

# Raising Awareness & Fundraising for our Sister Parish Relationships



Within the Sister Parish family, committee members work hard year-round to raise awareness of the Sister Parish Mission and Vision and stand in solidarity with their sister community. Additionally, committee members fundraise to maintain their sister parish relationships.

This resource contains activities and events from your fellow Sister Parish communities and other grassroots organizations. A supplemental booklet includes additional resources for the activities and events described in this document.

We recognize and deeply appreciate all you do. We hope these ideas will help you, and please don't hesitate to contact Sister Parish staff for additional support, as needed.

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## AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

### Prayer Program

Idea submitted by Bob Howell

Members of Danville Congregational Church and San Antonio Catholic Church implemented a prayer program agreed upon during the 2014 South to North visit. Members of both congregations have been encouraged to identify prayer concerns focused on accomplishing the Sister Parish Vision and raise those concerns before God, during both personal and communal prayer life. The prayer program aims to accomplish the following goals:

- To lift up the Sister Parish Vision before the members of both congregations, thereby helping them become more aware of and committed to this important ministry of the two churches.
- To help members become more aware the sources of injustice and oppression of concern to the members of the two churches.
- To help invoke the power of God in resolving the concerns raised by members of the two congregations.

To further stimulate commitments of each congregation's members to become engaged in actions focused building the Kingdom of God.

Participation in the prayer program has been solicited through fliers (see Supplemental Booklet), emailed announcements and articles in the church's newsletter. The prayer concerns have been collected during the Sunday offering and listed in a section of the Sunday bulletin, distributed through email and the church's newsletter.

## Prayer Partners

Submitted by Nancy Wiens

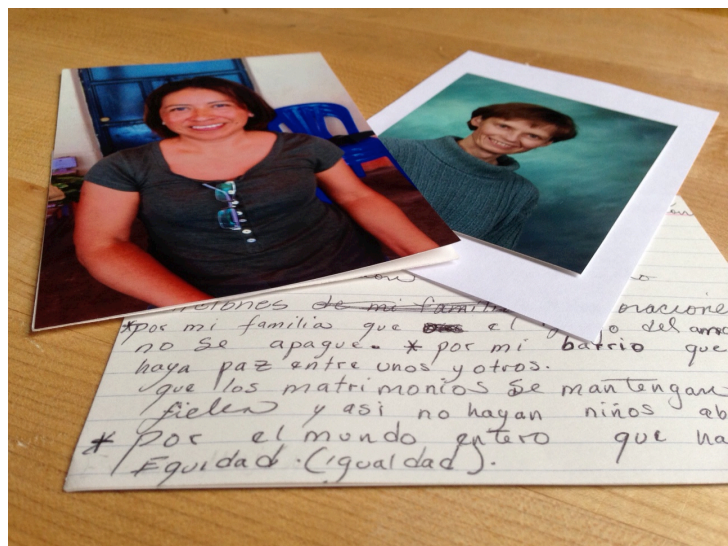
Parishioners at St. Joan of Arc church are invited to be prayer partners with parishioners at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Tierra Nueva II, Guatemala. It's a simple process. First, a photo of each participant is glued to the back of an index card on which the person has written his/her name, a brief description of himself/herself, and (if desired) special prayer requests. The cards are exchanged North to South in "pairs", so that if Mary in the North gets the photo of Alberta in the South, then Alberta gets Mary's photo too. People pray for each other as they wish. It is a surprisingly powerful connection.

Here are some of the comments from the program:

"I put my prayer partner's photo next to my reading/ meditation chair, and I pray for her every day." (Northern participant)

"I feel more connected to our Sister Parish because of having my prayer partner." (Southern participant)

"Every morning I think of my prayer partner when I see her photo tucked in the corner of my mirror." (Northern participant)



## Book Group

Submitted by Nancy Wiens

Occasionally, the Sister Parish committee at St. Joan of Arc will invite SJA parishioners to participate in a book group. A book is chosen, a discussion leader is selected, a series of discussion dates are picked and promoted in the weekly bulletin, and people get together to discuss and reflect on the readings. The books usually focus on historical, social and spiritual aspects related to Central America or solidarity. Here are two examples of books we've chosen:

Through A Glass Darkly: The U.S. Holocaust in Central America by Thomas R. Melville

Joy of The Gospel by Pope Francis – with a focus on sections of this encyclical relating to the Pope's views on solidarity



## Children's Art Exchange

Submitted by Sarah Jerde

Prior to a North to South Delegation in 2011, children of the First United Methodist drew pictures for the children of their sister parish in Potrerillos, El Salvador. The delegates delivered the pictures to the children of Potrerillos, and invited the Salvadoran children to create pictures to send back (with construction paper and crayons brought with the delegates).

The Northern delegates were amazed at how careful the Salvadoran children were with the crayons and paper; there was no grabbing or arguing over the supplies, as may have been commonplace with their northern counterparts.

The Duluth community has used coloring sheets with Salvadoran designs found here:

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/30301897/my-el-salvador-coloring-book-partners-with-el-salvador>





## Young People's Video Exchange

Submitted by Nancy Wiens

This project has been implemented jointly by the Sister Parish committees of St Joan of Arc and Tierra Nueva II, with generous community support. Both communities make and exchange simple videos and photos of children telling what they do to celebrate Easter. The communities feel indebted to the kindness and courage of the young people and their families who have participated in this project.

The objective has been to engage young people and their families in both communities to tell their stories, communicate and learn about each other. Another project goal has been to broaden the reach of their 21-year Sister Parish relationship to more people in both communities.

In each community, a couple of members of the SP committees use iPads, iPhones or borrowed video cameras to interview and record young people telling what they do on Easter and what it means to them. Many of the activities they participate in are also filmed. Some of the young people speak in Spanish. After editing on iMovie or similar computer software, the videos are shown to the communities in the North and South.
























## Children's daily activity calendar

Idea submitted by Sue Vogelmann

Sue Vogelmann, Children's minister at Trinity Episcopal, created a daily activity calendar to engage children during the Lenten Season. She titled it "Kids' Kindness Kalender." It was suggested to hang the calendar on the refrigerator during Lent. A coin collection can was obtained for each child in the family, and each child decorated his or her can. Families were encouraged to read and do the activities together. The coins collected were donated to the Episcopal Relief and Development, and was used to help children and families living in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Below is a sample of the daily calendar. The Supplemental Booklet contains the complete calendar.

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>14</b>  Make a card that says, I Love You and give it to someone you love.  Put a coin in your KK for every Valentine you received.	<b>15</b>  Call an elderly person and just say "Hi"!  Put a coin in your Kindness Kan for every older person you love.	<b>16</b>  Bring in some food for Food Pantry.  Put a coin in for each time you ate today. 
<b>21</b>  Over 1 billion people do not have access to clean water.  Put a coin in your KK for every drink you had today. 	<b>22</b>  Wash your hands before dinner without being asked.  Put 2 coins into the Kindness Kan in thanksgiving for soap and clean water.	<b>23</b>  Read about what it's like to live in El Salvador or Guatemala in a book, magazine or on the internet.  Pray for their children and families. 
<b>28</b>  Let someone else go in front of you in line today at school.  Put a coin in your Kindness Kan for all your friends.	<b>March 1</b>  Many children in Central America are hungry.  Try a meatless meal today and put 3 coins in your Kindness Kan.	<b>2</b>  Many children living in poverty have never even held a storybook.  Donate some of your extra or old books to the library in town.

## Recreating the Festival of St. Joseph

Idea submitted by Sue Vogelmann

Trinity Episcopal in Newtown, CT had an end of year celebration in honor of their linkage with San Jose la Montana, El Salvador. They recreated the Festival of St. Joseph in the way their delegation had experienced during their North to South visit.

During the event, a recording of Salvadoran music was played and tables were decorated with banana leaves and tropical flowers. A slide show of pictures was projected onto a large screen. Fruit, cheese, cake and freshly made pupusas were served. Here is a list of activities:

- Horse riding to catch the ring on a straw game (hobby horses and straws)
- Craft (made felt tropical birds)
- Letter writing to residents in their Sister Parish - letters were in Spanish with fill in the blanks.
- Teen area (a place for teens to hang out without little children or adults in the way)
- Creative drama kitchen center with tent overhead - little children pretended to make their own pupusas or tamales
- Posters to learn Spanish words were on display in the room and on the tables
- Photos of the people in their Sister Parish were printed out.



Making Pupusas



## Alfombra Project

Submitted by Greg Huang-Dale (More details available in the Supplemental Booklet)

This project was inspired by the community of St. Joan of Arc in Minneapolis, MN but originates in Guatemala where Christians of all stripes find common ground in laying a welcome carpet for Christ's entry into the Holy City, his violent end on the cross and the celebration of his Resurrection.



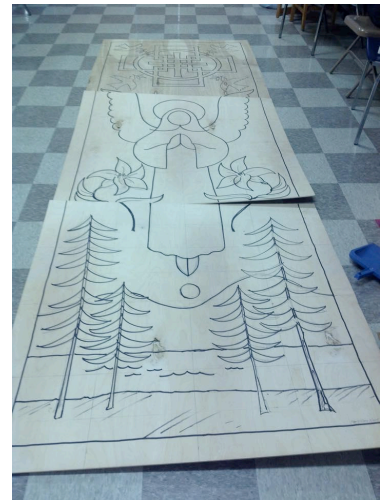
*One month ahead*

**Start with People.** Gather a group of about 6-8 to share the ideas of an Alfombra as a temporary art installation that both symbolizes the beauty and celebration of the season, but also the spirit of community coming together and sharing experience that is transformative. The Alfombra is a group activity for all ages and then it will be walked on and swept away afterwards. Encourage folks to photograph the process as well as the product.

*3 weeks ahead*

**Create an Image.** Use symbols of your church, symbols of your lives, nature, your faith, and your relationships

that highlights the values of your church community. Repeat small symbols along the sides or in small spaces around the central larger images. Smaller symbols can be easily made into cut out stencils and repeated from year to year as well. Discuss what colors would look good in each part of the image. Share the image with your congregation as a way to invite them into the process!



**Gather materials.** You will need the following materials and people to help out.



1. Large butcher paper or plywood to your preferred dimensions for the basic sketch of the image.
2. A frame (2x4 lumber) around the entire carpet to prevent spilling when walking through it.
3. Plastic sheeting or other floor covering that will make clean-up easier (especially if inside).
4. One or two large garbage bags of sawdust - coarse or fine depends on availability and preference. This can be found at a lumber yard or school woodshop. Fine sawdust will provide a softer look in the end. Coarse sawdust doesn't clump as much when you dye it and it is easy to hand "paint" when filling in image with colored sawdust.
5. Buckets or bags to transport sawdust in smaller amounts.
6. Latex paint, food coloring, fabric dyes or natural dyes. Experiment with what you have at home. Practice with some dyes ahead so you can tell others how much of what colors to use for the desired hues. This is not an exact science so experimentation can be fun and surprisingly successful.
7. Cardboard to cut out and use as stencils for images that are hard to color by hand.



*Two weeks ahead*

**Hand out Materials.** Plywood

Image and Frame: A few people should be assigned to draw the image on large paper or plywood. If you are doing it outside you might also try drawing it directly on the pavement with sidewalk chalk. Someone should take the task of building the frame. If you use plywood as the image surface the frame also serves to hold multiple pieces together.

Sawdust and Dyes: Delegate dyeing to people. They should take home a bucket or a bag of sawdust with an assigned color or dye. If one central person can hand out dyes or record what colors have been given out then you can be assured of having the colors you want on the assembly day.



*Palm Sunday (one week out); Traditionally done outside on Good Friday*

**Color the Image!** Finally, you are ready to start bringing your artwork to life. Folks who dyed sawdust will bring it to church so following worship a gathering of artists will come to help “paint” the carpet. Discuss or otherwise indicate what colors should go where on the large drawing. You may want to lay down a thin background layer of one color and build on top of it, or you may leave spaces on the drawing and come back to fill them in later. If you use course sawdust, you can easily push it around to the lines of your image and fill in other colors around it.

Precut cardboard stencils can make coloring much easier. For a large image you can lay a ladder across the frame and reach the middle without walking on the image. If you are doing it outside on a windy day you can use a gentle mister on a hose to hold the colored sawdust in place, or cover it for the night.



**Take an Easter Walk on the Alfombra.** Finally, your work is done and now you invite your church to walk joyfully into a new life that God calls us to join.

Take this chance to talk about your partnership with your sister community or with Sister Parish. Walking in solidarity with people in Central America and the traditions they hold sacred at this holy time of year.

Share stories, post pictures, sing songs!





## Skype Call with your Sister Parish

Your regional coordinator can arrange for a phone call or Skype call with member(s) of your sister parish, depending on access to phone/internet service. Consider planning a call during a meeting of your local Sister Parish committee, but you may want to try to practice the call ahead of time, and you may want to have a back-up plan in the event that technology fails.

## Sunday Morning Activities

Consider incorporating activities during your church's Sunday morning schedule: sing a hymn in Spanish (or just the refrain), recite a simple prayer in Spanish, share your experiences in Central America during Sunday School, teach the children songs in Spanish, project a slide show from a recent delegation during fellowship time.

## Dinner and Documentary Night

Many northern churches have hosted documentary nights as purely an awareness event, but it could also be planned as a fundraising event. There are many good documentaries available on Central America.

Here are a few which are available by contacting the Sister Parish US Coordinator:

- Generations in Solidarity <http://generationsinsolidarity.homestead.com>
- Through the Eyes of a Delegate

Other options include:

- Gold Fever <http://www.goldfevermovie.com>

It is advised that the host preview the documentary before the event. Certain themes may not be appropriate for children, and you may want to inform the attendees of any graphic scenes.

# FUNDRAISING EVENTS

## Recycled Art Sale

Idea Submitted by Suzanne Halvorson

St Thomas in Bloomington, IN joined forces with two neighboring faith communities for a recycled art sale. Members from all involved faith communities donated items. They tagged each congregation with a different color dot, so that the money went to the proper congregations. They even had people who did not belong to any of the congregations donate. For those items, there was a general fund that was split three ways.

The term art was broad. They asked that things be framed, such as posters. There were many originals. They also included sculpture, fiber art/textiles, ceramics, one of a kind jewelry, etc. One of the most successful items were art books. Many people have coffee table or text books that are no longer relevant to them. They did not include items from Ikea, Pier One, etc.

The event was held on a Sunday afternoon in late August in St Thomas' community room. St Thomas noted that a Sunday afternoon did not compete with rummage/garage sales. Also, one of their neighboring faith communities is a Synogog, so that is also a reason Sunday was chosen. The event also coincided with the return of college students to Indiana University (located in Bloomington). Refreshments were sold on the event, as well as fair trade coffee and chocolate.



A silent auction was held for very high priced items. We put a clip board with a minimum bid next to the item. The highest bidder at the end of the event won the bid.

Publicity included three days of classified ads in the yard sale section, emails, Facebook messages and signs around town. An article was published in the local paper because of the ecumenical nature of the event. An announcement was made at church (Supplemental Booklet).

After the sale, remaining items were donated to a shop whose profits provide scholarships for art students.

## Musica Dulce – an evening of outdoor music concerts

Submitted by Sarah Jerde

First United Methodist had a fundraising event called Musica Dulce (sweet music). The event took place on an evening in June, close to the solstice to take advantage of daylight. During the evening, participants enjoyed local musical groups, who performed in various garden locations.

About six to nine months in advance of the event, three host sites and three musical groups were identified. The hosts were not limited to members of the Sister Parish committee. The hosts had a nice yard with well-kept gardens. When identifying host sites, the traveling distance from one site to another was considered, because attendees had about 15 minutes to travel from one site to another. One year, a pavilion at a park was rented to serve as one of the host sites.



Three to four months before the event, advertising efforts began through the local newspapers, internet and word of mouth. An example flyer and poster are included in the supplemental booklet. Tickets were sold at the United Methodist church office as well as at a local business. Sister Parish members also sold tickets.

About two to three months before the event, a host site coordinator is identified (a member of the Sister Parish group) and a menu is planned. Light refreshments were served at each site. Examples include tortilla roll-ups and wine, sherbet and a cookie, dessert buffet, cheese & crackers. One week before the event, the host site coordinator contacted the host site to discuss the need for tables, extension cords, etc.



The Sister Parish committee asked for donations from the church members. These donations included desserts or other ingredients and monetary donations to help cover the costs of the musicians, wine, etc. If a monetary donation was made, complimentary tickets to the event were provided.

The evening of the event, guests arrived at each site according to the order on their ticket, so each musical group performed the same musical set three times for a different audience. United Methodist designed the tickets so there were different groups of people progressing to each site. (Example: ticket color red progressed to site A, B, C while ticket color yellow progressed to site A, C, B) So, there was an overlap of two ticket colors at each site, so participants had an opportunity to mingle with participants throughout the evening. This could be simplified based on expected attendance.

Before the first set of the evening, a one to two minute talk about Sister Parish was provided. At each site, pictures or memorabilia from Sister Parish delegations were displayed. There was 45 minutes allotted for each site, with the musicians performing for about 35–40 minutes. Attendees were welcomed to walk around the gardens as the musicians perform. There was 15 minute window for attendees to travel to the next site. Attendees were asked to bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on at each site. The rain location was the church, and each musical group would perform only one time for all the attendees.

## Irish Ceili: an Irish dance event

For many years, St Joan of Arc Catholic community hosted an Irish dance to raise funds for their Sister Parish committee. An Irish band played while dance instruction was provided. Snacks and crafts were sold. Children's activities were also incorporated.



## Fundraising Meals

Many churches have hosted fundraising meal events. First Lutheran in Duluth has hosted a Lutefisk, Meatball and Salmon meal inspired by their Scandanavian heritage. First United Methodist in Decorah has provided breakfast casseroles for church wide functions. First United has also hosted many taco/taco salad buffets, and has kept costs low by asking for produce donations from church members' gardens. Members at Incarnation Lutheran have hosted small, elegant dinner parties. Meals are a great opportunity to promote your Sister Parish relationship by displaying pictures and slide shows.

## Cinco de Mayo Event

Submitted by Ginnie Berge

Faith Lutheran in West Fargo, ND, hosted a Cinco de Mayo Celebration. This traditional Mexican celebration brought together Hispanic and other members of the West Fargo community to celebrate cultural diversity. Participants enjoyed a traditional Mexican dinner and fellowship. A silent auction raised funds to support their sister parish relationship. Both corporate and individual sponsorships helped to make the event profitable. Sponsors received complimentary tickets to the event. Other activities at the Celebration included: cake walk, merengue lessons and a pinata. The supplemental booklet includes: sponsor thank you letter, Celebration poster and a letter to solicit table sponsors and auction items.

## Benefit Concert

A benefit concert for St Thomas' Sister Parish relationship was held, featuring three musical groups. The event was held at the church in the fellowship hall. Doors opened at 7pm, the opening band performed at 7:30pm, the second band performed at 7:45pm, and the final band performed at 9pm. Tickets were sold for \$15 each.

## Craft/Chocolate/Coffee Sales

Several communities sell crafts made in Central America. Some communities sell fair trade coffee and chocolate.