

RELIGION

Metro Assembly Celebrates Diversity

Has long history serving many cultures

You've heard the old saying about Sunday mornings being the most segregated time of the week in America. There may be more truth to that than many people would like to admit.

But in the heart of Portland, there's a church that has attracted members of many backgrounds and colors and has been embracing its diversity for years.

"I guess we take that for granted," said John Marvin, pastor of Portland Metro Assembly of God, which meets at 5004 N.E. Sixth Ave. "We don't tend to see the color. We tend to see people. It is not that we are colorblind but we celebrate diversity in our congregation."

Marvin said the mix of people from such heritages as Jamaican, African, Caucasian and African American "just adds richness ... a certain flavor you don't usually find in many churches. I think di-



Rev. John and Sarah Marvin of the Portland Metro Assembly of God church.

versity helps you to learn more about the Kingdom of God since all cultures are needed to reflect the image of God."

The church blends music of many styles to reflect the tastes and backgrounds of the congregation. Contemporary music, Gospel songs and more are part of Sunday morning worship services.

"We are racially diverse, but I think we are culturally together," said Marvin. "We're family; we are brothers and sisters. There is a culture that transcends all cultures, the culture of the Kingdom."

He attributes the dividedness at many churches on people fearing "things we don't know, and we go

where we are more comfortable. Once we get to know one another then the walls of division tend to come down."

For information about Portland Metro Assembly of God, visit the web at portlandmetrochurch.org or e-mail Pastor John Marvin at pastor@portlandmetrochurch.org or call him at 503-287-4825.

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In Loving Memory

Nelson Zapata

Nelson Eduardo Zapata, 60, died Sept. 13, 2007, in San Antonio, Texas, after a brief illness.

He was preceded in death by his father, Eli Zapata Inostroza. Survivors include his wife, Lisa Elizabeth Zapata; children, Debbie Eurich, David, Danny and Derek Zapata; six grandchildren; mother, Guillermina Quinones de Zapata; sisters and brother, Elizabeth Koll, David Zapata and Susan Zapata.

A service was held Saturday, Sept. 15 at Porter Loring Mortuary North Chapel in San Antonio. Interment followed in Hill Country Memorial Gardens, New Braunfels, Texas. Memorial contributions may be made in Nelson's name to Parkhills Baptist Church, 17747 San Pedro Ave., San Antonio, Texas.



Nebraska Senator Sues God

(AP) -- The defendant in a Nebraska state senator's lawsuit is accused of causing untold death and horror and threatening to cause more still. He can be sued, the legislator claims, because He's everywhere.

State Sen. Ernie Chambers, angered by another lawsuit he considers frivolous, says he's trying to make the point that anybody can file a lawsuit against anybody.

Chambers says in his lawsuit that God has made terroristic threats against the senator and his constituents, inspired fear and caused "widespread death, destruction and terrorization



Ernie Chambers

of millions upon millions of the Earth's inhabitants."

The Omaha senator, who skips morning prayers during the legislative session and often criticizes Christians, also says God has caused "fearsome floods... horrendous hurricanes, terrifying tornadoes."

He's seeking a permanent injunction against the Almighty.

Chambers said the lawsuit was triggered by a federal suit filed against a judge who recently barred words such as "rape" and "victim" from a sexual assault trial.

Law Enforcement Sunday

A local chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives invites the community to join them with law enforcement, criminal justice and elected officials for a special

service on Sept. 23 at 10 a.m. at Maranatha Church, 4222 N.E. 12th Ave. Law enforcement and criminal justice officials are asked to wear their uniforms or court attire with their badges. For information, call Vera Pool of the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office at 503-988-3442.

Families Make Lents Home

continued ▲ from Metro

barbecue a couple days before. Jeffery Wood was one of the residents solidifying his own ideas about the nature of low-income housing at the event, as he reminisced on the negative impression he had previously had.

The area had been nicknamed "Felony Flats," but, as they ate grilled food in their new courtyard, they challenged anyone in the city to see a real felony in the shortage of responsibly managed, low-income apartments.

"The neighborhood barbecue is really going to encourage people from the neighborhood to come in and see that these are who their neighbors are, not an idea that they have in their head of who they think that they are going to be," says Mackendree Thompson, a ROSE coordinator. "In an organization such as this that does so much work with low-income people in a community where people tend to have a negative impression of who that community is, it is important to encour-



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Their parents haven't yet met, but Fatuma Kabiri and Elizabeth Wood quickly become friends on the new Leander Court playground in Lents.

age everyone on both sides to meet each other and to understand that really what we're talking about are people, some of them single mothers, and all of them, especially in this complex, are families who need a place to live."

Designed expressly for the

needs of working families with children, the complex consisting primarily of three- and four-bedroom apartments at 4620 SE 122nd includes two daycare facilities and a large outdoor play area.

Standing for Revitalize Outer South East, the 15-year-old organization strives to build and acquire affordable homes and rental units for those who would otherwise not be able to afford their own home.

"We're making the entire neighborhood better by providing them a home that's safe and secure," Thomson says. "Providing a home for somebody is a first step towards helping them become a more constructive member of society."

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