



Eastern Washington-Idaho

Synod supplement

# Area Lutheran churches build affordable housing

By Caitlin R. Manz

Lutheran congregations are banding together and working with other denominations and community groups to create affordable housing in Northwest communities.

Throughout Eastern Washington there is a need for both low-income and senior housing.

In the early 1990s, an ecumenical consortium in the Tri-Cities recognized an unmet need in the community and brought local churches together to help find solutions.

The Shalom Ecumenical Center began working on affordable housing to fulfill a vision started in 1994 when leaders of Richland Lutheran Church and All Saints Episcopal Parish saw a need for retirement housing for low-income senior citizens in their area. SEC was incorporated and took on the project in 1996.

Richland and All Saints became member organizations, along with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. With money provided by the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, SEC began a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development housing project for a low-income senior, independent living facility.

In October 2002, residents moved into the Tri-Cities Terrace I. But this was only the beginning. In April 2005, Tri-Cities Terrace II was available for more low-income senior residents.

In 2007, SEC also completed a low-income facility to house 15 developmentally disabled and low-income adults.

Most recently, SEC opened another 45 low-income senior units called Edison Terrace-West in Kennewick, Wash. It was dedicated June 25. The group also hopes to include more housing for the developmentally disabled at the Edison Terrace site, with a proposal submitted to HUD in July.

Good Shepherd is no longer a SEC member. But Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Kennewick is currently part of the SEC, as well as Riverview United Methodist Church in Pasco, Wash.

## Spokane development

In Spokane, five Lutheran churches and a nonprofit housing organization have formed Spokane Urban Ministries. Emmanuel, Grace, St. Paul, Holy Trinity and Salem Lutheran churches are working with the nonprofit Salem Arms to create affordable housing.

Work is under way at two sites in Spokane's West Central neighborhood, adjacent to Salem, on a project called Walnut Corners. The 47-unit project, costing \$9.3 million, will offer apartments for individuals and families who fall between 30 percent



KIMBERLY MANZ

**Walnut Corners is being built across the street from Salem Lutheran Church in Spokane.**

and 60 percent on the poverty level for annual income. Construction began Aug. 2 and is expected to be completed in June 2009.

"Salem and its partners in SUM recognize that the call we have to ministry is a call to be present with our neighbors and to work with them in addressing all of our needs for healthy neighborhoods and relationships," said the Rev. Tom Soeldner of Salem.

"We all understand that this is part of following Jesus in his work of bringing wholeness to human life and mending the stretched and tattered fabric of our society," he added.

In Leavenworth, Faith Lutheran

Housing, continued on page B

December 2008 A

# Eastern Washington-Idaho

Housing, *continued from page A*

Church is part of another community effort to minister to families in need by helping provide affordable housing.

SHARE (Securing Housing on Affordable Real Estate), a community land trust, worked with MEND (Meeting Each Need with Dignity) in Leavenworth to build homes in two different developments.

Families eligible for the three- to four-bedroom homes in Alpine Heights and Aldea Village have incomes below 80 percent of the median income of the county. Alpine Heights, the first project, finished in 2002 with an average cost of \$112,000 to each family. The 2006-finished Aldea Village, which cost families about \$130,000 each, has 10 units.

These units are sold, but the land is owned by MEND, "thus keeping the cost forever 'affordable,'" said the Rev. Alex Schmidt of Faith.

Another 10 to 15 houses or apartment buildings are planned to break ground in Leavenworth by spring 2010.

Schmidt said offering these quality, affordable housing options is important because many families who work in the resort town of Leavenworth are unable to afford houses in an area with high property values.

While Faith didn't begin the proj-

*Housing, continued on page D*

**Alpine Heights is part of a community effort to provide affordable housing in the resort community of Leavenworth, Wash.**

MARGIE SIMMONS



## Providing housing for seniors in their communities

By Caitlin R. Manz

**H**ousing for seniors is a great need in many communities.

In Idaho, two church-supported projects aim to offer senior housing at market rates.

Luther Park at Sandpoint (Idaho), a \$14.9 million project, and The Beacon at Southridge, an estimated \$40 million senior housing development in Meridian, Idaho, will both include catered living apartments and memory care units to help Alzheimer's patients.

The Rev. David Olson of First Lutheran in Sandpoint calls the Luther Park project "a long-term dream" of the congregation, an idea that first emerged in 1960, when the church moved to its current location in Sandpoint.

Planning for Luther Park at Sandpoint began in July 2005, with a groundbreaking in September 2007.

At presstime, occupancy of Luther Park was set for Dec. 1.

Offering 60 catered living apartments and 27 memory care units, which will be a secure Alzheimer's wing, Luther Park was built on land donated by First. The income from resident leases will pay for the cost of the development.

"The congregation is very supportive and excited about the ministry that is being created," Olson said. The members also provide leadership for Luther Park with a board of directors.

The significance of this senior housing project is, first and foremost, the great need that exists for such living spaces, Olson said.

"Secondly, it enables our congregation to minister to the broader community in a very significant way, and thirdly, we have, within the Lutheran



ARTIST'S RENDERING

**Walnut Corners will provide retail space and affordable housing in Spokane's West Central neighborhood.**

church, the resources and abilities to not only do this, but do it extremely well," he added.

The Sandpoint community has been very supportive, Olson said. In fact, prior to the groundbreaking ceremony, all the catered living units were leased.

Double the size of the Luther Park project is another Idaho senior housing development, The Beacon at Southridge in Meridian. Planning on the 139 catered living apartments and 48 memory care units began in September 2007. The project also has future plans to possibly add up to 48 independent living apartments.

The Beacon at Southridge, a project started by the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod, will also be senior housing at market rates. Just like Luther Park, it will "be financially self-sustaining and fully financed," Olson said.

Groundbreaking is planned for

Seniors, *continued on page D*

## Bringing good will to the earth as 'God's Beloved People'

**G**od's Beloved People, A friend remarked recently that she liked that I addressed each of these columns "God's Beloved People." I told her that it wasn't original to me, but that I had learned this form of address from the Rev. Cliff Lunde, former president and bishop of the ALC North Pacific District.

It was true for me then, and I'm glad it is true for my friend now, that this form of address carries an intimacy and compassion that seems hard to come by in this world of ours. I could hear the soft voice and see the round and generous smile of Cliff Lunde every time I read his words! You are to me, and will remain "God's Beloved People," not because of my affection, though that is certainly present and I hope generously felt. More to the point, you are "God's Beloved People" because God has declared you so. In Jesus this embrace has been extended in time and space to you, for you, once for all time, but repeated in each greeting.

It's so important right now, isn't it? Life is getting a little bumpy for many of us and an absolute free-fall for others. All around us pillars of life-as-we-knew-it are folding up and being discarded. The world is reorganizing itself for the next period of human relationships in a natural world pressed and taxed as never before.

A new president will soon be inaugurated, and we pray for this leader and all the leaders of the human family. But presidents have no call or command to regard you as "God's Beloved People." They must work from the "law" end of the law/gospel spectrum and push with demand and force to ensure a safe life for all.

It makes it all the more important that we who are baptized into Christ be for one another "God's Beloved People." What's more, it makes it so important that we regard the rest of the human family as "God's Beloved People" as well. Only through the all-consuming passion of Christ can this love be extended.

In this season when we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, I hope you will prepare for this birth with an outpouring of generosity and good will for the whole human family, and in particular for those who may have never known such love and grace. This is our call as "God's Beloved People."

Blessed Advent!  
Pr. Martin Wells  
Bishop



# Eastern Washington-Idaho

## Synod shorts

Housing, *continued from page B*

ect, the church was “critical for its formation and the current ongoing program,” Schmidt said. Parishioners have “been supportive in thought, word and deed,” he added.

SHARE, under director Marggie Simmons since 2007, has used its committee to finish a market study of Leavenworth. Schmidt said the survey involved more than 65 local businesses and institutions, employing 1,600 workers. This effort included one-on-one personal surveys with the businesses. Employers also gathered information using employee surveys. “The purpose essentially was to determine the type of quality, affordable housing that is needed here in our town,” Schmidt said.

In addition, Schmidt said they plan to work with the local government to initiate future directives or incentives for Leavenworth developers who offer their own quality, affordable housing.

“Our ELCA has made it very clear, and Faith is supportive, that we as a church need to be involved in the public square—doing the justice we believe is central to the gospel and, therefore, needs to be integral to our ministries,” Schmidt said. □

*Manz attends St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Spokane.*

Seniors, *continued from page C*

spring 2009, with hopes for seniors to move into the units in fall 2010.

“It is one way that we respond to the Great Commandment—to love our neighbor as our self. It is about ‘honoring Father and Mother that our days may be long in the land the Lord God has given us.’ It’s about offering seniors the opportunity to age with grace within the context of a Christ-centered community,” Olson said. □

### Stewards of creation

St. Mark’s Lutheran, Spokane, formed the Care of Creation Committee to help the congregation be better stewards of the environment.

The group’s mission statement is: “We acknowledge God as the source of all things and accept our vocation as earth-keepers who care for creation.”

The committee is based on recommendations from the ELCA. Its goal is to work with the church leadership to infuse an ethic of earth care into all the congregation does, including worship, education, building and grounds, individual life at home and work, and public ministry.

### All-ages brunch

Also at St. Mark’s, the congregation planned to host a multigenerational brunch. Fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade classes were asked to invite a person from another generation to attend with them.

Food and a faith talk were on the menu.

### Here’s the scoop

Lutheran Church of the Master in Pasco, Wash., hosted an ice cream fellowship in a city park this summer. In order to include all residents, members of the congregation knocked on doors for more than an hour before the event and invited their neighbors.

### We gather together

In July more than 30 women from the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod went to Salt Lake City for the Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering (photo below). The theme for the gathering was “Come to the Waters.”

While there the women worshiped, learned from speakers and workshops, and had the opportunity to quilt or put together health kits for Lutheran World Relief.

The next gathering is in Spokane, Wash., in July 2011. More than 200 women preregistered for the Spokane event while in Salt Lake City. For more information, go to [www.womenofthelca.org](http://www.womenofthelca.org). □



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAMIE EVERS

**Women from the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod pose with members of their sister synod while at the Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering in Salt Lake City in July.**