

The Fig Tree  
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## Ecumenical style shifts

By Mary Stamp

After 17 years as executive minister of the Washington Association of Churches, the Rev. John Boonstra, a proponent of the association's vision of building "a movement of the faithful," leaves the association on Oct. 15.

"For congregations to be faithfully obedient, we must be involved in civic life, speaking with a loud, clear voice on issues of social justice, without playing into party politics," he said.

The Washington Association of Churches (WAC) has long had an educational role, gathering people in churches to inform them so they can discern solutions for issues—particularly on health care, hunger, housing and tax justice.

"As people are better informed, we encourage them to take responsibility to be active in the public policy formation," he clarified.

John came to the WAC from work with the Frontier Internship and Mission Program and the Urban-Rural Mission Network of the World Council of Churches. In that role from 1985 to 1988, he traveled around the world out of the headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

*Continued on page 9*



The Rev. John Boonstra at a legislative conference in Spokane

## Volunteers spread load

The Fig Tree has had response from several volunteers who are helping this media accomplish more.

Responding to the request for Spanish translators to translate articles, Mirna Díaz and David Brookbank translated an article on Andrew Holguin. It's now available online at [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org).

Two service learning students in a Gonzaga University public relations class are helping with two projects:

- Catherine Canterbury is developing an email connection network to help The Fig Tree improve communications with congregations and nonprofits.

- Emily Orr is assisting with the website, evaluating the design and development plans from a public relations perspective.

Deidre Jacobson of The Fig Tree Board is volunteering half a day a week, working on volunteer recruitment and special events.

Sister Rose Theresa has volunteered to work on data bases, odd jobs and making phone calls one full day a week.

Others interested in joining them may call 535-1813.

## Canadian and global church leader will share insights on worship, issues

The birth of her first child, her congregation's merger, her daughter's conversion to Judaism and five weeks on sabbatical in Tanzania influenced Marion Best's journey into interchurch-interfaith involvement and to leadership in the World Council of Churches between its seventh assembly in 1991 at Canberra, Australia, and its ninth assembly in February at Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Marion will share elements of the recent assembly's worship, music, symbolism, encounters, discussions and decisions at 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 10, in the Seeley G. Mudd Chapel at Whitworth College as part of the 2006 Fig Tree Faith in Action Dialogue.

She will lead a workshop from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Nov. 11, in room 206 of Dixon Hall at Whitworth, involving participants in small-group dialogue, taking turns as storytellers and listeners.

Marion lived in New Westminster, B.C., near Vancouver, through studies in nursing at the

University of British Columbia, work at the Royal Columbian Hospital, 15 years rearing four children and eight years working part-time in emergency and intensive care at the hospital.

When she was 12, the fundamentalist church she attended did not answer her questions about faith, so she left church involvement and did not return until she and her husband, Jack, decided to seek baptism for their daughter at the United Church of Canada where his family was involved.

"I took the baptismal vows seriously. In 1965, my husband and I began 12 years of team teaching church school, attending teacher training workshops and team teaching the children in groups with other adults.

"We intensively studied biblical background to help us discern how to share the biblical stories with six-year-olds," Marion said.

Some of that training was at Naramata Centre in the B.C. Okanagan, where her family went

for two weeks each summer.

Marion said the United Church of Canada—a merger of Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches in 1925—started Naramata Centre for continuing education in 1947. It started four others like it across Canada. In the 1960s, the centre collaborated with Whitworth in Spokane on leadership development.

In the summer, more than 160 adults and about that number of children and youth go for week-long sessions. The rest of the year, it offers leadership development programs for both church and community workers.

By 1970, Marion's commitment to church led her to serve on national United Church of Canada committees on Christian development and on theology and faith.

In 1977, Naramata Centre invited Jack and her to join their staff, Jack as fund raiser and Marion in program administration and program leadership. Jack retired in 1980. Marion continued working there until 1987.

*Continued on page 3*

## Network needs churches

With shelter programs in the Spokane area filled and with waiting lists, Kathy Bonner Walsh, the new executive and development director of the Interfaith Hospitality Network, asks congregations to help the network serve the four families it currently shelters.

"Every religious congregation can be part of providing their talents, treasures and time to address this tragedy," she said.

The Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) is one channel for helping. There are 18 families on its waiting list, and it now serves 14 people—seven under the age of 10—in four families housed in host churches."

"Faith is hope," said Kathy, who attends Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church in Nine Mile Falls.

She has faith the Interfaith Hospitality Network will find two more congregations to join the 10 host congregations so they can return to the 12-week cycle of housing families for a week at a time in their buildings.

She also has hope that other churches will join the 19 support congregations that help host churches with transportation, food and other needs.

Kathy, who has been in nonprofit development work for 15 years, graduated from Eastern Washington University in communication studies and marketing in 1985. She worked with Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, St. George's School, March of Dimes, Special Olympics, Sacred Heart Medical Center and St. Vincent de Paul before coming to the IHN in May.

"Community nonprofits have such a need," Kathy said. "So many try to help underprivileged people and families with real problems. It's up to the community to help the people around them.

"It's what the Lord says. It's about what we do to the least

*Continued on page 9*

**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*

**Zimbabwe churches seek to stem national crisis**

Harare (ENI). Churches in Zimbabwe want a national debate to secure the future of the African nation blighted by its worst economic and political crisis since independence from Britain 26 years ago. "Our nation is desperately in need of a physician, and that physician is none other than us, the people of Zimbabwe," Roman Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical leaders stated in a document—www.africamission-mafr.org/zimbabwe.doc—that examines the crisis and offers proposals on the way forward. "As churches, we confess we have failed the nation because we have not been able to speak with one voice. We have often not been the salt and the light that the Gospel calls us to be. We, therefore, confess our failure and ask for God's forgiveness," they state.

**Sami leader says churches key for indigenous**

Karasjok (ENI). The president of Norway's Sami people told a gathering of indigenous people from throughout the world meeting near the Arctic Circle that the church and religious communities play a vital role in promoting indigenous issues in her country and internationally. The Sami are a group of indigenous people, most of whom inhabit the northern parts of Norway, but who straddle Finland, Sweden and Russia as well.

**Canadian church opts for tap water**

Toronto (ENI). Members of Canada's largest Protestant denomination will drink tap water at meetings in future and not bottled water, which has become institutionalized at gatherings. United Church of Canada leaders say this stems from decisions at its general council demanding an end to the privatization of water. "Bottled water containers labeled with images of pristine natural environments are rapidly becoming a major threat to the environment and to our health," notes the Web site of Kairos, a social justice group supported by Canadian denominations.

**Musician urges Asians to eschew Western tunes**

Kobe (ENI). Asian Christians need to use traditional cultural elements to enrich their hymns, despite their long-standing preference for western melodies and words, according to a leading exponent of liturgical music. "The majority of Asian Christians have internalized Western hymns so much that it is difficult for them to develop their own traditional hymns," says I-to Loh, general editor of "Sound the Bamboo," an Asian hymnal.

**Leader calls for reclaiming faith**

New York (ENI). A new book by the general secretary of the National Council of Churches is a call to reclaim U.S. religious life from the "far religious right," says its author, the Rev. Robert Edgar. "The politics of faith has been co-opted in the service of a political agenda defined by fascination with war, indifference toward poverty and exploitation of God's creation for the benefit of a relative few," he writes in the introduction to his book, *Middle Church: Reclaiming the Moral Values of the Faithful Majority from the Religious Right*.

**Anglican, Jewish leaders sign dialogue accord**

London (ENI). The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, and Israel's two chief rabbis, Shlomo Amar and Yona Metzger, have signed an agreement mapping out their future dialogue. "What we've agreed to today will provide a framework within which both practical and sometimes challenging issues can be discussed on the basis of mutual trust and respect," Williams, the leader of the global Anglican Communion, stated after signing the agreement.

**More WCC members pay membership dues**

Geneva (ENI). Three-quarters of the 348 members of the World Council of Churches paid membership contributions in 2005, compared with 55 per cent in 1999, WCC finance committee told the recent central committee meeting.

**REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS**

**Workshops present faith views on initiatives**

Catholic Charities and the Interfaith Council will present area workshops to inform people about initiatives on the Washington State ballot in November from a faith perspective.

The workshops, which begin at 7 p.m., will present analysis based on shared faith principles of the common good from the Lutheran

Public Policy Office, the Washington Association of Churches and the Washington State Catholic Conference, said Scott Cooper of Catholic Charities' parish social ministries office in Spokane.

The workshops are:  
• In North Spokane on Thursday, Oct. 19, at the Spokane Friends Church, 1612 W. Dalke;

• In Spokane Valley on Tuesday, Oct. 24, at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, 503 N. Walnut;

• In South Spokane on Wednesday, Oct. 25, at the Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., and

• In Clarkston on Thursday, Oct. 26, at Holy Family Catholic Church, 917 Chestnut St.

For information, call 358-4273.

**Tri-Cities and Yakima plan CROP walks**

The number and severity of disasters in recent years has raised awareness about how people have been affected by them, instilling a commitment that Lynn Magnuson, regional director of Church World Service/CROP in Seattle, believes has resulted in greater interest in CROP Hunger Walks.

Two October walks will occur in the Tri-Cities and in Yakima.

The first Bridge-to-Bridge Tri-Cities CROP Walk in years begins at Cable Bridge in Pasco and proceeds along the Columbia

River on the Heritage Trail across the Pioneer Bridge in Kennewick and back—a four-mile walk.

It begins with registration at 1:30 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 8.

Larry Hansmeier, pastor at First Christian, is coordinating the walk with other Tri-Cities pastors.

Second Harvest Tri-Cities will receive the local 25 percent of proceeds. For information, call 586-2101.

The Yakima walk begins and ends at La Casa Hogar, a Yakima Interfaith Coalition program that

will receive the local 25 percent.

The walk begins with registration at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 14, at La Casa Hogar, 106 S. Sixth St. Walkers will wind 10K through downtown, with optional shortcuts.

David Helseth, pastor at Englewood Christian, is coordinating the walk through the coalition.

The church that raises the most money there receives the Golden Tennis Shoe award. In 2005, 51 walkers raised \$7,000.

For information, call 966-6550.

**Pediatrician speaks on United Nations Day**

For the United Nations 61st anniversary on Tuesday, Oct. 24, Deb Harper, a pediatrician for more than 20 years in Spokane, will speak on "Maternal Health and Well-Being: A Cornerstone of the Millennium Development Goals - Global and Local Successes and Challenges."

The United Nations Day Dinner begins at 5:30 p.m., at the Muk-

ogawa Fort Wright Commons.

The UN set the Millennium Development Goals to improve lives of the world's majority, the poorest people, said Risa Takanaka, communications director of the Spokane Chapter of the United Nations Association.

Deb, a pediatrician with Group Health and a consultant on child abuse for Partners with Fami-

lies and Children, will tell why healthy, educated mothers are central to efforts to raise the level of human development.

As assistant dean and clinical coordinator for the University of Washington School of Medicine, Eastern Washington Region, she is committed to protect children and strengthen families.

For information, call 534-5253.

**Exhibit depicts Darfur through children's eyes**

Gonzaga University's Institute for Action Against Hate is sponsoring an exhibit of refugee children's prints, "Smallest Witness: The Crisis in Darfur, Africa, through Children's Eyes," Friday to Sunday, Nov. 10 to 12, at the Crosby Student Center.

Annie Sparrow, a pediatric spe-

cialist for Human Rights Watch collected the prints, which will be on display from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, and from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sunday.

In conjunction with the exhibit, James Waller of Whitworth College will speak on "Genocide in Darfur" at an event from 5 to 7

p.m., Friday—followed by music by the Sidhe Duo.

From 3 to 5 p.m., Saturday, actors Silvia Lazo and Selena Schepfer will present a play, "Darfur Strikes Forward," accompanied by the Malidoma African drummers and dance troupe.

For information, call 323-3665.

**Symposium at WSU features Matthew Fox**

Matthew Fox, founder of Wisdom University and Friends of Creation Spirituality, will present the 29th annual Roger Williams Symposium on Sunday and Monday, Nov. 5 and 6, at Pullman Presbyterian Church, 1630 NE Stadium Way.

The Common Ministry at Washington State University presents the former Dominican priest, theologian and author of

28 books, speaking on the theme, "Creativity: Where the Divine and the Human Meet."

Since 1978, the Roger Williams Symposium has brought together area clergy, laity, students and faculty interested in the intersections of knowledge and faith.

Matthew's books include *Original Blessing*, *Sins of the Spirit* and *The New Reformation*, presenting "95 Theses" which demand that religions rethink what they represent in the present day and

that nations reconsider their responsibilities to their citizens and the world.

Registration begins at 5 p.m., Sunday, followed by a banquet and a 7 p.m. presentation.

Monday begins with registration at 9 a.m., followed by lectures at 10 a.m. on "Feminist Mystics of the West" and at 1 p.m. on "The Green Man and Our Search for the Sacred Masculine."

For information, call 332-2611 or visit wsu.edu/~comm.

**The Fig Tree is reader supported BECOME A SPONSOR!**

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Deidre Jacobson - Administration  
**Fig Tree Board**  
Bob Bartlett, Sr. Bernadine Casey, Jim CastroLang, John Coleman Campbell, Jo Hendricks, Lance Jacobson, Mary Mackay, Carl Milton, Nancy Minard, Roger Ross, Brian Royer, Mary Stamp, Marilyn Stedman, Wesley Strait, Edie Volosing  
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**Veradale United Church of Christ**

66th Annual

**Harvest Dinner**

**5 to 7 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 14**

Our traditional Harvest Dinner is a delicious event! The mouth-watering meal features turkey and all the trimmings, ham and Swedish meatballs. Instead of an established ticket price, we invite donations!

**611 N. Progress Ave. • Spokane Valley • 926-7173**  
one block west of Sullivan and south of Broadway



# Marion Best progressed into church life and national leadership

*Continued from page 1*

"At Naramata Centre, I did human relations training, teaching community leaders, social workers and teachers, as well as church people how to do experiential education and leadership development," Marion said.

Her interest in interchurch relations grew because Naramata's only church was a United-Anglican congregation that had merged in 1968. They formed a joint local ministry even though, after Canada's United and Anglican churches conversed about merging for about 40 years, the Anglicans voted against a national union.

The shared ministry of the local church began about 1968. It has one minister, a church common board and all worship together. Anglican Eucharist is the liturgical form on first Sundays, and United Church communion on third Sundays.

"The church was already together and decided to stay together even though national union talks had failed," she said.

When her eldest daughter, then 26, converted to Reform Judaism after studying religion at the University of British Columbia, it was at first difficult for Marion.

Knowing that she did not want to be alienated from her child, Marion decided to learn more about and came to a new appreciation of Judaism. She also participated in some Christian-Jewish, Christian-Islam and Christian-Buddhist conversations with the United Church's Interchurch Interfaith Committee.

On sabbatical from Naramata in 1985, she participated in a five-week Christian Lay Leadership Training of the World Council of Churches in Tanzania.

"I had never been outside North America. It was life-changing. After orientation in Dar es Salaam, we formed six teams of five people and spread to different parts of the country," Marion said.

"At that time, two-thirds of the population did subsistence farming with no money changing hands. It was also sober-

ing to see the effects of aid that did not help people, such as a chick incubator and a copy machine sent to an area with no electricity, tractors rusting in fields when the people needed oxen and plows."

That stirred her interest in how the global economy is structured.

After leaving work at Naramata centre in 1987, she began working freelance from home in Naramata. She continued to lead some programs at the centre, and worked with Vancouver School of Theology (VST) Centre for the Study of Church and Ministry and with hospital staff and community nursing staff.

Through VST she worked with 75 congregations in groups of eight for 18 months each, helping them discern their directions for the future.

Marion trained nurses and hospital management in stress management, team building, conflict resolution and assertiveness training.

In 1988, she was elected as B.C.'s lay representative to the United Church of

Canada's General Council Executive. She served on it until last February.

The United Church invited her to chair its Interchurch-Interfaith Committee, which led to opportunities to be involved in its conversations with Disciples of Christ and Roman Catholic-United Church dialogue.

That role led to her being named as one of the United Church's delegates to the World Council of Churches' seventh assembly in 1991 at Canberra, where she was elected to the Central Committee. At its first meeting in Canberra, she was elected to the Executive Committee.

In 1994, the United Church of Canada elected Marion to a three-year term as its moderator, a full-time paid position. She worked from the national office in Toronto and traveled 10 days a month to visit churches and church groups across Canada, as well as some of their overseas partner churches.

*The November issue will report on her work with the World Council of Churches.*

## Habitat-Spokane dedicates 166th home

As Habitat for Humanity-Spokane prepared for its 11th annual Raise the Roof Auction on Friday, Oct. 13, it also dedicated several new homes in September.

It completed its first straw-bale home at 1915 N. Waldo.

The four-bedroom, handicapped accessible home was designed by WSU-Spokane Interdisciplinary Design Institute students and construction began in March.

Along with the straw-bale exterior, the earth-friendly home has an on-demand hot water system, a skylight for passive solar light

and radiant floor heat.

"Habitat-Spokane is dedicated to incorporating sustainable building products and energy-efficiency into all homes," said director Michone Preston.

Three families received keys to homes at 5645, 5647 and 5649 E. Union Ave., which were built with a grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

As part of the Thrivent Builds program, Thrivent contributed 70 percent of the funds, with 20 percent from local Lutherans and Thrivent members, and 10 percent

from other Habitat donors.

The grant required that Lutherans and Thrivent members provide half the volunteer hours, working with the families.

With these homes, Habitat-Spokane has built 166 in the community since 1987.

Habitat-Spokane's Raise the Roof Auction to benefit local Habitat home building begins with a silent auction at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m., followed by a live auction on Oct. 13, at Northern Quest Casino Pavilion.

For information, call 534-2552.



Manito Methodist's  
**Pirates' Treasure**  
Auction & Dinner

November 4<sup>th</sup> 6 p.m. \$5.00  
33<sup>rd</sup> & Grand... 747-4755

## 2006 Faith in Action Dialogue

**'God, in your grace, transform the world'**

featuring

**Marion Best**

- 15 years on World Council of Churches Executive Committee
- vice-moderator at the 9th Assembly in February in Brazil
- former moderator of the United Church of Canada from Naramata, B.C.



with

**Marc & Judy Hafso**

Marc is director of choral & vocal activities at Whitworth.  
Judy teaches elementary music at St. George's School.  
Music resource leaders at Naramata Centre

**Friday & Saturday, Nov. 10-11**

**7 - 9 p.m. - Friday**

**A Glimpse of the WCC Assembly:  
Music, Worship, Dialogue, Process and Decisions**  
Seeley G. Mudd Chapel - Whitworth College

**9 a.m. to noon - Saturday workshop**

**Dialogue and Listening to Discern  
the Kernel of a Person's Story**

Dixon Hall Room 206 - Whitworth College

**PLEASE RSVP**

**Suggested donations: \$15 each event, \$25 both events  
Send to The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202**

**FOR INFORMATION, CALL 535-1813**

Sponsored by The Fig Tree

# Bazaars

Bake, Craft and Book Sales & Meals

The Fig Tree will run another composite ad in the issue out on Nov. 1.  
Cost: \$12 / col. inch

**Opportunity Christian Church**  
**OKTOBERFEST**  
Saturday, Oct. 14 - 9 am-3 pm  
Book & Bake Sale  
Soup, Bread & Hot Dog Lunch  
Open House • Displays • Door Prizes • Free Raffles

**Cheney United Methodist**  
**Annual Holiday Fair**  
Saturday, Nov. 4 - 9am-2pm  
204 Fourth St. - Cheney  
(entry in alley - NO STAIRS)  
Baked goods & hand crafted items

**Trinity United Methodist**  
1725 E. Bridgeport - Spokane  
**Bazaar & Turkey Dinner**  
5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 9

**Hamblen Park Presbyterian**  
**Women's Association**  
**Fall Bazaar**  
Saturday, Nov. 4 9am - 4pm  
4102 S Crestline  
Many handcrafted items, gift bags, cards, baked items, jams, butters, gently used children's and adult books, and a quilt raffle.  
Start your holiday shopping with us.  
*Monies raised will be used for mission outreach.*

**SCANDINAVIAN**  
**BAZAAR**  
Proceeds benefit local charities  
**Friday, Nov. 3**  
10 am - 2 pm  
Kaffe Stua 9 am - 1 pm  
at  
**Central Lutheran Church**  
Corner of 5th & Bernard  
FEATURING  
LEFSE, SCANDINAVIAN COOKIES,  
MEATBALLS & OTHER SPECIAL ITEMS

**St. Rose of Lima Catholic**  
**Women's Guild**  
**Bazaar**  
Saturday, Oct. 28  
9am to 3pm  
460 N. 5th St. - Cheney  
Crafts, bake sale, 'white elephant' items, kid's only table.  
Raffle tickets for a quilt, pillow doll, and oil painting.  
Coffee and pastries!

**Bazaar & Bake Sale**  
**St. Mark's Lutheran**  
316 E. 24th Ave.  
Grand Blvd. & 24th  
9 am-3 pm  
**Saturday, Nov. 4**  
Coffee bar, bake sale, quality seconds and crafts

**Central United Methodist**  
**Holiday Bazaar & Luncheon**  
10 am-3 pm, Saturday, Nov. 4  
518 W 3rd Ave. • 838-1431  
**Lunch 11:30 am-1:30 pm**  
\$5 at the door - \$2.50 under 12  
Turkey casserole, salad, carrots, roll, beverage & dessert  
**Drawing for antique Anna Mae Fan**  
quilt and other items \$1 or 6/\$5 at 2:30 p.m.

**St. John's Cathedral**  
**BAZAAR**  
at 12th & Grand  
**9:30 am-3 pm**  
**Saturday, Nov. 4**  
**Lunch available**  
11:30 am-1 pm  
Tours, Labyrinth Walking, Music, Santa Claus, Food, Craft Items  
OPEN FOR SENIORS FRIDAY, NOV. 3

**Jubilee International Marketplace**  
*Unique gifts, alternative gifts, and gifts for people who have everything*  
**Friday, Nov. 10**  
10 am - 8 pm  
**Saturday, Nov. 11**  
9 am - 4 pm  
**First Presbyterian Church**  
318 S. Cedar  
Maple St. Exit off I-90

# WSU doctoral student applies crop science to feeding people

By Carol Price Spurling

Julie Dawson takes Jesus' message to "feed my sheep" seriously.

Julie, a doctoral student at Washington State University in Pullman, thinks about feeding others much of the time. Her research in crop science focuses on wheat varieties suited for organic agriculture.

In her spare time, she volunteers for the Palouse Food Project (PFP), a multi-faceted partnership between the university and the region's communities designed to alleviate hunger on the Palouse.

For Julie, the connections between her faith, her studies and her volunteerism are natural.

"Nature is a place where I feel God most strongly. So I believe we need to learn to treat the land as a sacred gift to be used, but never abused," she said.

"Everyone should have access to fresh, healthy food, but our food system needs a major overhaul before that will happen. I want my career to focus on developing an agricultural and food system that respects the earth and provides good food for everyone."

The Palouse Food Project is a concrete way she is involved in these issues.

Julie grew up in Ithaca, N.Y., where she still is a member of the First Congregational Church. She moved to Pullman in 2004 and is an associate member of Pullman's Community Congregational United Church of Christ.

"The churches are similar. I find their social and environmental justice focus meaningful," Julie said.

She earned her bachelor's degree in plant science from Cornell University. After working on agricultural policy in Washington, D.C. for a year, she searched for a graduate school where she could work with an advisor and a school dedicated to "public research for the public good," instead of working for a corporation concerned mainly about profitability for its shareholders.

"I wanted to focus on sustainable agriculture, and WSU has a good program in organic and sustainable agriculture," she said.

Her advisor, Steve Jones, is the winter wheat breeder at WSU.



Julie Dawson

He keeps his research and wheat varieties in the public domain and has started programs in organic and perennial wheat breeding. Julie's research is a part of those programs.

Of all human activities on the earth, Julie said that agriculture, which provides the cereals, grains, fruits, vegetables and meats people consume throughout the day in various guises, probably has the most environmental impact.

"Most people in the United States, however, have no idea where their food comes from and what the environmental costs of its production are," she said.

One solution to this disconnect between people, their environment and their food, she believes, is to bring food production closer to home.

"We need to re-localize the food system to feed everyone well, while protecting the environment," Julie said.

The Palouse Food Project is a start in this direction.

The project began in spring and summer 2003, when David Gruenewald of WSU's College of Education taught a class to help future teachers understand how communities can support schools and how schools can give back to their communities.

He proposed having a plot at

Pullman's community gardens and taking the produce to the food bank, said Kim Freier, assistant director of WSU's Community Service Learning Center, which helps coordinate the project.

"We connected with the Community Action Center in Pullman and, from the first year, the fresh food flew off the food bank shelves. When we saw that food bank clients were eager and willing to have that kind of food, it was encouraging. Word spread. The Palouse Food Project started meeting regularly in fall 2003."

The immediate goal of the project, Julie explained, is to provide fresh produce to food banks in the community from local, mostly organic, farms and gardens. The project is a complex web of interconnection and cooperation.

She manages two plots for the project at Pullman's Koppel Farm, a former dairy now leased to the Pullman Community Gardens.

"This year, we planted lettuce, beets, carrots, onions, tomatoes, summer squash and potatoes. Last year, we also did some broccoli, cauliflower, kale, chard and cabbage, but had trouble with flea beetles, so we avoided that plant family this year," Julie said.

The WSU organic farm community-supported agriculture (CSA) program, in which people can pay cash in the spring for a "share" of the farm and in turn receive a box of produce each week throughout the growing season, has worked with several sponsors in order to provide four of its farm shares to the Palouse Food Project each week.

There is also some growing space at St. James Episcopal Church dedicated to the project.

A new program in Moscow,

"Backyard Harvest," under the umbrella of the non-profit Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute, picks up excess produce from home gardens and provides drop boxes for excess produce at community garden plots and delivers the food to the food banks. WSU's Tukey Horticultural Orchard donates excess fruit to the project as well.

"There are many supporters and volunteers," Kim said. "Some WSU classes work with it through us, the Community Service Learning Center (CSLC). WSU's Sustainability Club helps in the gardens. Members of Community Congregational and other churches help. Whitman County's Council on Aging and Human Services' nutrition program is finding ways to make the food available to people in rural areas. It is a coalition of many agencies, organizations and groups."

This summer, the PFP distributed 2,000 pounds of fresh produce to 516 households with 1,405 individuals—573 of them were youths and children under the age of 18.

Julie said the project is focused on larger goals than charity.

A greenhouse project at Sunnyside Elementary School in Pullman is starting a lunch-time gardening club to grow salads. They plan to have the owner at a local restaurant teach them how to make salad dressings.

"The Groundworks Institute works with Sunnyside on composting. We will expand educational programs at the Community Action Center and involve more people in gardening and cooking with fresh produce," Julie said.

"We may build raised beds for gardening at local senior and disabled housing complexes

and/or start container gardening projects there. The long-term goal is to expand to towns around the Palouse to create a sustainable regional food system that provides good local food to low-income citizens," she said.

With a community service grant from the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, which coordinates work-study jobs, the CSLC has hired work-study interns to help. It is their only formal funding source so far, but Kim hopes they will draw larger grants in the future.

"The grant gives us a way to involve students more intimately and regularly with hunger issues," Kim said, "and gives us more staff to implement activities."

In the long run, the project wants locally grown foods served at WSU dining services and Pullman schools.

The project has attracted many supporters in its first few years.

"It is a multi-pronged approach to alleviate poverty and hunger from immediate charity needs to growing healthy food for people in need, to educating adults and children to bring about long-term change," said Kim.

Julie and other volunteers have put their gardens to rest for the fall and are planting winter cover crops. They are also planning educational activities for elementary students and food bank clients.

They know another growing season and more opportunities to feed God's sheep will be here before they know it.

For information, call 335-7706.

## 'Browning of America' is talk theme

A Whitworth graduate and leader in Chicago's Latino community will start Whitworth's Homecoming with a lecture, "The Browning of America: Immigration, Integration and Incarnation."

The Rev. Noel Castellanos will speak at 8 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 11, in Weyerhaeuser Hall.

He is founder and president of the Latino Leadership Foundation and founding pastor of La Villita Community Church, in inner-city Chicago. He has worked in youth ministry, church planting

and community development in San Francisco, San Jose and Chicago.

At the George Whitworth Honors Banquet on Friday, Oct. 13, he will receive the Alumni Mind and Heart Award for exemplifying the Whitworth mission.

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## Special Section - Two Fairfield Churches Share Pastor

# Rural realities conducive to ecumenical cooperation

With farms and agricultural businesses consolidating, incomes being static, populations declining and improved transportation, economic realities have cultivated cooperation among rural Inland Northwest churches, too.

Two years ago, the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches in Fairfield, a town of 590 people 35 miles south of Spokane, chose to call one minister, the Rev. Paul Anderson, a Lutheran.

Two retired farmers, Karl Felgenhauer of First Presbyterian Church and Glenn Leitz of Zion Lutheran, recently described how changes in community life and farming practices influenced their churches' decision.

While about the same number of people live in Fairfield now as have for 20 years, in the last few years, one of two agricultural chemical businesses moved and two of three farm machinery companies consolidated.

"Agriculture is our base," Karl said.

Those changes came because family wheat, lentil and pea farms in the Palouse hills have been consolidating in recent decades for efficiency and to be competitive. So they need fewer, more skilled people to run the labor-saving farm machinery.

"The size of farms is unbelievable, but they are still family farms," said Glenn, a third-generation farmer who never married. For a while, a nephew helped him. Then he leased his farm and retired 10 years ago.

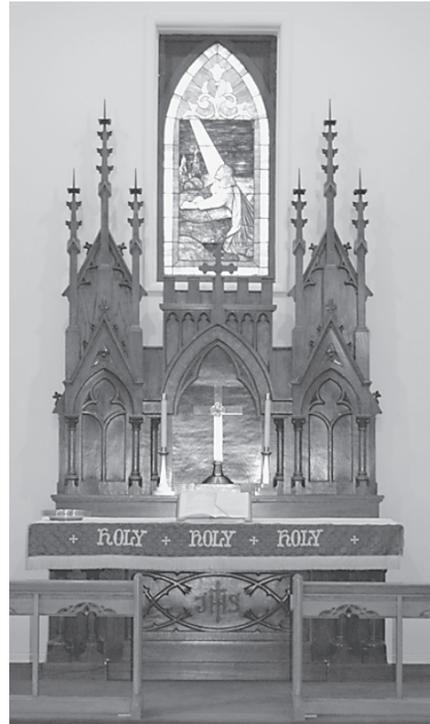
Farms are now from 2,000 to 4,000 acres, but still run by a father and son or sons, he said.

"During my farming years, one farmer could support a family by farming about 800 acres," he said, adding that some farms are still 800 to 1,000 acres, but use older equipment, so those farmers have to do their own repairs.

Schools followed the trend of consolidation.

Once neighboring communities and Fairfield had their own local schools for kindergarten through high school. Now the Liberty School District draws students from Fairfield, Waverly, Spangle and Latah to Liberty High School and Liberty Junior High-Elementary on the Spangle-Waverly Road near Spangle.

The consolidated high school opened in 1961. Until the 1980s, there were two schools for grades one to eight, East Liberty School in Fairfield and West Liberty



Altars of First Presbyterian, left, and Zion Lutheran reflect their cultural traditions.



Farming is the base of Fairfield's economy.

School in Spangle.

Fairfield has a 45-bed nursing home, a pharmacy, a hardware store, a grocery store, the locally owned Bank of Fairfield, a branch of the Spokane County Library, two farm machinery dealerships, two farm chemical companies, a cooperative grain elevator and a dentist.

When Karl was a child, Fairfield had three Seventh Day Adventist doctors who settled there after World War II and worked until retirement.

Karl then served on a task force to search for a doctor. They could find no doctor willing to move there, but a group of five doctors in the Spokane Valley agreed to serve the clinic as a satellite.

The Indians on the Coeur d'Alene reservation, once quite impoverished, used to come to the clinic. Now with casinos, they have their own wellness center, now drawing Fairfield residents.

Some people commute to Spokane to work, so now, Karl said, he doesn't know who lives in a third of the houses in Fairfield. Some are transient. Others use it as a bedroom town and don't interact in the community, unless they come to church.

While some young people stay, many leave to find opportunities. Some young people commute, drawn to Fairfield by lower-cost housing. Others move to Fairfield for a startup job.

About 15 years ago, Karl said, there were some single mothers,

but when laws changed, they had to find jobs. Now there are fewer because transportation costs offset cheaper housing.

"Fairfield doesn't supply all needs. There are no clothing stores, and our grocery stores lack variety, so many people go to Spokane or Spokane Valley stores. For nonperishable items, like hardware, we know if we don't shop locally, we'll lose a store, so we go to local businesses as much as we can," Karl said.

"The quiet, pastoral rural lifestyle offsets the lack of economic opportunity," he added. "You can trust your neighbors. You don't have to lock your car, but we take our keys out."

Karl, a fifth-generation farmer, said his oldest daughter, Marci Green, and her husband, Lonnie, farm with him and are members

of the church.

Marci, a CPA, was at the Bank of Latah before she took over bookkeeping for the farm.

She and Lonnie, who were high school sweethearts, like small-town living.

"Lonnie is from Spangle, worked on farms and liked it. He was not in a position to be in his family farm, so he worked with me four years before he became a partner," Karl said.

His daughter Julie schedules physical therapy at Sacred Heart and Jill is a speech therapist in Richland.

Karl said his faith connects with his occupation, because "a farmer depends on the good Lord to provide moisture for crops. We live and die by the grace of the Lord to nurture our crops to a bountiful harvest. We pray for the rain or to

shut it off or for sun and warmth. Plus, we see the beauty of God's creation every day on the land."

So he seeks to be a steward of the land and leave it in better condition than he received it.

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# Multi-generational farmers describe community, personal roots

Glenn Leitz and Karl Felgenhauer, whose forebears and families helped shape the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches in Fairfield, recently reflected on the backgrounds, mission and life in their churches that helped lay seeds for their sharing a pastor.

Except for a few years at college and in military service, Glenn and Karl have lived in Fairfield and attended their churches all their lives.

Their roots are in farm families who homesteaded in the area in the 1880s.

Glenn is the third generation of his family at Zion Lutheran, and Karl, the second generation at First Presbyterian.

While committed to their own congregations, they are ready to engage in ecumenical relations, especially when it serves their churches' mission.

"In my lifetime, the movement to ecumenism has been dramatic," said Glenn. "Our sharing a pastor is an example in our community of putting ecumenism in operation. We were motivated by practicalities and our faith to meet the realities of our times.

"It made sense to share a pastor so we can offer a salary and benefits package to draw a pastor and provide a good livelihood," he said. "I envision moving ahead, not going back, even if both churches grow."

**Karl said the collaboration** is not the first ecumenical involvement for him or the churches.

In 1983, he hosted a visitation team from the World Council of Churches before its sixth assembly in Vancouver. They came because of his involvement for three years with the late Ed Brewer, at First Presbyterian, and Reinhold Leitz and Ralph Kline of Zion Lutheran in the Church World Service/CROP wheat campaign.

They collected wheat from neighbors' harvesters in the fields. CROP either sold it to support programs, such as digging wells in Africa or South America, or shipped it abroad to feed people.

"We drove a bulk tank under a harvester's spigot, and the farmer said when to close it," Karl said.

Ed, a proponent of mission, also scrounged the area for windmills, dismantling them and sending parts to build windmills abroad.

In addition, local farmers gave bags of lentils, shipped through the Seventh Day Adventist Church to Siberia after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

When those projects ended, many went "back into their own congregations and denominations," Karl said, preferring to



**Karl Felgenhauer**

give locally so they see how the funds are used.

With the financial crunch about paying salaries, pastors also began to say little about wider church ministries, he noted.

**Both churches have had** minister's children become missionaries, giving Zion Lutheran ties in Papua New Guinea and First Presbyterian interest in Thailand.

First Presbyterian sponsored two Vietnamese refugee families: In 1975, a family of five settled in Fairfield until they moved to California. In 1989, a mother and son they helped lived in Spokane.

First Presbyterian has also been involved in Heifer Project globally and hosting a local senior nutrition program.

**Glenn and Karl also described** roots of the churches and community through their family stories.

Both trace their local family roots to German settlers in the Fairfield area in the 1880s. Many were Lutheran.

Glenn's family was among the 26 families who founded Zion and still have descendants in the church.

At first, circuit riders—ministers on horseback—served the German Lutheran settlers who met in homes or the schoolhouse.

By 1891, Zion was organized. At that time, Lutheran churches were based on ethnicity and language—Danish, Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian and German.

"Everything was in German only until 1932," said Glenn.

"When I was a child, we had a German and an English service. German services ended with World War II."

His maternal grandmother never learned to speak English. She felt no need, because all her friends spoke German, but her husband learned English for farming.

Although Glenn's parents spoke German at home and didn't learn English until they began school, his generation spoke English at home, so he knows only some German.

**The Lutheran church reached** its peak of 250 members after World War II. People of German Lutheran background used to come from 20 to 30 miles away. It was the only German Lutheran church in the northern Palouse.

Glenn said that more than 40 years ago, he and his father met with Lutheran, Presbyterian and Adventist men for a monthly ecumenical breakfast that rotated among the churches.

"Farm families have been the bedrock of the congregation," he said, noting that the decline in farm population meant a "steady erosion of membership."

In addition, people gradually lost attachment to denominations. They would join church activities in their own towns rather than going to Fairfield or they might commute to a contemporary church in Spokane Valley.

Glenn knows there has also been some attrition because of

controversies, primarily between "those favoring liberalization and modernization, and those who do not.

"As in any congregation, conservatives and liberals may argue," he said, adding that most continue their participation in the church community.

For example, the vote to join former ethnic Lutheran synods as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the 1970s concerned some.

Some allow divisive issues to be a reason to leave, but many continue despite differences.

"We have gone through divisive issues several times in my lifetime," Glenn said.

**First Presbyterian Church** was organized in October 1892 by eight people who came from various churches. They were farmers and merchants. They built a building in 1894 and began a Sunday school in 1898.

Over the years, the church has served various Protestants—Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and others, Karl said.

From the 1890s to 1940s, most pastors stayed one or two, maybe three years, until the Rev. Clayton Saunders came in 1941 from Omak, where Karl's mother, Elizabeth, grew up. He stayed until 1968.

Karl said the church's peak membership during his ministry was about 150. In 1965, they built the present building. In 1992, there were 128 members, and now there are about 100.

Karl's maternal grandmother grew up in a Presbyterian church in Illinois, came as a single mother with three daughters to teach in Omak in 1908.

His mother, who died in Sep-

tember, came to Fairfield to teach after graduating from Washington State College. She married his father, whose family had been unchurched, and involved him and their three sons in church life.

Karl joined the church at 12 in 1952. He had the same pastor until he went to Washington State University and earned a degree in agriculture. He married in his senior year, and his wife, Ione, spent two years traveling with him in the military, primarily in Europe.

In his mother's memorial service, Karl said, family members recalled her commitment as a Christian not only to the church but also to mending a two-generation split in his father's family.

His parents were among the young couples the pastor gathered after World War II, in a Presbyterian Mariner's Club, which became a community social group.

When Walter Hart, a Seventh-Day Adventist physician, came to the community, he and his wife, Dorothy, joined Mariner's Club, even as they organized the Adventist church in Fairfield.

Doctors Francis and Shirley Thiel, also Adventists, came later. Together they helped establish Upper Columbia Academy in Spangle.

In recent years, the Adventist, Presbyterian and Lutheran churches have held an Easter sunrise service and breakfast.

Jehovah's Witnesses were in the community in the 1940s, said Karl, and by the 1970s, built a Kingdom Hall.

In neighboring communities, Rockford, six miles north, has a Methodist and a Catholic church and six miles south is Latah Valley Bible Church, which is connected to Valley Fourth Memorial.

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Fairfield churches find that diversity can be set aside to be in community or can cause splits

## Churches' financial struggles became impetus for common ministry

With church budgets a typical area for division in churches, First Presbyterian and Zion Lutheran turned financial struggles into an impetus for common ministry for the sake of the community.

Declining memberships in both congregations led to financial woes and some joint efforts.

Karl Felgenhauer, the Presbyterian treasurer for six years, said, "I could see it was a matter of time."

Zion's full-time minister left seven years ago. To save funds, they hired a part-time interim, George Lacey, a retired Presbyterian minister in Coeur d'Alene.

"He loosened Zion's service," said Glenn Leitz. "He used the Lutheran book, but made it more contemporary to appeal to younger people. I favor having worship meaningful to our day."

In 2003, First Presbyterian's pastor left and a group began talking about combining forces to call one pastor.

Zion had considered sharing a minister with another Lutheran church or hiring a part-time pastor, but Fairfield's isolation worked against those options.

"Karl and I first discussed whether the Lutherans and Presbyterians might have a closer affiliation about five years ago. I've known Karl and Ione for a long time," Glenn said.

Nationally, Lutherans and Presbyterians, along with the United Church of Christ and the Reformed Church in America, established full communion through a Formula of Agreement the church bodies adopted by 1997.

"When I was growing up, Lutheran pulpits were for Lutheran pastors only. I was a staunch Lutheran. We stuck to ourselves," he said. "With ecumenism, we can have communion together."

Now it's more important for him to be a representative for Christianity.

From his frustration as a child trying to understand the King James version and his struggles with some aspects of Lutheran liturgies, he readily will let go of "old-time traditions that lack relevance" or "a liturgical service that turns people, especially young people, off to faith."

When membership in both churches began dropping 25 years ago, they began a joint vacation Bible school and some joint Sunday school activities, but maintained separate Sunday schools.

Beyond finances, Karl thought a shared minister made sense because "we serve the same Lord. Maybe our order of service is different, but we have more simi-



Glenn Leitz

larities than differences."

When the churches decided to pursue sharing a pastor, members went to Potlatch, Idaho, a logging town, where a Presbyterian pastor serves the joint Lutheran-Presbyterian parish. They wanted to find out what the two churches there had learned from 35 years of sharing a pastor.

The Fairfield churches formed a covenant committee with five representatives from each church. They met for about nine months and agreed how the churches would operate with one pastor and still maintain their identities and autonomy.

They decided how to deal with two parsonages—by renting one—how to respect their differing liturgies and how to arrange their worship times.

Because both churches are comparable in budgets and attendance, each agreed to contribute half the salary and pension.

"In the joint group, everything was surprisingly amiable, contrary to the bickering that was possible. We were on the same wavelength, bringing the proposal back to

our congregations," Glenn said. "There were some foot draggers and people with questions about how it would work."

After approving the covenant, the churches formed a search committee to look for a pastor.

"The covenant, which gives us rules to live by, is written so if it doesn't work out and unforeseen things happen, we can get out of it," noted Karl, who served on the pastoral search committee.

"We are breaking ground ecu-

menically," Glenn said. "Our denominations are supportive. We are under the spotlight to see how it works out."

"The merger makes sense because at community gatherings, it has no bearing if you are Lutheran or Presbyterian," he said. "So why is there a big deal to maintain separate congregations and identity? It's more important to maintain our religious identity and have a functioning religious community."

As a lifelong member of Zion, Glenn said the church is in his thinking often. It was central in his childhood, when there was no TV. Local schools and churches were the centers of activities for children and youth, and for community social life. Vacation Bible school in his time was three weeks, not one. Confirmation was a serious program, half a day each week all winter.

Now, Glenn said, it's hard to keep children's interest.

"Society has moved, and life is more complicated than the war between good and evil," which he said held many.

Karl believes the two churches are now in "a honeymoon time" with the covenant and the pastor.

"The plan has exceeded my expectations. We found a pastor who fits here. He's working hard.

We just don't want to burn him out," Karl said.

"We're optimistic about the future. It's the coming thing. As we go to connectional meetings, we hear of similar decisions. To do the job in this economic and social climate, we need to combine forces ecumenically. We are on the cutting edge," he said.

With finances a primary issue bringing the churches together, Karl said that by working together both churches have more funds for mission and evangelism—both for local projects and for world hunger aid, disaster relief, global mission, retired pastors and national church resources.

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## Even unchurched people appreciate having resident pastor

The Rev. Paul Anderson's half-time ministry at each of two churches in Fairfield, Wash., makes him the community's full-time, resident pastor.

Even non-church people in Fairfield like having a community pastor. The Seventh-Day Adventist pastor serves the churches in Fairfield and Farmington. The Jehovah's Witnesses are lay led.

Paul provides worship leadership, pastoral care, community presence and mission opportunities for First Presbyterian and Zion Lutheran churches.

By visiting people, learning their needs, responding to the needs and caring about people, he has helped both churches grow numerically and spiritually since he came in July 2004.

Paul meets people where they are on their spiritual journey—whether they are long-time church members, transient residents, poor people or commuters.

First Presbyterian had seven baptisms and added nine members last year. Zion added eight members and had 12 baptisms.

If someone comes to the Lutheran church and does not like the liturgy, Paul may encourage the person to try the Presbyterian church, or vice versa.

About 40 attend each church. "We need to see what God is doing and trust where God is taking us," Paul said. "I was fresh out of seminary but had been around the block with rural, farming and life experience. Still I'm humbled, learning and growing."

To foster a spirit of shared ministry, Paul answers the phone at the Presbyterian Church, saying: "First Presbyterian and Zion Lutheran" and the reverse when he's in Zion's office.

"I'm pastor to everyone in both churches all the time. When someone from the Lutheran church apologized for calling me at the Presbyterian church, she asked if she should wait to call the next day at 'our church.' I said I'm your pastor all the time."

Similarly, his business card is double sided, with the logos of each denomination.

"We can live out that we have one Lord, one faith and one baptism as Ephesians says. God was at work in the people before I came," he said.

Because both churches are freed from having 80 percent of their budgets tied up in pastors' salaries, plus church maintenance, they now can think about using funds for mission—to help local families and for wider mission.

The churches started a food bank within the last two years.



The Rev. Paul Anderson

It has expanded to several communities. Carol Widman, who lives in Waverly, saw a need and started it.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church in Fairfield, the Grange, Latah Country Bible Church and Waverly Community Church are also involved. People help in the food bank. Food comes from Second Harvest and local donations.

Youth will have a hayride in October to collect food.

"We put youth on a wagon with some bales of hay and pull it with a tractor. The third annual Hayride Food Drive will be on Oct. 15," said Paul.

He said it's a way for youth to learn about helping others and understand that not everyone has as much food as they do.

"It also instills that we all worship one God. We are different churches but can share experiences, rather than arguing about petty differences. In the Hayride Food Drive, youth give of themselves, their food and their time. It makes them feel good to help someone," he said.

Paul preaches basically the same sermon, keeping the theology true to each church.

"I'm aware that for Presbyterians Christ is present at the meal in the Eucharist, but for the Lutherans Christ is in the meal, the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ. I honor each faith, not watering either down," he said.

The liturgies are in line with each church's tradition.

Another difference is that the Presbyterian congregation says the Lord's prayer with "debts"

and the Lutherans say it with "trespasses." In joint services, they use "sins," Paul said.

The churches rotate worship three times a year. The early service is 8:30 a.m. at the Presbyterian church and 11 at the Lutheran church from September to December 2006. Sunday school is between services at 9:45.

From January to May 2007, Lutherans will have the early service and Presbyterians, the later one. In summer 2007, Presbyterians will worship early and Lutherans later.

Besides the normal services in the summer, the churches have a joint service one Sunday a month—in June at the community center and in July and August in the park, followed by potlucks. About 70 came in June, 90 in July and 70 in August. People stay around to visit.

"We are getting to know the Lutherans as people," said Karl Felgenhauer. "The more we talk, the more we know about each other. It's another avenue to meet and has impact on community life.

Paul believes God is blessing these churches, growing them together as a community.

He grew up in a Lutheran church and lived on a dairy farm five miles outside Newark, Ill.

After high school, he went to Lutheran Bible Institute (LBI) in Seattle from 1975 to 1977, worked on a dairy farm and traveled for two years with an LBI music ministry team.

A pastor friend once told him he would know if nothing worked out, it might mean he was being

called to be a pastor.

When Paul at 40 was laid off in 1997 from a job he had since 1987 at an Atlantic salmon farm near Olympia, his wife said, "Maybe it's time to stop running from your call." While fish farming, he began working part time as youth director at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Rochester, Wash.

His unemployment insurance counselor agreed to pay half his tuition to go to LBI. In 2000, after earning a bachelor's degree in youth and family with an emphasis on Bible, he went to Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, which shared a bookstore, classes and professors with a sister seminary for Presbyterians and Methodists.

Impressed with ecumenical encounters there, he wrote in his profile his desire to "do ecumenical work to bring denominations together in a community."

When he saw the Fairfield church profiles and after going with his wife, Gwen, to interview in April 2004, both felt at home there.

On May 16, he graduated and learned the churches had voted to call him. Ordained in the Lutheran church in Rochester, he came to Fairfield in July 2004.

"With God's guidance, I will use my skills to see where the community has been, where it is and where it is going," he said.

Paul helps the Presbyterian session, the Lutheran church council and the joint parish council realize they have a role beyond church

administration. As church leaders, he invites them to be spiritual leaders in their congregations.

Paul meets with Lutheran and Presbyterian ministers' groups. He represents the churches at Presbytery and Synod meetings.

First Presbyterian pays Zion half of his salary package. Then Zion writes his full paycheck.

Paul believes "God was weaving a masterpiece" when Zion was without a permanent pastor and served by a Presbyterian interim, and when First Presbyterian's pastor left—all while he had an ecumenical seminary experience.

"We need to be disciples, following where the Holy Spirit guides us. It's a slow process, but baby steps add up to big ones. It's about loving and caring for people and letting them love you back," he said.

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# Movement of the faithful embraces churches and organizations

*Continued from page 1*

"I believe that the mission of God precedes the mission of the church. For the church to be ecumenical is for Christians to realize that the people of God do not carry ID cards and to hope that the church expresses God's mission in the world," he said.

"In fact, the church often receives God's mission through activities of labor unions and community organizations," John continued. "For the ecumenical movement to be broader, it must embrace the institutional church and organizations beyond the walls of the institutional churches."

**So the WAC helps connect** teachers, state employees, service workers, labor unions, tribal councils, immigration agencies, farmers, environmental organizations, nonprofits and community organizations, as well as regional churches and congregations.

"For the ecumenical movement to advance God's mission, we need to be part of a wider table," he said.

"Ecumenism has been about everyone—the whole inhabited earth—being at the table," John said. "The danger is that a representative council may act based on the lowest common denominator, to hold everyone at the table."

In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, churches passed resolutions on social issues. Those served as a basis for justice action on the ecumenical level.

John finds, however, there has been a change from the narrative of "Have we got a statement for you!" to involving people in congregations in social justice action.

"The Christian right has politicians' attention. Politicians need to hear from progressive Chris-

tians, too," he said, defining "the progressive agenda" as a commitment to creative social change that will bring about a community founded in justice and equity for all people.

**The WAC is an association** of 10 Christian communions coming together to learn from each other and "wrestle with what it is to be faithful in our world and community, and what it is to lead Christians from a preoccupation with charity to a preoccupation with building justice in society," he said.

Those communions include African Methodist Episcopal, Evergreen Baptist, Church of the Brethren, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, United Methodist, Presbyterian USA, Unitarian and United Church of Christ churches, and Catholic religious orders in the state.

"We chose to form an ecumenical table without straining over questions of membership. While interfaith relations are in the future, we need progress in Christian cooperation," John said.

**After earning a bachelor's** degree in philosophy and ethics at Hope College in Michigan, John, the son of a Reformed Church in America pastor who grew up in Iowa and Rochester, N.Y., went on to San Francisco Theological Seminary, graduating in 1975. He served a year with the National Council of Churches' Joint Strategy and Action Committee and about four years with the World Student Christian Federation.

Moving to Seattle, he worked several years with the Pacific Northwest Interfaith Network for Economic Justice, with the Center for Ethics and Urban Policy, as an editor for Orbis books and as a volunteer with the Church Coun-

cil of Greater Seattle.

Because the Reformed Church in America did not ordain women, he, in solidarity, was not ordained after seminary. In 1984 in Seattle, he decided to be ordained in the United Church of Christ, which ordains women.

When he came to the WAC in 1989, churches embraced an ecumenical movement that was moving from a church-council model into bilateral and trilateral dialogues among confessions.

Today, local and regional ecumenical agencies promote collaboration and partnership, more than ecclesiastical dialogue.

**The shift from interdenominational** communication and cooperation does not mean the WAC abandons that work. The WAC will still keep denominations in dialogue and ecumenical organizations in conversation with each other.

"There is still a role for the world and national church councils to bring churches together to experience a deeper sense of community, and to understand themselves as a moral community," John affirmed.

In fact, when institutional churches are not working together, he believes Christ's ministry is diminished.

John pointed out that ecumenical agencies do two things that churches cannot do alone:

- 1) They can build a progressive, prophetic faith-based movement influencing community public policy and moving society from charity to social justice.
- 2) They can bring churches into

## Coalition begins hunger project

Beginning at noon, Wednesday, Oct. 4, the Feed Spokane Coalition is starting "Forty Days to End Hunger in Spokane."

The coalition is a group of restaurant and civic leaders, working with local ministry leaders to use restaurant overages—food otherwise wasted—and redirect it back into the community through churches and ministries.

The opening gathering will be at the Awakening, on the East 500 block of Broad behind Zion Christian Church.

For information, call 994-7177.

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closer relationship with organizational players of other segments of society.

The WAC has developed a curriculum, "Faithful Advocacy Workshops," to help congregations discuss moral and ethical issues, reflect on program possibilities and decide to work together.

It believes there are 50,000 Christians concerned about education, the state budget, discrimination, health care, nursing home funding, labor justice, tax reform, hunger, affordable housing and other justice issues.

**The WAC has hired** Richard Wells, formerly an Industrial Areas Foundation organizer in King County, as its social justice program organizer.

It will also hire an executive minister and an operations director. A volunteer is helping with financial development.

Financially, dollars denominational partners give remain steady, but the cost of living is up.

"For denominations to keep the dollar amounts represents strong support," John said, "given pressures of rising health insurance and infrastructure costs."

When John first came, the WAC had \$80,000 from national denominations. Now it receives about \$10,000, but donations from congregations and individuals are up from about \$25,000 in 2004 to \$112,000 last year. There is also support from unions.

**John, 57, decided to follow** his wife, the Rev. Vicky Stifter, who was recently called to serve the Riverside Community Church in Hood River, Ore., beginning in mid October. In late September, he was called to serve as pastor of Bethel Congregational Church, across the Columbia River in White Salmon, Wash.

Having never been a local church pastor, he said that he seeks to do more to accompany people in their spiritual lives.

For information, call 206-625-9790 or visit [www.thewac.org](http://www.thewac.org).

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## Network partner hosts concert

*Continued from page 1*

of our brothers and sisters," she added.

Families come to Interfaith Hospitality Network host churches for an evening meal and to spend the night. A van picks them up at 7 a.m., taking parents to the day center and children to school.

At the day center at 2515 E. Sprague, families have an address and phone number to give to potential employers. They also have a place where they can make phone calls and use the internet to find jobs, transitional or permanent housing, and education.

"We connect people with programs that help them find jobs at livable wages or place them in technical or vocational training through which they can be retrained to find livable wage jobs," Kathy said.

The IHN connects people in need with congregations and community resources.

It is partnering with the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, which will host a benefit concert, "Samba in the Cathedral," at 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 26.

For information, call 747-5487 or email [ihnspon@cet.com](mailto:ihnspon@cet.com).



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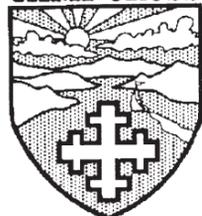
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## Is the commandment to love God and neighbors fundamental to faith?

'Tis the pre-election season to sling mud, scream names, spout opinions, spread smears, repeat jingles and cry "Lord, Lord" to bless political leanings.

Demonizing political opponents actually predated the entry of the "religious right" into the political fray and their current status as a force for candidates to rally.

Candidates of various Christian persuasions—such as conservative, moderate, progressive and liberal—are also honing their skills at professing their faith to affirm that they have values, too.

Name calling has erased the meaning of many labels, be it "religious right," "necons" or the worn out aspersions about "liberals."

Recently visiting churches, campuses and political gatherings in Yakima and Spokane, the Rev. Jan Linn, a Disciples of Christ pastor serving the Spirit of Joy Church in Minneapolis, gave food for thought on name calling and mudslinging, church and state, and Christians and politics.

He explores those issues in his recent book, *Big Christianity: What's Right with the Religious Left*, and an earlier book,

*What's Wrong with the Christian Right.*

He grew up in Lynchburg, Va., and returned to teach at Lynchburg College at the time Jerry Falwell formed the Moral Majority in 1979. He saw the rise of the Christian right "close and personal" and thought the movement would have its day in the sun and pass. So he spent time reflecting on right and left movements of Christianity and offered some commentary.

For example, he prefers the term, "liberal," to "progressive," because it means to be "free, respectful, generous and to believe government has a rightful role in human progress." What's wrong with that? Jan asks.

What does association of some Christians with and blessing of politicians engaged in negative ads and partisanship do to the whole community that shares their name?

What happens also when Christians promote politicians who hold some—but not all—of their faith-based stands?

What does it do to bypass the biblical call to work for justice, when moneyed, corporate candidates—espousing a "pro-life-anti-gay" family values agenda—back

policies that kill innocent people through war or limit opportunities and resources?

Hymn words assert that political-religious liaisons may lead people to be "confounded by idols and lies." It's true whatever the bent—conservative or liberal.

Jan considers the mix of church and state contrary to national health. Growing up in Virginia and studying founders Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, he knows both opposed a mingling of church and state.

"People came to Virginia for religious freedom," he said. "They desired a wall between church and state. Jefferson wanted to protect the state from the church, and Madison wanted to protect the church from the state. Founders who were Christians could have made a Christian nation, but consciously wrote documents not to make it a Christian nation. They wanted to avoid the tyranny of state churches in Europe."

Politicians know how to "divide and conquer" people and faith emphases. While they cultivate the Christian right on some issues to give that constituency the feeling they have power, they expect compromise on biblical mandates for justice.

We know that power corrupts. Christians are susceptible to that corruption once they are drunk with power, Jan said, concerned that the credibility of Christianity hangs in the balance, especially after the political system chews them up and spits them out, as it has betrayed Christian liberals, conservatives and moderates in earlier decades.

"Many Christians are afraid to say they are Christian, not wanting to be aligned with viewpoints media play as if they are the only Christian perspectives," he said.

Does it help to paste religious language in candidates' mouths? Does using religion to bless campaigns and impugn others make the faith less credible?

A cartoon on religious extremists notes: "The world is mad, but very religious."

A bumper sticker calling for "a separation of church and hate" sums up the danger of twisting Christ's love and peace into hate and violence in order to gain power. It happens whatever the faith or political bent.

We assume constituents of differing religious views are neatly in different churches, but most churches are actually variegated.

Mary Stamp - Editor

## Unlikely friendships of quite unlike folks is refreshing hope

Sales tables in bookstores are a never-ending fascination, exhibiting bits of our culture that are about to disappear from easy view, inviting a second look at some subjects and occasionally revealing a jewel.

Eudora Welty's name beckoned from the cover of *The Norton Book of Friendship*.

A quick scan of the index revealed T.S. Eliot and Groucho Marx on the same pages!

At first glance, a friendship between Groucho Marx and T.S. Eliot looks highly unlikely.

Groucho was an audacious, rakish looking comedian who grew up in vaudeville and moved into movies and television.

Eliot was a highly educated, austere looking poet and book publisher.

Groucho was a Jew, and Eliot was an Anglican.

Groucho and Eliot exchanged letters and

photographs over five years and shared a pleasant evening at the Eliots' home a few months before Eliot's death.

That evening, Groucho inquired about some lines from "The Wasteland," but Eliot didn't take the bait. He wanted to discuss "Animal Crackers" and "A Night at the Opera." Groucho couldn't remember the joke Eliot quoted.

Each was essentially more interested in learning about the other's work than in discussing his own.

They enjoyed their after-dinner cigars and found other things to talk about, beginning with a mutual affection for cats and a weakness for making puns.

Neither found it necessary to try to change the other.

The picture of these different men finding common ground and enjoying it is particularly refreshing in a day when media report much noise of various sides trying to force

others into their form of "orthodoxy" or "right belief."

There's a sense of communion in the mental picture of Groucho and Tom enjoying cigars and conversation that should say something to us in a day when he who shouts longest and loudest claims to be right.

Many unlikely people befriend each other. Many families have wide differences in religion and politics—often forbidden topics at family dinner tables.

Brothers and sisters—and other relatives—at least hope to relate in a civil, respectful manner despite differences. That's likely why Scriptures say God's children are to treat each other like brothers and sisters.

At best, siblings are expected to love each other, knowing that despite their differences they shared common genes, a common upbringing, common childhood

experiences and common values before their divergence arose.

We know, too, that there are brothers, sisters, cousins and relatives who despise each other, suffering from broken relationships, fighting over inheritances and property, even though they may share common religious and political beliefs and opinions.

We see that across the broken relationships of our global sisters and brothers—who think they can get their way by temper tantrums, stubbornness, self-righteousness and violence.

A difference between those who find common ground and those who don't is often that the former first accept that they have differences, and then proceed from there to some delightful surprises.

The Groucho-Eliot friendship is a refreshing example of that simple dynamic of human relationships.

Nancy Minard - Editorial team

Letter to the Editor

## Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

**In petitionary prayers, we ask** something of God for ourselves. We pray them many ways, many times a day. If we begin by addressing our loving God before we move into our prayers—being thankful for God's presence in our lives—we may be more careful about what we ask for.

Is it something for which we are willing, if we can, to put forth our own energy and perseverance to obtain the results we seek with God's help? Or is it a heart-wrenching plea because we are unable to help in any other way? In petitionary prayer, we have opportunity to put ourselves at the mercy of God in our needs, our strengths, our courage and, above all, our loving thanks for God's mercy.

**Deacon Dutch Carlisle**  
All Saints Episcopal - Richland

**The simple truth that a change** of perspective can bring profound revelation continues to surprise, astound and delight me. Life—the abundance we have and the joy we live in—is a matter of perspective. So often we approach our living—our families, work, play and even church—from one viewpoint. In doing so, we often fall into routines. We become bogged down. We form opinions. We believe all life is exactly the way we and we alone see it or desire to see it. If we would only try to see things through another's eyes, if we changed the way we look at the world, if we stooped from out lofty places to lift up another, we would see another perspective.

Recently when I stooped down to pick a bowl of berries, I remembered a quote: "No one stands as tall as when he or she

stoops to help another." Jesus did that all the time: "Blessed are the meek, the poor, the persecuted..." "The greatest among you will be the least." "Whoever is humbled will be exalted."

It's not just about perspective, but about life, abundance and being open to surprises. It's about understanding a Christ-like life—looking again with open eyes, an open mind and heart from a new vantage, rather than sticking to narrow views. God calls us to see anew, because there is so much more to life than what we see.

**The Rev. Lauri Strait**  
Opportunity Christian

**Old age has a way** of simplifying life. Now I'm an octogenarian, I go to bed a little earlier and often sleep a little longer without feeling guilty. House clutter bothers me less now, and I'm content to let the lawn grow an extra day or two. My ambitions are more in line with the number of hours in the day. I no longer measure success by the number of appointments on my calendar.

Does that mean I'm less efficient and suffer from reduced capacity? Probably. Multitasking does not have the appeal it once had, and stress seems less valuable. Does that mean I'm washed up? "Negative!" Perhaps it means old age teaches the difference between speed and accomplishment, frenzy and creativity, pressure and effectiveness. Savoring life is not necessarily the result of a stuffed engagement book.

Psalms 92:14 shares an optimistic thought, likening aged people of God to trees: "They still bring forth fruit in old age." That's

encouraging. Even though others may think I'm finished, God doesn't. Although I go at a slower pace, I haven't stopped.

**The Rev. Wilbur Rees-pastor emeritus**  
Shalom UCC - Richland

**Recently on sabbatical** in the Middle East, I interacted with Muslims I know and call friends. The hope I have is that Christian moderates and Muslim moderates will be able to dialogue with each other and bridge the tremendous suspicion that each has of the other. Dialogue by definition means really listening to each other. In this day of national and global polarization, moderates really need to listen to other moderates. This needs to happen on both theological and political levels.

Jesus was a radical, but it was a loving radicalism. Religious radicalism today is just the opposite. It is infused with hate and intolerance. My prayer is that we know and practice Gospel radicalism.

**The Rev. Dick Finch**  
St. Mark's Lutheran

**Hopefully, memories we return to** over and over are memories that ground us in God, memories of affirmation, purposeful struggle, connections with others and perseverance in the midst of hardship. Sometimes memories tell us we are not good enough, things can never change or we will never find meaning and purpose.

Our spiritual practice as human beings is to remember those things that challenge and free us to grow and become more of who we are created to be. It is also to find a way to let go of the memories that imprison us. One aspect of a healthy spiritual remem-

bering is that we do it in every relationship with one another, with Scripture and of course with God. As we journey with one another, may we take opportunities to remember and share our memories of the Divine with one another.

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

**Geography affects how people** live, think and choose. We interact with the environment in which we live. We change it to suit our purposes—flattening, bridging and watering it—but it changes us, as well.

Americans across the country may have more in common than they did a century ago, with the standardizing influences of television, air conditioning and air travel, but people are still quite different from one place to another.

Thinking of ourselves as people who shape the land around us and are shaped by it is one road to understanding the people we need to reach—people of Asotin, Clarkston and Lewiston, not people of Seattle, Los Angeles or central Kansas.

The Gospel we proclaim does not change when our environment changes, but our environment should affect the way we proclaim it. Just as missionaries tell stories of Jesus in the language of the people they try to reach, we seek to convey Christ's good news in ways that make sense to the people around us, ways that speak to the deepest longings and unspoken dreams of the people here.

**The Rev. Forrest Claassen**  
First Presbyterian - Clarkston

## YWCA of Spokane honors local women

The YWCA of Spokane will honor five women for their contributions to the community and their reflection of the YWCA's mission at its 24th annual YWCA Women of Achievement Benefit Luncheon, at noon, Monday Oct. 30, in the new Spokane Convention Center.

Linda Armstrong Kelly, the mother of seven-time Tour de France Champion Lance Armstrong, will speak on overcoming life's obstacles such as domestic violence, teen pregnancy and poverty to become a successful businesswoman and mother.

Those being honored include:

- Kahla Christine Noel, young woman of achievement, is a senior at Cheney High School, where she is on the equestrian team. She teaches able-bodied and disabled children to ride horses.

- Betty McInturff will be recognized for her community service on boards, task forces, committees

## Middle East Peace is theme of two events

In October, the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) plans two events on peace in the Middle East.

A "Peace in the Middle East" rally begins at 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 14, at Franklin Park on Division at Garland.

The speaker is Sara Rich, the mother of Spc. Suzanne Swift, who refused re-deployment to Iraq where she had been sexually harassed by her commanders and who continues to suffer sexual harassment at Ft. Lewis while she awaits a possible court martial.

The rally will "say no" to war in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Palestine, to torturing prisoners and to sexual abuse in the military. It will urge rebuilding international relationships.

Barbara Lubin, the founder and director of the Middle East Children's Alliance will talk about her work bringing medical supplies and food to children in Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon at 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 12, at St. Ann's Catholic Parish Hall, 2120 E. First.

Her presentation, "Crossing the Lines: Children as First Victims," is the second in a three-month PJALS series on Palestine.

For information, call 838-7870.

and commissions to improve lives and circumstances of the marginalized and powerless.

Barb Richardson will be honored for her professional work helping the Spokane School District move toward equitable opportunities for students.

In arts and culture, the YWCA will celebrate Kay Lester's work

in video production and as one of the founders of First Night Spokane.

Eva Lassman will receive the Carl Maxey Racial Justice Award for her 10 years of sharing her story of pain, hunger, fear and loss in the Holocaust as a way to say hate in any form is unacceptable.

For information, call 326-1190.

## Calendar of Events

- Oct 5**
  - The Fig Tree Board, 3220 S. Grand, 9 a.m.
  - PeaceWorks, 35 W. Main, 5:30.
- Oct 6**
  - "Loose Change, Second Edition," film, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr., 6:30 p.m. - 466-5986.
  - Iranian slides, food and music, celebration for *Anahita's Woven Riddle* by Meghan Nuttall Sayres, 35 W. Main - 7:30 p.m.
- Oct 7**
  - Annual Mennonite Country Auction and Relief Sale, Menno Church Grounds, Rural Ritzville, breakfast at 7-9:30 a.m., booths open 10 a.m., auction at noon.
  - Spokane River Clean-up, High Bridge Park, booths, activities, food, music, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Oct 9-11**
  - Turner Lectures, "America and the Theocratic Vision," the Rev. Hubert Locke of the University of Washington School of Public Affairs, Englewood Christian Church, Yakima - 966-6550
- Oct 10**
  - Spokane Citizens for a Living Wage, 35 W. Main, 5 p.m.
- Oct 11**
  - "The Browning of America: Immigration, Integration and Incarnation," the Rev. Noel Castellanos of Latino Leadership Foundation, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 8 p.m. - 777-3275
- Oct 12**
  - Palestine, The Forgotten People, Part II, Barbara Lubin, Middle East Children's Alliance, St. Ann's Parish Hall, 2120 E. First, 7 p.m.
  - "The Church and Globalization," John Coleman, SJ, Loyola Marymount, Catholicism for the New Millennium, Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University, 7:30 p.m.
  - "Celebrate Simply," Wisdomworks, St. Pius Faith and Formation Building, Coeur d'Alene, 1 p.m. or 6:30 p.m.
- Oct 13**
  - Habitat-Spokane Raise the Roof Auction, Northern Quest Casino, p. 2
- Oct 13-15**
  - Retreat on Passion of the Earth Art/Poetry Project, Teresa Jackson, OSB, Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho - 208-962-3224
- Oct 14**
  - "Call for Peace in the Middle East," Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane rally, Franklin Park, Division at Garland, 1 p.m.
- Oct 16**
  - School of the Americas Watch, 35 W. Main, 5:30 pm.
  - "Speaking Our Truth," panel discussion of Call to Action Spokane, Sacred Heart, 219 E. Rockwood, 7 p.m. - 624-9869
- Oct 18, 19**
  - "What's So Wise about These Wisdom Years?" 18th: St. Joseph's Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, 19th: St. Pius Faith and Formation Building, 625 E. Haycraft, Coeur d'Alene, 10 a.m. to noon
- Oct 19**
  - "The Spiritual Crisis in America: The Dynamic of Human Reconciliation," Community Partnership program with Rabbi Michael Lerner, Na'im Akbar and Guadalupe Lara, Martin Center, Gonzaga University, 7 p.m. - 359-4370, ext. 4383
  - PeaceWorks, 35 W. Main, 5:30p.m.
- Oct 24**
  - United Nations Day Banquet, Mukogawa Commons, 5:30 p.m.
- Oct 25**
  - "No More Bull!" Howard Lyman, Montana rancher-turned vegetarian, KYRS, 35 W. Main, 6:30 p.m.
  - "Lifting up One Voice Against Abuse," Abuse Recovery Ministry and Services, Hillyard Baptist Church, 21221 E. Wabash, noon luncheon - 484-000
- Oct. 30**
  - YWCA Luncheon, New Convention Center, noon
- Nov 1**
  - Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave., 9 a.m.
- Nov 2**
  - Fig Tree Board, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 9 a.m.
- Nov 3**
  - NAACP Annual Banquet, Northern Quest Casino, 5 p.m.
  - Film: "Iraq For Sale: The War Profiteers," by Robert Greenwald, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m.
- Tues**
  - Need to Know, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 314 S. Spruce.
- Tues-Sat**
  - Habitat-Spokane work days - call 534-2552
- Fridays**
  - Colville Peace Vigil - call 675-4554
- 1st Sat**
  - Ministers' Fellowship Union - call 624-0522
- 2nd, 4th Weds**
  - Pax Christi, St. Joseph's Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, noon
- 3rd Mons**
  - NAACP - call 467-9793

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# Mentors help youth with disabilities see more than their limitations

When a 1982 motorcycle accident left Ray Lancaster with prospects of being confined to a wheel chair, he decided he could and would live a good life in a wheel chair.

"That was the moment I decided to live," he said.

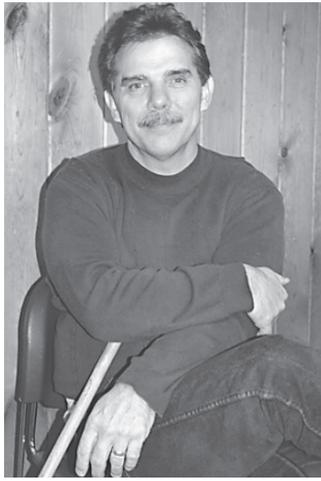
Now through volunteering as a mentor with a 20-year-old developmentally disabled special-ed high school student with Project MOVE (Mentoring Opportunities for Vocation and Education), he hopes he can help that young man realize how much he has to offer. Ray said his experience motivates him to connect with someone facing limitations.

With a broken back, he lost sensation below his chest. He spent four months in the hospital, told he would never walk again.

His life and self-image changed as a young man who had worked in construction, mining and ranching in Nevada and California.

One day Ray, who grew up in Spokane and graduated from Ferris High, noticed he could move a leg. Now he walks with a cane.

After redirecting his life, he earned a degree in urban and regional planning in 1993 at Eastern Washington University.



Ray Lancaster

Since then he has worked two years with the City of Cheney, a year with the City of Medical Lake, seven years in economic development programs with the Spokane Neighborhood Action Program, a year with Mayor John Powers of Spokane and three years with Skils-kin, providing services for people with developmental disabilities.

As one of 11 volunteer mentors with Project MOVE, Ray seeks to help his mentee consider options and issues after high school, as he transitions into college or

employment. He is encouraging the student, a "bright, motivated young man," to try to enter regular classes so he can pursue college.

"The fresh set of eyes a mentor brings can help someone see possibilities," Ray said.

Kerry Whitsett, community outreach specialist with Community-Minded Enterprises and Project MOVE, said the program is funded by a grant from the Department of Education and is a collaborative effort with the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment, University of Washington's Center for Disability Policy and Research, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Inland Northwest.

These partners believe "a healthy relationship with a caring adult is often the factor that will enable otherwise vulnerable 16- to 21-year-olds to succeed."

Project Move has seven mentor-mentee matches and four mentors ready to be matched with youth. Of 19 youth waiting for mentors, 13 are men and six are women.

Mentors meet with the youth one to two hours at least twice a month for a year, and talk on the phone. Because Project MOVE is a research project, mentors record

and turn in activity reports.

"It's about creating relationships that may extend beyond the program if they are genuine," Ray said.

"Mentors are not expected to solve people's problems, but to encourage them and offer guidance," Kerry added. "Informal mentors in our lives provide an example to follow or offer words of support during our struggles."

Ray said that although youth with disabilities are mainstreamed in school, "there's a gap for people with disabilities to integrate into society. Services drop away after high school. More than 70 percent of people with disabilities are unemployed."

He hopes to learn about limits systems can place on people.

"I like helping people find opportunities to better their lives and enter the mainstream," he said. "Often people carry the label of their disability and the focus is on what they can't do. This is a chance to help people focus on their abilities."

"People internalize what are told they can't do. It's often what they become. Some are frustrated, wanting to do more than bag groceries," Ray explained.

Project MOVE looks at people's skills and potential, rather than their limitations.

"We want to help people focus on something greater than themselves and their issues," he said.

Ray has experienced people who see his physical limitations and make assumptions. He has learned, however, not to assume they are making assumptions.

"Once a woman began quizzing me about my disability. I thought it was intrusive and rude," he said. "Then she said she asked because she was just diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and wondered what might be ahead for her."

For him, faith is a factor—with background in Presbyterian and later Unitarian congregations—as he continues to search for possibilities in himself and around himself, "to see something greater than the day-to-day world."

Ray said that when he decided to live, he trusted he would be okay and have a good life.

Project MOVE organizers are available to meet with churches and community groups to inform them of the program and opportunities to recruit volunteers.

For information, call 444-3088, ext. 219.

# Generosity of 'angels' help Our Place meet needs that arise for clients

By Deidre Jacobson

Aware that "angels" seem to come through with generosity to meet needs that arise at Our Place means co-director Peggy Sammons spends less time worrying how needs that arise will be met.

"I used to worry and twit about it," she said.

Our Place, the neighborhood ecumenical outreach ministry in West Central Spokane, has served people for more than 20 years.

Peggy's co-director Sister Ann Pizelo, SNJM, was director for the Sisters of the Holy Names Washington Province from 2000 until August, when she came to Our Place.

Peggy focuses on day-to-day operations, while Ann oversees the renovation of the facility, building relationships in the community and fostering volunteers.

Currently, 60 volunteers assist four part-time staff.

"Our volunteers demonstrate Christian charity on a daily basis. We depend on them, and they are faithful," said Sister Ann.

Sister Ann, who grew up in Spokane, served in the Sisters of the Holy Names as a teacher and principal in western Washington.

Her example of ministry to those in need comes from her father, an immigrant from Italy.

He owned a grocery store in Spokane and regularly gave food to those in need. He spent hours in the Christmas season wrapping food baskets for the poor.

In 1990, Sister Ann became the pastor at St. Joseph's Parish, and served on Our Place's board of directors.

Peggy, the mother of three and grandmother of four, grew up in Montana and moved to Spokane to work as a stay-at-home mom until her youngest was in sixth grade. She then began her career as a cosmetologist, serving shut-ins and group homes before becoming assistant director of Our Place for five years.

She became interim director prior to becoming co-director last fall.

Our Place began in a building near Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. Overwhelming response to the services meant the building was soon outgrown.

In 2000, it moved to its current location at 1509 W. College, where Our Place rented half of the building.

When their co-renters moved, a

donation made it possible for Our Place to purchase the building.

The increased space allowed for installation of a laundry facility with two commercial washers and dryers, and the expansion of the food and clothing areas, the classroom and welcoming area.

In a client survey, the most frequently listed need had been for laundry facilities. More than half the clients don't have their own transportation. Without a washer and dryer at home, doing laundry becomes a burden.

People who come for help can receive five articles of clothing per family member, once a week, from the clothing bank; 25 pounds of food per person, once a month; a bag of hygiene products, bus tokens or a gas voucher twice a year and one-time utility assistance.

Every Tuesday, the Washington State University Extension staff teaches a cooking class. About 14 clients attend.

"The need is clearly increasing," Peggy said. "Last year we served 4,898 households with about 14,000 people. We are seeing more working people.

Almost half of our clients are on fixed incomes, disabled or elderly. We serve increasing numbers of homeless people."

Sister Ann said Our Place has a morning ritual of prayer: "Clients in the waiting room, volunteers and staff join hands. We begin our day in prayer. Staff and volunteers try to walk in the moccasins of the people we serve."

Our Place always needs dona-

tions of food, clothing, hygiene and paper products, diapers—anything people need to live—and funds for renovation, she said.

Churches that support and provide resources for the ministry are St. Paul's Methodist, St. Joseph's Catholic, Salem Lutheran, Westminster Presbyterian, Knox Presbyterian, Central Baptist and Jefferson Street Christian.

For information, call 326-7267.

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