

Fair-trade palms are the wave of the future

◀ PALMS FROM E14

The social justice aspect has organizations such as Baltimore-based Lutheran World Relief encouraging churches to purchase the eco-palms, which cost 22 cents a stem. Regular palms cost 12 to 60 cents a stem.

"It's similar to the well-known fair-trade coffee programs, but with one big difference," said the Rev. Glenn Berg-Moberg of St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church in St. Paul, whose 800-member congregation is buying eco-palms for the second year. "The palm is not farmed," he said. "It is from the forest. It provides steady income for the communities, and its existence protects the forest canopy."

The church had considered switching to silk fronds. But Current, a member of the congregation, explained the importance of retaining a market for the palm.

In last year's pilot sale, 5,000 fronds were purchased by 23 churches. This year's orders reached 68,000 fronds, supplying more than 230 churches, many in the Upper Midwest. Next year, organizers are hoping for a nationwide sale.

Grateful communities

In January, a Minnesota delegation visited the palm communities, where Rainforest Al-

liance staff member Juan Trujillo, a Carmelita native, explained his work. He teaches harvesters to cut only a few high-quality fronds from each plant every few months so that the palm can regenerate. Under old practices, 50 percent of the fronds were discarded because of poor quality. Now, only 5 to 7 percent are wasted. Fifteen women have new jobs sorting and packing the fronds — work that used to be done in distant warehouses by exporting companies.

"The women are so grateful for the sorting jobs," said Rae-Lynn Jones Loss, a "U" graduate student who was on the trip. Out of gratitude, she said, the village women invited the visiting Minnesotans into their homes and cooked chicken and vegetable soup for them. The vegetables, she noted, are a new commodity, purchased from vendors who travel long distances to the formerly impoverished village, drawn by the community's newfound prosperity.

Next in the works: a kitchen for the village school. "The community is so excited," said Jones Loss, transmitting the enthusiasm she'd caught from the villagers 2,000 miles away, on the other end of the trail of palm fronds.

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DEAN CURRENT • CINRAM — University of Minnesota

A girl from one of the palm-growing communities in the Peten region of Guatemala smiled amid eco-palms being sorted and stacked.

Tomlin big winner at Dove Awards

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Chris Tomlin took home artist of the year, male vocalist and song of the year honors at Wednesday's 37th annual Dove Awards.



Chris Tomlin

"I tried out in college for the singing group and the director said, 'You'll do anything in life but sing, Chris.' ...

So this is pretty cool," Tomlin said. His song "How Great Is Our God" won in both the song of the year and worship song categories.

Natalie Grant was named top female vocalist, her first Dove after several nominations. She said that when she was told she also had been nominated for artist of the year, she tried not to get too excited because "I thought they were going to call me

back and say it was Amy Grant."

David Crowder was a three-time winner, as was his David Crowder Band.

Steven Curtis Chapman won his 50th award, the most of any artist in gospel music history, for special event album of the year for a "Chronicles of Narnia" project.

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Catholic, Mormon and Pentecostal churches among the fastest growing

NEW YORK — The Assemblies of God, the Mormon church and the Roman Catholic Church were the fastest-growing major denominations in the United States last year, according to the just-released 2006 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches.

The Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal church, grew 1.81 percent to almost 2.8 million members. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints increased 1.74 percent to nearly 6 million people. And the Catholic Church, by

far the largest denomination in the United States, grew .83 percent to 67.8 million parishioners.

Only three mainline Protestant churches remain among the 10 biggest denominations in the country. The United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., stayed in the top 10 despite experiencing declines in membership last year.

The Methodists ranked third, with about 8.2 million

members. The Evangelical Lutherans ranked seventh, with nearly 4.9 million people. And the Presbyterians ranked ninth with just under 3.2 million congregants.

The Southern Baptist Convention remains the largest U.S. Protestant group, with 16.3 million members. It is the second-largest denomination in the country, behind the Catholic Church.

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calendar

CONFERENCES AND SPEAKERS

FAITH & SCIENCE: CONNECTING MODERN PHYSICS AND ANCIENT FAITH: Talk by Stephen Barr, a physicist at the University of Delaware and author of "Modern Physics and Ancient Faith." 7 p.m. today. Free. Plymouth Creek Center, 14800 34th Av. N., Plymouth. 763-559-2775.

NEXT TARGET: IRAN?: Speaker M. Jay Shahidi, president of the Iranian American Society of Minnesota. 1 p.m. today. St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, 4537 3rd Av. S., Mpls. 612-827-5364.

POET U SAM OEUR: Oeur will talk about his memoir, "Crossing Three Wildernesses." Discussion with members of Cambodian community organizations will follow. 9 a.m. Sun. Free. Plymouth Congregational Church, 1900 Nicollet Av. S., Mpls. Oeur's poetry will be read by him and his translator at 7 p.m. Mon. 612-871-7400.

MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES: In February, some U.S. church leaders denounced the war in Iraq and apologized to other countries. Cindy Kennedy of the Minnesota Council of Churches will discuss how to respond to the declaration. 8 a.m. Wed. Free. St. Martin's Table, 2001 Riverside Av., Mpls. 763-784-5177.

THE COMING STORM — THE RISE OF AMERICAN FASCISM: Talk by Khoren Arislian of New York Ethical Society. Socialize at 6:30 p.m. 7 p.m. Sun. Free. First Unitarian Society, 900 Mount Curve Av., Mpls. 612-377-2211.

MUSIC AND ARTS

PILATE'S EASTER: A drama on the resurrection of Jesus. 7 p.m. today-Tue. \$5. Family tickets are \$20. Immaculate Conception School Auditorium, 4030 NE. Jackson

St., Columbia Heights. 763-788-4506. **SCREENING OF THE FILM "CELESTINE PROPHECY":** 7 p.m. today-Sun. Lake Harrier Spiritual Community, 4401 Upton Av. S., Mpls. 612-922-4272.

LENTEN CONCERT: Including the Lenten portion of Handel's "Messiah." Offering. Child care provided. 4 p.m. Sun. Centennial United Methodist Church, 1524 W. County Rd. C2, Roseville. 651-633-7644. **STATIONS OF THE CROSS:** 9 a.m. Sun.-Fri. Westminster Presbyterian Church, 12th St. and Nicollet Mall, Mpls. 612-332-3421. **DRIVE-THRU EASTER STORY:** Live reenactment and recorded narration. 6 p.m. Sun. Free. Cross View Lutheran Church, 6645 McCauley Trail, Edina. 952-941-1094. **DUAL REQUIEM:** By John Rutter and Gabriel Faure. \$12; \$10 for students and seniors. 4 p.m. Sun. Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church, 5011 31st Av. S., Mpls. 612-330-1265.

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST: Featuring the church's Cathedral Choir. 7 p.m. Wed. Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, 5025 Knox Av. S., Mpls. 612-926-7651.

GRACE THAT AMAZES: Easter musical. 7 p.m. Thu.-Fri. Lutheran Church of the Master, 1200 69th Av. N., Brooklyn Center. 763-561-5852. **LIVING STATIONS:** By high school youths. Noon Fri. Church of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1725 Kennard St., Maplewood. 651-777-8116. Also at 3 p.m. Fri. at St. Jude's Church in Mahtomedi and 7 p.m. Fri. at Transfiguration Church in Oakdale. Free.

CELEBRATIONS AND SERVICES

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: By parish youths. 8 p.m. today. St. Thomas Aquil-

nas Church, 920 Holley Av., St. Paul Park. 651-459-2131.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS AND SOUP SUPPER: Offering. 5:30 p.m. Thu. St. Jerome Catholic Church, 380 E. Roselawn Av., Maplewood. 651-777-1209.

MASS AND SUNDAY NIGHT LIVE FOR YOUNG ADULTS: Palms, incense and oil as liturgical symbols and expressions of faith, a presentation by Johan van Parys. 6:30 p.m. Sun. Basilica of St. Mary, 16th St. and Hennepin Av. S., Mpls. 612-333-1381. **PALM SUNDAY VESPERS CELEBRATION:** Gregorian vespers featuring the Rose Ensemble. 3 p.m. Sun. Basilica of St. Mary, 16th St. and Hennepin Av. S., Mpls. 612-333-1381.

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS: Tenebrae Good Friday service, composed by Patrick Liebergen of the University of Wisconsin-Stout. 7 p.m. Fri. Free. Holy Trinity United Methodist Church Prior Lake, 16150 Arcadia Av., Prior Lake. 952-447-2990. **SERVICE OF THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST:** Meditations on Jesus' last words on the cross. Noon Fri. Colonial Church of Edina, 6200 Colonial Way, Edina. 952-925-2711.

HUMANISTS OF MINNESOTA BANQUET: Speaker Herb Silverman, president of the Secular Coalition for America and author of "The Fundamentals of Extremism." \$35 per person, \$25 for students. 5 p.m. today. DoubleTree Park Place Hotel, 1500 Park Place Blvd., St. Louis Park. 651-335-3800.

FUNDRAISERS

BENEFIT FOR MINNEAPOLIS JEWISH DAY SCHOOL: Speaker Michael Steinhardt, founder and chairman of the Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation, and a

TOP CHRISTIAN SINGLES

- 1 "How Great Is Our God," Chris Tomlin (EMI)
- 2 "My Savior My God," Aaron Shust (Brush Music)
- 3 "I Am," Mark Schultz (Word)
- 4 "Only Grace," Matthew West (Universal South/EMI)
- 5 "Cry Out to Jesus," Third Day (Essential)
- 6 "This Man," Jeremy Camp (BEC)
- 7 "What Are You Waiting For," Natalie Grant (Awaken)
- 8 "Praise You in This Storm," Casting Crowns (Reunion/PLG)
- 9 "I Am Free," Newsboys (Inpop)
- 10 "Jesus Take the Wheel," Carrie Underwood (PLG)

Compiled by Christian Radio and Retail Weekly

ON THE HORIZON

CAEDMON'S CALL AND BEBO NORMAN: "An Evening of Compassion," with John David Webster, Aaron Shust and host Geoff Moore. 7 p.m. today. \$15-\$20. Maranatha Hall, Northwestern College, 3003 N. Snelling Av., Roseville. 651-631-5151.

TWIN CITIES COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHOIR: 7:30 p.m. today. \$9.50-\$19. Zabee Theater, Elk River High School, 900 NW. School St., Elk River. 763-441-4725.

MICHAEL CARD: 7 p.m. today. \$15-\$24. St. Michael's Lutheran Church, 9201 Normandale Blvd., Bloomington. 952-831-5276.

REVERA, ALLIES IN CHAOS, SENTRY, LEVEN AND THE LAST HOLIDAY: 7:30 p.m. today. \$7. Club 3 Degrees, 113 N. 5th St., Mpls. 612-781-8488.

ROBERT ROBINSON AND THE TWIN CITIES COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHOIR: 7:30 p.m. today. \$5-\$20. Zabee Theatre, 900 School St., Elk River. 763-441-4725.

RECORD LABEL SHOWCASE: Featuring Superchick. 7 p.m. Mon. \$10. Club 3 Degrees, 113 N. 5th St., Mpls. 612-781-8488.

FFH: 7:30 p.m. May 12. \$12-\$17. Hosanna! Lutheran Church, 9600 W. 163rd St., Lakeville. 651-631-5151.

TWIN CITIES GOSPEL CHOIR AND ENSEMBLE: A Mother's Day concert with director Robert Robinson. 7:30 p.m. May 13. \$15-\$18. ArtsCenter Minnetonka, 18285 Hwy. 7, Minnetonka. 612-521-0800.

GAITHER HOMECOMING CONCERT: An in-the-round concert featuring Bill Gaither and the Gaither Vocal Band and friends. 6 p.m. May 20. \$19.75-\$34.75. Target Center, 600 1st Av. N., Mpls. 651-989-5151.

YOU CAN HELP

Ronald McDonald House of the Twin Cities is looking for volunteers to fill weekday shifts as school aides, housewarmers and in the office. Call 612-331-5752.

For the following volunteer opportunities, call Hands on Twin Cities, 612-379-4900 weekdays, or go to www.volunteertwincities.org.

Christopher & Banks Multiple Sclerosis Walk-A-Thon: Volunteer throughout Minnesota on May 7.

Transitional care: Visit with patients, assist with group activities and escort residents through Ebenezer of Minneapolis' Fairview-Riverside Transitional Care Unit.

Como Ordway Memorial Japanese Garden interpreter: Assist as a garden interpreter and learn about the philosophy and cultural style of the gardens.

Leaf raker: Help elderly homeowners through the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches.

Fishing guide: Help mentally ill or physically disabled people fish throughout the metro area. Sponsored by the Guild Incorporated of St. Paul.

Receptionist: Work at Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery's south Minneapolis shelter, weekdays 1 to 5 p.m.

Store assistant: Help customers at the Minnesota Landmark Center store in St. Paul.

Ticket seller/greeter: At Cafesjian's Carousel in St. Paul.

Classroom aide: Volunteer with Hope Community to help adult students with reading and writing in the Twin Cities.

Child mentor: Mentor through Kids N' Kinship, a nonprofit organization in Apple Valley.

Cinco de Mayo: Volunteer with the Riverview Economic Development Association to work on the Cinco de Mayo Festival in May in St. Paul.

Office assistant: At HealthPartners clinic in Bloomington.

If your nonprofit organization has a volunteer need, e-mail cstoken@startribune.com and type "Volunteer Need" in the subject field.

RINGING IN A BELL EPOCH

"Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky. ... Ring out the darkness of the land, Ring in the Christ that is to be."

— Alfred Lord Tennyson



Bells in the new tower at Central Lutheran Church.

Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis will dedicate its new bell tower during worship at 8:30 and 11 a.m. Palm Sunday. An anonymous donor provided money to finish the tower, begun in 1928, and a 47-bell carillon. Sunday's events include a carillon concert by David Johnson on the church's north plaza at 3 p.m. followed by a dedication concert at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary. "When Church Bells Are Ringing!" by composer Stephen Paulus will be performed by the Minnesota Orchestra directed by Central Lutheran member Osmo Vänskä. Call 612-870-4416 for a seating envelope, required for admission.

KAREN GAIL JOSTAD

three-course kosher dinner. 5:30 p.m. Sun. \$100. Minneapolis Marriott City Center, 30 S. 7th St., Mpls. Call 763-559-7551. **VIA DOLOROSA:** Organist Gerrit Lamain presents the Passion story. Offering for Neighbors Food Shelf. 7 p.m. Sun. St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, 1575 Charlton St., West St. Paul. 952-432-1899.

RETREATS AND PRAYER GROUPS

DAY ADVENT JOURNEY: Prepare for Holy Week through reflection and projects. Cost includes lunch. Reservation re-

quired. 10 a.m. Tue. \$12. Mount Olivet Retreat Center, 7984 W. 257th St., Farmington. 952-469-2175.

MEN'S HOLY WEEK RETREAT: Register at 4:30 p.m. Thu.; 8 a.m. Fri. and next Sat. Breakfast is at 7:30 a.m. \$140. Franciscan Retreats, 16385 St. Francis Lane, Prior Lake. 952-447-2182.

Items for the Faith+Values calendar may be e-mailed to kjostad@startribune.com.

observances

• On Sunday, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians observe **Palm Sunday**, marking the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the start of Holy Week.

• On Monday, Muslims observe **Mawlid al-Nabi**, birthday of Mohammed.

• On Tuesday, Jains observe **Mahavir Jayanti**, birthday of Lord Mahavir.

• On Wednesday, Jews observe **Pesach: Passover**. The festival commemorates Israelites' exodus from Egypt and release from bondage. Ends April 20.

• On Thursday, northern Buddhists observe **Wesak**, the anniversary of Buddha's birth.

• Catholic Christians observe **Holy Thursday**, commemorating the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist.

• On Thursday, Hindus observe **Hanuman Jayanti**, celebrating the birth of Hanuman the monkey, Rama's faithful servant.

• Anglican, Catholic and Protestant Christians observe **Good Friday**, the day of Jesus' crucifixion and burial.

• On Friday, Sikhs observe **Baisakhi**, the beginning of the new year.