

BELIEFS Values

CWU celebrate world prayer day

BY RENA FULKA
SPECIAL WRITER

When Lisa Ahijevych of Southfield was plunked in the middle of an Australian rainforest to study cultural ecology, her thoughts quickly drifted to church celebrations she used to enjoy with her mother at home.

"The first person she saw was a woman putting up a poster for the World Day of Prayer," said Karen Ahijevych, the Cornell University student's mother. "It was the same poster we have hanging up in our church advertising it."

On Friday, March 6, the Oakland County mother and daughter will offer their prayers from across the globe as they celebrate the Church Women United event in cooperation with millions of Christian women from 170 countries.

The local observance of the Birmingham unit begins at 10 a.m. with coffee and conversation at the First Baptist Church, 300 Willits, in Birmingham. The one-hour service follows at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. It is written by the Christian women of Madagascar based on the theme, "Who is my Neighbor?"

"It's an anointing with oil service and as we do it, we speak to each other saying, 'You are my neighbor,'" said event coordinator Barbara Diederich of Franklin, a member of the host church. "A lot of the prayers are for health and against the violence of women and children around the world, which is one of the goals of Church Women United."

Ahijevych is one of eight Oakland County women leading the 11th annual service, which features songs and prayers from the tropical island country in the Indian Ocean. The guest speaker is Hazel Boltwood of Southfield, director of Detroit American Baptist Churches. The soloist is Carol Olsen of Birmingham. Boltwood and Olsen are members of the host church. The event is expected to draw 100



Prayers: Luanne Fisher, Karen Ahijevych and Barbara Diederich of the First Baptist Church of Birmingham will join millions of Christian women from 170 countries in the World Day of Prayer.

local women.

"I love it because of the ecumenism," said Diederich, a CWU member for 25 years. "Everyone comes from a different background. They practice their Christianity in different ways, but we're basically all the same in our hopes and desires."

Church Women United is an international movement of diverse Christian women who have been joining together to express their spirituality for more than a century.

Organized in 1937, the Birmingham unit now includes 26 congregations in Bloomfield Hills, Farmington Hills, Franklin, Pontiac, Royal Oak, Southfield, Troy, Waterford and West Bloomfield.

The organization's three annual global events are held in a dif-

ferent Oakland County church each time.

World Day of Prayer originated in 1987 as a day to reflect on "confession of individual and national sins with offerings that fitly express the contrition."

Members are encouraged to make the event a time of "informed prayer and prayerful action." A portion of the day's free will offering will be used for grant projects in Madagascar.

A member of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Bloomfield Hills, Ahijevych joined the CWU Birmingham unit 10 years ago and often brought her daughter along to share the experience.

"I was impressed with the women I met," said Ahijevych, who currently serves as the group's treasurer. "I think it's a wonderful organization. There's

always something to learn."

Communications chairwoman Luanne Fisher of Bloomfield Township has continued her affiliation with the group since serving as a delegate from Northminster Presbyterian Church in Troy a decade ago.

"I like meeting different women and attending different churches and knowing we can all do things together," said Fisher. "And the feeling that the same service is being done all over the world."

World Day of Prayer begins at 10 a.m. on Friday, March 6, at the First Baptist Church, 300 Willits, Birmingham. The church is handicap accessible.

Drop-ins are welcome. Childcare is not available. For information, call Karen at (248) 644-0550.

Shir Tikvah fund-raiser will go for new building

The firm of Alan Frank and Associates located in Bloomfield Hills has been chosen as creative designers by Congregation Shir Tikvah for its fund-raiser - the Detroit premier of RENT at the Fisher Theatre on Wednesday, April 28.

Congregation Shir Tikvah is the only Jewish congregation in the Detroit metropolitan area east of Woodward.

After years of renting space in various religious locations, it is building a permanent home at the corner of Wattles and Northfield Parkway in Troy.

RENT to OWN, the campaign designed by Alan Frank and Associates, promotes the benefit premiere performance of RENT.

Winner of the 1996 Tony for best musical and the Pulitzer Prize, RENT is sold out on Broadway.

Honorees for the evening will be Sam and Jenn Frankel.

They have been instrumental in the development of the business climate in Troy.

The RENT to OWN campaign includes invitations, the program book and an ad campaign.

All proceeds from the Detroit premiere of RENT will go toward a new building for Congregation Shir Tikvah's.

Call the Shir Tikvah fund-raising line at (248) 706-1703 for tickets, to place an ad and for other information.

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