, gain retail experience and develop a sense of empowerment, while they "grow vegetables, fruit, flowers and community," he said

**The farm also produces** for farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) sales, a few West Central grocery stores and meal sites.

Brian, who attends St. Ann parish in Spokane, manages the farm in the spring, summer and fall, and does organizing and community development in the winter months.

A Jesuit volunteer and AmeriCorps volunteer assist every year. "They do hands-on operations of the garden and in the greenhouse, planting starts for the garden, doing plant sales and helping organize other community gardens. A St. Margaret's Next Steps trainee is learning to manage the greenhouse, building management and sales experience," he said.

Some produce is sold at the South Perry and West Central farmers markets, which are now able to accept the EBT—electronic benefits transaction—cards that have taken the place of food stamps, Brian said.

The AmeriCorps and Jesuit volunteers are also doing a worm bin compost project with children at St. Margaret's. The Health District is helping with a community kitchen to teach cooking skills.

**The community farm can help** meet needs of urban and local food systems, providing food that is affordable and accessible for low-income people, he said.

He expanded the program and production, increasing it to producing 4,500 pounds of food by tripling the size of garden so after four years it now operates as much like a small farm as a traditional community garden.

He also gives his time, energy and expertise to farmers, farmers markets and community gardens,

exploring different models such as Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) and plant-a-row options, so backyard gardeners can donate fresh food to food banks.

Setting up CSA sales and being able to accept food stamps dropped barriers to access at farmers' markets, Brian said.

CSA introduces diverse vegetables—like kale—and teaches customers how to cook them.

**He also helps farmers' markets** find ways to extend the season for fresh produce by helping people learn to eat more types of produce.

Tomatoes, for example, are available fresh for only four to eight weeks. Early season produce includes greens, cabbage and peas. People who change their menus to include them can eat fresh produce longer.

"Much of people's lives comes from their relationship with food," Brian said. "I was a picky eater and liked junk food until I was 18. When I was 14, I wanted to open a hamburger stand."

Drawn to social aspects of food—people eating together—he learned about the history of people as social beings.

**More neighborhoods offer** resources of fresh, nutritional food at affordable prices, he said, adding that there's more interest in urban planning around food production and in challenging current farm policies that tend to subsidize large-scale agriculture.

"As cities evolved in the last 50 to 75 years with cars more prevalent, it affected how cities were designed in terms of where people work and live," he said.

"Specialty markets where people once bought whole food are drying up in favor of large, buy-all-you-need grocery stores. People who cannot drive to those supermarkets pay higher prices and have limited options. These are considerations in revitalizing neighborhoods.

**"Can food access** be restructured?" he asked.

For example, the Spokane Regional Health District supported development of several West Central Spokane "Healthy Corner Stores" that can sell fresh produce and whole foods at enough profit so that they will stock them.

Brian calls for influencing the macro food system through changing national agricultural policies that subsidize huge farms—for example, to produce corn for soda and highly processed foods—but do not subsidize whole, locally

grown or organic foods.

"Policies have influence through direct payments to farmers to grow certain commodities," he said.

"As farms have grown bigger and grow single crops or focus on livestock, farmers have lost resources they had in diverse farms, such as food to feed pigs or manure to fertilize. So many farms rely on transporting waste, rather than using it to fertilize.

**"The transition to monoculture** production in the 20th century reduced creative options for feeding people," Brian said. "Most farmers want to feed people well and care for the land. We need to challenge the disconnect between large farmers and small organic farmers who distrust each other.

"Immigration and environmental issues also affect farming," he said. "How can we operate our food system to mitigate problems, increase quality of life and create more justice? We will not feed everyone on small plots or small farms on the periphery of cities. We need to know the challenges."

**Local food systems provide** the best way to understand positive or negative outcomes of food production, he said, in contrast to buying food products grown halfway around the world.

"I care about farm workers and farmers," Brian said. "We need to be invested in the whole picture based on our values."

In 2009, the South Perry Farmers' Market lost its location and manager, so Brian has been helping restructure it. He has finished a two-year term on the board and continues as an ex-officio advisor.

The Grant Community Garden started in February 2011, when the Parks and Recreation Board opened parks for nonprofit community gardens to use. The South Perry Business and Neighborhood Association contracts to manage it, and 24 individuals and nonprofits signed up to care for their garden beds organically in 2011.

The Grant Garden Club donates food to the East Central Community Center's food bank.

Brian also assists the Riverfront Farm and West Central Market-place.

"I try to be mindful of my beliefs and values in my day-to-day life," he said.

**Brian's thinking on farming** has also been influenced by visits to Central America in 2005, 2007 and 2008. In 2005, he studied four months in Costa Rica and Nicara-

gua through a Boston University program on environmental and sustainable development. He also traveled in the West, Southwest and Mexico, visiting farms, learning what communities are doing as people pursue their wellbeing.

**He hopes to increase discussion** about growing one's own food and access to safe, nutritious food, but knows discussions can turn controversial when addressing barriers to access safe, fresh food.

"I see enthusiasm about community gardens, raising chickens and knowing the farmers who grow our food," he said. "Eating organic, local food is an immediate, approachable argument for change. The food tastes better."

**The cost of farmland is one part** of the reason there are fewer farmers than ever before, he reported. Because farmers struggle to make a profit, many are drawn into the corporate food production system that relies on genetically modified crops and heavy use of chemicals.

Because farms operate on debt, from which farmers try to recover each year, big farmers are buying up neighbors' land and leasing it.

Brian said his family now

leases their property near Walla Walla for production of wheat, sweet onions and garbanzos. The choices of crops have become more limited as the markets for commodity crops globalize and local infrastructure is lost. Many Walla Walla area producers growing asparagus lost their market when processing plants closed and moved to South America.

**Farms are dependent** on the global system where distributors and marketers influence what they can grow affordably, Brian said.

For information, call (509) 521-0606, email [smallgarden@gmail.com](mailto:smallgarden@gmail.com) or visit [vinegarflatsgarden.catholiccharitiesspokane.org](http://vinegarflatsgarden.catholiccharitiesspokane.org).

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# Educating and feeding children in Haiti inspires generosity, gratitude

*Continued from page 1*  
and we find we have more faith that seemingly impossible things will happen. We also have more gratitude for what we have.”

St. John’s outreach committee wanted to involve the congregation in a global project, aware that connecting with other cultures can change people’s ideas about God’s world and what God wants people to do.

Trish knows the difference it made in her life to help build classrooms in the Dominican Republic in 1995 with a group from a Presbyterian church she attended in New Jersey. She had also gone on building projects in an economically stressed town in Maine, and volunteered at a feeding program in California.

After she moved to Spokane and began attending the cathedral, she was soon involved with the outreach committee, which provides financial grants and volunteers to various local agencies.

In addition to cathedral members, families and friends who help support it, the project has the support of St. Andrew’s and Holy Trinity Episcopal churches



**Robin Leiserson, Trish Newton and Tracey Waring share their appreciation of the Haiti Project.**

in Spokane, St. James in Pullman and St. Paul in Cheney. It also received millennium development grants from the Diocese of Spokane and gifts from Episcopal churches in Tacoma.

The group sends \$4,400 quarterly to the diocese for the school and 10 percent of funds help schools in Haiti without partners.

“People ask why we are helping in Haiti. It’s because we can make

a difference for children. It is true that there is corruption with the lack of infrastructure, but there are also compassionate, caring people who work hard to bring a better life for their children and their country,” she said.

Trish said people respond to the need for education and food.

The relationship with the school in Haiti began when Judy Beane, a member of the cathedral, went to help her son bring home a Haitian child he and his wife adopted.

While there, she met the head of the Episcopal Church’s Haiti Partners Project.

Supporters trust that by giving through the Diocese of Haiti the money will be used as intended. They receive detailed accounting, regular progress reports and photos of students and staff.

When Father Duveaux, the parish priest of St. André’s Episcopal Parish in Cazale, came to Spokane in September to visit supporters, he spoke at an adult forum and at

a dinner. He told of his life and his work as a parish priest and overseer of eight schools, only two of which have partners.

When he said there was need for two more teachers at Cazale, one individual volunteered to pay their salaries for a year.

“Next year we hope to feed students five meals a week, rather than three,” Trish said. “It’s hard for students to learn when they are hungry. For many, this is the only food they have in a day.”

While Cazale was not damaged in the earthquake, the community received people who fled from Port au Prince or came there for medical care, straining the area’s resources, Trish said.

Because the cholera epidemic has affected the village, the school emphasizes handwashing and teaches families how to sterilize water with powdered bleach.

Another goal is to fund building a small solar plant to provide electricity for the school and a small water purification plant to produce enough clean water to sell to the community.

Trish wants to go back when the first class graduates.

For information, call 838-0121 or email bluheron12yahoo.com.

## Project inspires tithing commitment

Robin Leiserson of the Cathedral of St. John in Spokane said the Haiti Project has inspired her husband, Michael, and her to tithe. She also sees it influencing generosity from others.

At the main fund raiser for the Haiti project, an annual rummage sale in early September, more people help at the sale, donate items or pick up donations. One customer haggled over paying \$1 for something, bargaining down to 50 cents. When the volunteer asked if she would like to donate to the Haiti project. She gave \$5. Some give \$20 beyond purchases. This year it raised \$3,000.

“It’s a basic impulse to give,” said Robin, who was influenced by a Seattle church to tithe—give 10 percent of her income—splitting it between the church and other charities. “It’s all God’s.”

When she decided to tithe, she said something changed in her. “I became more grateful,” said Robin, who lived and worked in France and Seattle with L’Arche, communities of disabled people.

Knowing the Haiti Project needed sustained giving, she and her husband prayed and decided to increase their giving by 30 percent to make a tithe to the cathedral, designating additional funds to Haiti.

“Giving became a response of gratitude for what we have,” Robin said. “When the church recently had a deficit, everyone was asked to give more. We realized we could give another \$7 a week.”

As Trish gives reports and updates on what the funds are doing in Haiti, Robin realizes that lives of children are being changed. Children wake up each day, knowing they are going to school and have structure in their lives.

Robin, who grew up in Spokane and attended the University of Washington, left to work with L’Arche in France. In 1984, she finished a degree in theology at Seattle University and worked with L’Arche in Seattle. After a few more years in France with L’Arche, she returned to Spokane, and in 1998 she became a single mother with three children. With two children on the verge of adolescence, she chose to be a consultant so she would be at home when they came home from school. For six months, she was on food stamps.

“I shopped at thrift stores. Even then I was grateful for what I had. I was able to keep my house. I changed from feeling embarrassed about using food stamps to seeing them as a gift,” said Robin, who did not pledge to the church for several years. “As I gained financial stability, I began giving again.”

Four years after she and Michael married in 2005, he retired. So while they have less income and need to pay attention to their budget, they maintain their commitment to tithe.

“When we have medical bills or the car breaks down, we find a way to continue giving,” Robin said. “We give because we are blessed and because giving blesses us.”

For information, call 624-4872 or email ribinredrock@hotmail.com.

## Mission encourages giving from abundance

St. Andrew’s has had ties to a project in Honduras and also supports its Clothes Closet ministry—now located at Salem Lutheran—for recently released prison inmates in area work release programs.

Tracey Waring, who helped start the Clothes Closet, said it’s important to offer people choices so they find ministries that interest them, rather than trying to rally everyone around one effort.

“It’s important to do outreach in the community and in the world to move us beyond our comfort zone,” she said.

Tracey said there’s a difference in living with an attitude of abundance rather than one of scarcity.

“Giving out of abundance, we look at how much we have,” she said. “Giving is not an obligation, but a response to God’s love.”

“There are still bills to pay. When I wonder whether to pay a bill or the church, miracles happen when I pay the church first,” Tracey said. “My needs are met. I may have a chance to house-sit to earn a bit extra or I may find \$20 in my pocket.”

As a graduate student living on financial aid, she said she chooses to live in poverty, planning some day to work in nonprofits.

She said that St. Andrew’s is a community of givers, even though

it is not a rich congregation.

Last year during Lent, the church participated in the diocesan Organizing for Mission program and raised funds for an agricultural project in Honduras. Half the funds stayed in Spokane for local feeding programs.

Looking for a project for Lent 2012, they learned from Judy Beane, who does their books, about the Haiti Project. With pictures of the children and teachers on their bulletin board and a brochure, funds trickled in until they invited Trish and Judy to speak.

St. Andrew’s response amazed Tracey. They raised \$5,000 last year and \$5,508 this year. She hoped half of those attending Sundays—30—would pledge, but 50 did.

“Through our efforts in Haiti, we can plant seeds to help children grow, blossom and spread love,” Tracey said.

Tracey also shared her story of growing in a poor Stamford, Conn., neighborhood. In the seventh grade, she was put in the gifted program with rich, white children. She won first place

for a science fair project, and her teacher said he believed she would go to college and succeed.

In 2008, 30 years later, she earned her bachelor’s degree in Eastern Washington University’s interdisciplinary studies program, which gave her credit for her life, work and volunteer experiences. She earned her master’s degree in social work in 2010 and is now working on a master’s in public administration.

At the Clothes Closet, Tracey said she tries to be the face of Christ to people, but finds they often are the face of Christ to her.

One day when it was closed, a man came needing a shirt. She let him in. He chose a shirt and said, “You are my sister in Christ.” Tracey replied, “You are my brother in Christ.” He told her he was going to church that night.

She finds that unexpected encounters often feel like encounters with Christ. Her grandmother told her always to look someone in the eye, because “you may be looking into the face of Christ.”

For information, call 481-1167 or email tlwaring728@msn.com.

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## Author offers food for thought about mindsets that frame values

Poet, novelist, farmer, conservationist Wendell Berry recently challenged today's rampant individualism and concentration on the bottom line, as they contribute to the current economic and spiritual conundrum.

His April lecture on "It All Turns on Affection" sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., offers food for thought to stir conversations. It is at [neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture](http://neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture).

Berry told about his grandfather's small tobacco farm in Kentucky that is still in the family. In 1906, his grandfather hoped the crop would bring a good price at auction, not a windfall, but enough to allow him to pay his expenses and have a bit left over.

However, James Duke and his American

Tobacco Company had a monopoly on the tobacco market, and the crop brought in only enough to pay for its transport to market and the commission on its sale.

Berry said one of his teachers, Wallace Stegner, identified two groups of Americans: "boomers" and "stickers." Boomers are "those who pillage and run" who want "to make a killing and end up on Easy Street." Stickers are "those who settle, and love the life they have made and the place they have made it."

Berry said a boomer is motivated by greed, the desire for money, property and power. Stickers are motivated by affection, "by such love for a place and its life that they want to preserve it and remain in it."

Duke was a boomer. The pedestal of a

statue of him at Duke University says "industrialist" on one side and "philanthropist" on another. Berry said the two labels were more true for his grandfather and others exploited by Duke, pointing out that by appropriating "for little or nothing the work and hope of enough such farmers, you may dispense grand charity as a philanthropist."

Today as then, boomers see no connection between people whose labor they use and their own prosperity. Nor do they think sustainability is necessary. Pay lower prices, so more has to be produced on the same land, and the land becomes depleted. What eventually happens to the farm and the farmer is not of concern.

Because of people who give in to such destructive tendencies, Berry sees "a ruin-

ous failure of imagination" throughout history and growing worse in our own time.

For people to have a responsible relationship to the world, he said, people must let their imagination enable sympathy, and their sympathy enable affection. "In affection, we find the possibility of a neighborly, kind and conserving economy," he said.

Berry sees risks in "making affection the pivot of an argument about economy." For him, affection and values of love, care, sympathy, mercy, forbearance, respect and reverence have meanings related to worth. He calls people to give their affection to the true, just and beautiful.

That's food for thought to chew on in our faith community conversations.

**Nancy Minard - Contributing Editor**

## Internship gives hope for new journalist that she can make a difference

Coming as an intern to The Fig Tree, I was not sure what to expect. It seemed ironic that in previous internships I had shifted away from the secular into the religious sector—from a position in the mayor's office to a writer for the Latin American Theological Fellowship to a writer for The Fig Tree. It seemed that God was pulling me toward nonprofit work.

As my time here comes to a close, I reflect on what I have learned from this kind of journalism. The first time I heard the term "peace journalism" was during my training with Mary Stamp a few short months ago. It intrigued me. While I was interested in learning about a newspaper's role within the community, I had not considered how it might bring people together instead of dividing them.

The Fig Tree practices peace journalism by bringing together the different faith groups in a common forum. It focuses on similarities instead of differences, letting people tell their own stories according to

their own backgrounds.

Through making our "Communicating Credibly" video, I learned that The Fig Tree is a voice within the community that reflects what it has to say while inspiring hope, informing people and involving faith groups to work together.

In my interviews, articles and videos I strove to put this kind of journalism into action. It was not always easy. The video program was unfamiliar, the internet was slow at times and with other new staff and volunteers, the office was sometimes crowded.

Even these challenges taught me how I could adapt to and work with my environment.

I valued the opportunity to create the Communicating Credibly video. When Mary heard through my advisor that I had video editing skills, she told me how I could help. Using iMovie, a program unfamiliar to me, I learned how to pull something together out of several video clips, events

and interviews. In the end, I was impressed with what I had learned and done in that amount of time.

In interviewing a professor, an organizer of Habitat for Humanity and a prophetic dancer, I have had the chance to learn other people's stories without avoiding the "religion" question. I could ask without fear those deeper questions regarding spirituality.

If I were to have the chance to do this internship over, I wish that I would have written a bit more and perhaps done a few more special projects. I discovered, to my dismay, 120 hours only allows for so much.

I will miss the editing team. These women are probably the kindest and most thorough editors I have ever worked with. Even in the few hours I spent editing with them, I began to learn their editing styles and backgrounds.

What journalism students do not always realize in choosing an internship is what is available in the area. Although the in-

ternship was not paid, the experience was what was important. I would recommend the Fig Tree to college students seeking an internship in journalism for credit. Especially for anyone interested in working with nonprofits, the Fig Tree is a good fit.

Finally, I would like to thank Mary Stamp for her patience with me in this learning process. As a supervisor she was excellent at making sure I had something to do while keeping in mind my personal goals for the internship. May she continue to serve The Fig Tree for years to come!

This experience has shown me what journalism can be like, which gives me hope for what I can be as a journalist.

While the secular media try to exploit conflict, I realize that I can make a difference even in telling a small piece of the human experience with each person I interview. That, to me, is what journalism should be about.

**Heather Kennison  
Editorial Intern**

Letter to the Editor

## Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

**The longer a church exists**, the more it closes in on itself. In a new congregation, all the "arrows" point outward toward relational, need-meeting ministries with the outside community. Over time, all the "arrows" turn inward toward in-church relationships and activities. Church becomes less about relating self and others to Jesus and more about feeling good with each other in the church. This makes congregations die comfortably. Eventually, they drift off into a coma and expire.

Only the phenomenon of falling in love is powerful enough to counter this trend. I have never heard of a congregation reversing its decline without two things: First, the people fall in love with Jesus enough to want to be with him and like him. Second, they joyously and aggressively break out of their religious ghetto and re-engage with the community in every way possible, especially through their personal relationships with individuals they previously ignored.

**The Rev. Carl Martin - Audubon Park  
United Methodist Church newsletter**

**A move from one place** to another requires a person to consider, over and over, what belongings will be kept and what will be discarded or passed on. In spite of the hard work, it is worthwhile.

I can't help but wonder if it would be worthwhile for each of us, every so often, to thoughtfully consider the habits, relationships, patterns and practices of our lives. What needs to be kept? What do we need to give up? Would we be better off if we let go of this routine or habit, or that practice? Which relationships ought to be nurtured and strengthened? Which ones need to be eliminated? What about our practices of faith? Which practice needs to be strength-

ened? What practice needs a significant commitment of time and energy? Is there anything we need to let go of?

May God grant us wisdom and courage as we consider our lives. May God guide us through the hard work of considering and help us to know when to hang on and when to let go.

**The Rev. Linda Crowe - Veradale  
United Church of Christ newsletter**

**Spring is a time of transition**—the transition from the cold wintery months of short days and long nights to the summer season of warmth and long hours of sunlight, flowers, green grass, and growing fruits and vegetables. Transition times, however, can be rough.

It can be warm one day and blustery winds and snow the next. Actually, that can all happen in one day. Signs of new life are appearing in the valley and in the mountains a blizzard is raging with a foot of snow being dropped overnight.

Transition is moving from one place to another. We leave one thing and move toward another. We are neither where we were nor where we are fully going.

Transitions can be difficult even though we may be anticipating them. There is always a sense of uncertainty. We can be jerked back and forth from one thing to another. Our world is changing so quickly these days that I think we are constantly in a state of transition. Communication and technology are moving so quickly we are out-of-date before we have even arrived at a new place. We are bombarded with more news than we can grasp.

Our spiritual journey is one of transition, one of being on the road all the time. We look back to where we have been, yet there

is more in front of us. We are never fully settled. Jesus constantly calls us to discipleship, to a way of living that calls more from us than we could imagine. It means leaving behind some things that have given us comfort to grasp more fully the Realm of God with its uncertainty. At other times, we leave behind a storm of chaos to walk in the light of grace and peace.

Transitions always seem to be times of uncertainty. The old doesn't fit as well as it used to and the new isn't fully comfortable.

**The Rev. David Helseth - Englewood  
Christian Newsletter - Yakima**

**What if your Christian faith costs** something? For a long time, it's been easy to be a Christian in the United States. It has been respected, at times almost required, in society. Christians have had it easy. That's not what Jesus told us to expect.

Recently, more than 10,000 people gathered on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to celebrate that they don't believe in God. The speaker urged people to mock Roman Catholics. . . . When you throw rocks at Roman Catholics, you are bound to hit Lutherans, so we won't take comfort that the speaker wasn't talking about us.

What would you do if someone ridiculed you for your faith? The scriptures can prepare us. Jesus says to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (Matt. 5:43-45) Paul says to bless those who persecute you. (Rom. 12:14).

At the same time, I see people becoming more open about their faith on Facebook. People who would not drop their beliefs into ordinary conversation are posting (or re-posting) what they believe for all to see. Some who are not believers hear and experience the Christian faith in a new

way, getting beyond media stereotypes and televangelists to the living faith of their friends. I see changing minds among those who are my Facebook friends. The Holy Spirit is at work, and I am heartened.

Undoubtedly these two changing trends will run into each other, but God will lead us through. With eyes open, realizing that times are changing, we trust God's leading.

**The Rev. Ladd Bjorneby - Zion Lutheran Newsletter - Spokane Valley**

**For the most part, we look** at the world as opposed to seeing it. We live by "filling in the gaps" of our perception with our preconceived notions and our past experiences. What we have experienced in the past influences how we perceive our world in the present. Each of us is biased. Learning to see is learning to get out from under all kinds of perceptual bias. Learning to see is not just for artists. It is an ancient spiritual practice that, ironically, connects us more fully with the material world.

Jesus taught this practice in almost everything he did and said. He taught by parables that helped people break through their assumptions. He talked about how God's realm was all around then, and he helped people see it. Most importantly, he could not bear to accept a way of living that normalized injustice and oppression.

When some people began to think certain people were less valuable, he named it blindness rather than bias, but the idea is the same. Learning to see the world anew is a crucial spiritual exercise, not just for us as individuals but also for the communities and networks we form with one another.

**The Rev. Chip Laird  
Community Congregational United  
Church of Christ Newsletter - Pullman**

# Calendar of Events

- May 2-5** • **Cinco de Mayo Celebration**, Spokane Falls Community College SUB Lounges, 11:30 a.m.
- May 3** • **Fig Tree Board**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1 p.m., 535-1813
- **National Day of Prayer**: Service Station, 9315 N. Nevada, 7:30 a.m., 466-1696; Life Center Foursquare, 1202 N Government Way, noon, 327-4422
- May 3, 17** • **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m. 838-7870
- May 4** • **Catholic Charities Centennial** GALA Event, Pennington Ballroom, Davenport Hotel, 6 p.m., 358-4254
- **First Friday with the Bishop**, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m., 448-1224
- May 4-5** • **"Sanctuaries of Family Life,"** Shea Darian, author of *Seven Times the Sun*, Windsong School, 4225 W. Fremont Rd., 6 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, 326-6630
- May 4-6** • **"Tea with the Mystics: Different Paths to Center,"** Spirit Center, 465 Keuterville Rd., Cottonwood Idaho, 208-962-2000
- May 5** • **Building Better Communities** Conference, Hargreaves Hall, Eastern Washington University Cheney, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., 359-6813
- **Cinco de Mayo**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave, 6:30 p.m., 747-6677
- May 6** • **Race 2 End Slavery**, World Relief Spokane, in conjunction with Bloomsday, [worldreliefspokane.org/home/race2endslavery](http://worldreliefspokane.org/home/race2endslavery)
- **"Wizdom: Making Dollars and Sense**, Stories about Living with and without Money in Spokane," Bing Crosby Theatre, 901 W. Sprague Ave., 777-3707
- May 8-10** • **Immanence and Art**, Spirit Center, 465 Keuterville Rd., Cottonwood Idaho, 208-962-2000
- May 11** • **Hearth Home Annual Celebration** of Mothers Dinner & Auction, The Luxury Box, 10512 E. Sprague Ave, 926-6492
- **Valley Fest Auction**, Center Place, 5:30 p.m., 922-3299
- May 12** • **NW Autism Center** Annual Evening of Art & Auction, Lincoln Center, 1316 N. Lincoln St., 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., 328-1582
- **World Fair Trade Day**, Kizuri, 35 W. Main, 464-7677
- May 12-13** • **Mother's Day Walking Tour** of Rockwood District historic homes, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, noon to 4 p.m., 363-5315
- May 12, 19** • **Cup of Cool Water Volunteer Training**, 1106 W. 2nd, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (May 12), 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (May 19), 747-6686
- May 13** • **I Remember Mama Luncheon** to raise funds for Alexandria's House, Volunteers of America, 624-2378, [voasokane.org/Give-a-Gift/Events/I-Remember-MamaMay-13-2012](http://voasokane.org/Give-a-Gift/Events/I-Remember-MamaMay-13-2012)
- May 15, 22** • **Thomas Merton's "Bridges of Contemplative Living Series,"** The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior, 6 p.m., 483-6495
- May 16** • **Spokane City Forum**, "Is Leading by Serving Good for Business," First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar St., 11:45 a.m., 777-1555
- **Coffee and Contemplation**, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 to 11 a.m., 448-1224
- **Faith Action Network** Fundraising Lunch, Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway, noon, 483-8449
- **Spokane Area Ecumenical Assembly**, Faith Action Network and The Fig Tree, Unitarian Universalist Church Ft George Wright, 3:30 p.m., 535-4112
- May 18-19** • **Red Nation's Student Association** Annual Pow Wow, Spokane Falls Community College Gym, 289-8692
- May 18-20** • **Weekend Ignatian Retreat** – The Examen, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224
- May 19** • **"Mary, A Woman of Substance,"** The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., 483-6495
- May 21** • **Women Helping Women Benefit Luncheon**, Spokane Convention Center, 334 N. Spokane Falls Blvd., noon, 328-8285
- May 30** • **Marian Day of Prayer**, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., 448-1224
- May 31** • **Peace and Justice Action League** of Spokane Spring Soiree and Auction, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- June 1-3** • **ArtFest 2012**, Coeur d'Alene Park in Browne's Addition, Spokane, 456-3931
- June 5** • **Vanessa's Promise Benefit Luncheon**, Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, noon to 1 p.m., 340-0479
- June 6** • **The Fig Tree distribution**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m., 535-1813
- June 7** • **The Fig Tree Board's Annual Meeting**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1 p.m., 535-1813

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# Christ Kitchen continues to expand food services, empowering women

By Shannon St. Hilaire

On Thursdays, women recently released from prison or coming from clinics, the street or battered homes, participate in Christ Kitchen's Bible study and workdays.

The women assemble cooking mixes, which they sell as gifts, and help prepare food for their restaurant and catering business.

Most of the women attend both the Bible study and workdays to stabilize their lives through healthy relationships and work, said founder and executive director Jan Martinez.

**She developed the idea** for Christ Kitchen while counseling women who came to Christ Clinic from 1993 to 2000.

Jan hopes that Christ Kitchen will someday be self-sufficient and able to support its sister organization next door, the Christ Clinic.

"Through bean sales, we could support health care," she said, explaining that supporting the clinic will come only after Christ Kitchen begins to make a profit and support its program through product sales.

Having more sales would also put more women to work, she said.

Currently, two thirds of the income is from sales and one third is from donations, Jan said. It costs \$1,750 to hire one woman for a year.

**Some women only come** to Christ Kitchen to work and do not attend the Bible study.

For the first five years of operation, few of the women went to church. However, Jan noted that they are open to hearing about faith and do not blame others for their situations.

Every woman comes to Christ Kitchen for a different reason.

Some are retired and working to supplement their fixed income. Some use it as a way to a new life, and a few become managers within the organization.

Most women work part-time because they are also mothers. They often experience the tension and balance between work and home, said Jan.

Some women have moved on from the program and come only for the Bible study. The 35 women employed often bring friends to the Bible study.

"They go out of their way to help women not suffer the way they have. They are ambassadors to populations that don't set foot in churches," she said. "Many of the women do not go to church often because they feel unworthy."

When they begin to find stability, the women "often join faith communities they like," she said,



Jan Martinez stands beside some of the packaged foods.

"but it usually doesn't happen until their lives are in order."

**Christ Kitchen is a place** for women to develop skills and loving relationships with each other, which is important for women who have a history of looking for love in unhealthy relationships, she said.

For relationship and other advice, many women turn to the Bible study, said Jan, who shares scriptures she believes are relevant to the women's lives.

The women work with Jan to come up with new ideas for the business. There are 35 products on the menu. The cookies are popular and sometimes decorated with a company's logo or used at weddings instead of cake. The women also make holiday-themed cookies.

Often the employees help the volunteers more than the volunteers help them, she said. The longer the women work in the kitchen, the more skills and ideas they have.

**Christ Clinic is planning** a new event, a cookie-making day on May 12 for Mother's Day. Families can decorate pre-made cookies in the shape of hats, watering cans and other designs with frosting and sprinkles. They can decorate either at the warehouse or buy a kit to use at home.

Christ Kitchen will organize the same activity for Father's Day.

Some women sell their art at the restaurant. The proceeds from the products, which include greeting cards, business cards, crocheted items, and T-shirts, go directly to

those who create the items.

Many lack confidence that they can be good workers, she said.

"When they first arrive, women often feel unemployed and unemployable, but then they make friends, begin to eat healthful foods, quit smoking and find gifts they didn't know they had," she said

**Jan clarifies what she learns** in her work through teaching a course at Whitworth University on the church and its ministry to the poor.

The class is based on the 2,100 scripture references to poverty—"otherwise it is just my thoughts," she said.

It is painful for the students, whose "eyes are opened to the poor and the unchurched," she said.

As is common for those who do not grow up in poverty, many students feel guilty and want to help, she said. Often, they volunteer at Christ Kitchen.

With her students, she shares her belief that, in addition to the services and goods the church gives, it is also necessary to build relationships with those in need.

**"We must walk beside people** in order to see transformation," she said.

It is a bigger commitment to build relationships with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, said Jan, who believes the church has the ability to transcend superficial barriers and lead people to common ground.

"We learn God's work here, and we learn how better to minister,"

she said, observing that many people can relate to suffering from domestic violence even if they have a hard time understanding those who experience poverty.

**From her missionary work** abroad, she believes there is a difference between poverty in the U.S. and in under-developed countries.

She noted that many immigrants she meets at Christ Kitchen, despite having suffered from wars and violence, have an intact family, work ethic and desire to prosper.

"They want to use the services and move on because of their intact structures," she said.

"It looks worse in other countries, but in the U.S., the level of violence in homes is overwhelming," she said. "We simply don't realize what people have been through."

While people often believe that poverty in the U.S. exists because of laziness, she believes that is only part of the issue.

"The women here are the most industrious people I have ever

met," she said, noting that violence and lack of stability cause the women to believe they are incapable of work.

In addition to leading Christ Kitchen and teaching, Jan is writing a book based on her doctoral dissertation that looks at similar programs throughout the country.

For her dissertation, she did research on 18 organizations that "bring women together for work and fellowship," she said.

Jan encouraged the directors of the organizations, four of which followed the model of Christ Kitchen, to "create a business indigenous to their area," she said.

**She said each organization** found two factors create transformation in the women: "the Lord and mentorship," she said.

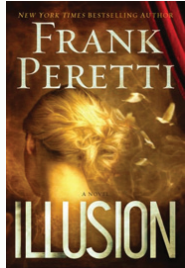
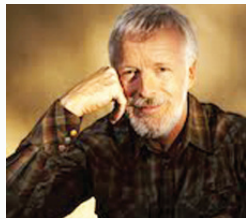
Some groups use English language classes, literacy or business to draw women in, but the emphasis is working on stability.

"The women continually learn how to find balance," she said. "They can't do it alone."

For information, call 325-4343 or email janbow@msn.com.

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