

## God as Center of Our World Is a Very Comforting Reality

By REVEREND JANE ROCKMAN

I am a child of television, having grown up in the era when many of the shows that Nickelodeon now presents as classics were the meat of prime time. I loved them all: "Gunsmoke," "77 Sunset Strip," "Donna Reed," "My Three Sons," "Ozzie and Harriet."

I especially loved those family sitcoms. Although they are now treated with the respect generally accorded ancient relics and museum pieces, the family shows have also been widely criticized as unrealistic and naive. All those smiling faces, all that sharing, problems neatly wrapped up by the end of each episode - "that's not how people live," is how the criticism goes.

So now we have programs like "Survivor" and "Temptation Island," whose lack of formal scripting has won cheers and attracted viewers eager to watch so-called Reality TV. But whose reality is this, anyway? No mild mannered folks here! Instead, these programs provide a healthy dose of cynicism, one-upmanship and betrayal. I grant you, all this is an unfortunate part of life, but that's been the case since Adam and Eve.

Here is another, better reality - the reality of God and a world that recognizes God at its center. According to recent polls, the vast majority of Americans say they believe in God. But if that's true, then there seems to be some disconnect between all that belief and how the world goes along.

Maybe the problem is we can't give up the incorrect notion that God is keeping score, totaling the good things we do in a short column on

one side of the page and the bad things in a much longer column on the other side. Maybe the fear is that if God is a more active force in our lives, that will increase divine scrutiny. Actually, the effect would be on us. More than likely, we would become more aware that what we do and how we do it matters, and that's the point, after all.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Those words from the Hebrew Bible, which are repeated by Jesus in the Gospels to summarize the Law, provide context for a life that is richer and more fulfilling than life without it.

God's creation is good. God created us with generosity of spirit. But dealing with the demands of life chips away at that, and it is not naive to want to recover more of the positive spirit God created in us. It is not unrealistic to refuse to accept cut-throat competition and devious maneuvering as the way the world should work.

In the "Book of Common Prayer" of the Episcopal Church, there is a prayer which is part of every Communion service. It is called the Collect for Purity, and it says in part: "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your Holy Name."

Now that's reality!  
\* \* \* \* \*

Reverend Rockman is the Rector of All Saints' Episcopal Church, located at 559 Park Avenue in Scotch Plains.

### NJAWBO Reveals Meetings Calendar

MOUNTAINSIDE - The Union County Chapter of NJAWBO (New Jersey Association of Women Business Owners) will hold its monthly meetings on Thursday, March 15, Wednesday, April 18, Tuesday, May 15 and Wednesday, June 13.

All the meetings will be held at 6 p.m. at L'Affaire Restaurant on Route 22, East, in Mountainside.

For information and reservations, please call (908) 688-0707.

### Foxhunters to Appear At Fanwood Library

FANWOOD - On Wednesday, March 14, the Fanwood Memorial Library will present The Foxhunters in a special Pre-St. Patrick's Day concert at 7:30 p.m. at the library. Admission is free.

The Foxhunters is a two-piece Irish band named after the Foxhunter reel. Their repertoire includes traditional Irish jigs and reels, well-known Irish ballads, waltzes and sing-alongs, plus more contemporary music from groups such as the Saw Doctors and Goats Don't Shave.

The band consists of Chris Kelly on lead vocals and acoustic guitar and Sean Fahy on the piano accordion.

Refreshments will be served at 7 p.m., courtesy of the Friends of the Library. The library is located at North Avenue and Tillotson Road. For more information, please call the library at (908) 322-6400.

### Rosarians' Program To Honor Two Saints

WESTFIELD - The Holy Trinity and St. Helen's Rosary Altar Society will hold their Thursday, March 15 meeting at 12:30 p.m. at St. Helen's Parish Center in Westfield.

Featured will be a program honoring St. Patrick and St. Joseph, with Rita Curran and Betty Avis providing musical accompaniment for the Society's sing-along.

All Rosarians and their guests are welcome. Attendees are asked to bring a "brown bag" lunch, with dessert to be provided.

In addition, all women are invited to the Society's "Day of Reflection," to be held at St. Joseph's Shrine in Stirling on Wednesday, May 2. For further information, please call Eleanor Pfaff at (908) 232-3374.

## Echo Lake Church to Hold 'Neighbor Day' on Sunday

WESTFIELD - The Echo Lake Church of Christ, located at 419 Springfield Avenue in Westfield, at the corner of East Broad Street, will hold a special "Neighbor Day" service on Sunday, March 11, at 10:30 a.m.

This service will be open to all, and a Potluck Dinner will take place afterwards. Guests are welcome to stay.

The Echo Lake Church of Christ offers Sunday School classes for children of all ages at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday. In addition, there is a staffed nursery to



AND THEY'RE OFF!...A wave of Boy Scout-pulled sleds line up at the starting gate for the 44th Patriot District Klondike Derby in the Watchung Reservation on January 27. Sixteen Scout teams and eight Senior teams participated, including the Eagles Patrol of Troop No. 77 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield, pictured above at center. The winning Senior Scout team was the Eagles Patrol from Troop No. 73 at the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield.

### JCC Art Auction Set At Temple March 17

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Central New Jersey, based in Scotch Plains, will present an Art Auction on Saturday, March 17, at Temple Beth O'r/Beth Torah, located at 111 Valley Road in Clark.

The event will begin with a preview hour from 8 to 9 p.m., followed immediately by the auction.

Ross Galleries, Inc. will showcase hundreds of works of art, and there will be many pieces on which to bid. A silent auction of goods and services will also be featured. Admission is \$10 per person and will include food and beverages.

All proceeds will benefit the JCC. For more information and to register, please call Susan Lemerman at (908) 889-8800, extension No. 205.

### Thrift Shop to Hold Half-Price Sales To Honor St. Patrick

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League has announced that half-price St. Patrick's Day sales will take place at its Thrift Shop, located at 1730 Second Street in Scotch Plains, from Tuesday, March 13, through Saturday, March 17.

In addition to the shop's regular merchandise, a collection of items appropriate for St. Patrick's Day will be featured.

The Thrift Shop's hours are Tuesday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



HELPING HAITI...Joe and Linda Markee, pictured above, who have been involved in missionary activities in Haiti, will speak about their experiences as part of the Presbyterian Women's Association Birthday program on Thursday, March 15, at 12:30 p.m. in the Assembly Hall of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield.

## Missionary Couple to Speak About Assisting in Haiti

WESTFIELD - Missionaries Linda and Joe Markee will speak at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield on Thursday, March 15, in the Assembly Hall at 12:30 p.m. as part of the Presbyterian Women's Association Birthday program.

The couple's topic, "Haiti: Can You Make A Difference?" will focus on their mission activity on the island and how others can help there.

The Markees live in Washington state, where they have been active members of a Presbyterian church for 24 years. Mrs. Markee is a former member of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield.

After being commissioned by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the couple worked for two years in Léogane, Haiti at Hôpital Ste. Croix, an Episcopal owned hospital, operated in partnership with the Presbyterian

Church (USA). Mr. Markee taught, consulted and assisted Haitian physicians at the hospital, where he was the only non-Haitian on staff.

Together, he and his wife served as the Volunteer Visitor Coordinators. Mrs. Markee also was the Program Chairwoman for an international medical/scientific meeting.

She has photographed much of Haiti and has been published in church magazines, in addition to winning awards for her photography. Both Mr. and Mrs. Markee speak Creole.

Today, the couple continue to be involved in leading short-term mission trips to Haiti.

To make reservations for the Markees' talk, please call the church office at (908) 233-0301. The cost is \$1.50 and child care is available upon request.

## Torah Center Purim Party Slated for Tonight at JCC

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Union County Torah Center will present a Purim Celebration tonight, March 8,

from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Wilf Jewish Community Campus and Jewish Community Center of Central New Jersey, located at 1391 Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains.

A masquerade contest for children will be held at 6 p.m. All children dressed in costume will receive a prize, and one special grand prize will be awarded for the best costume.

There will be a multimedia Megillah reading at 6:30 p.m., recounting the Purim story in which Queen Esther was instrumental in the deliverance of the Jewish people from the threat of annihilation at the hands of Haman and the inhabitants of the Persian Empire 23 centuries ago. This will be followed by refreshments, music and dancing.

For more information and to receive a free Purim guide, please call the Torah Center, located at 418 Central Avenue in Westfield, at (908) 789-5252.

### Methodist Women Schedule Bag Sale For This Saturday

WESTFIELD - The United Methodist Women of the First United Methodist Church of Westfield will hold a Bag Sale on Saturday, March 10, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the church, located at 1 East Broad Street.

Admission will be \$5 per brown paper grocery bag (which may be filled to the brim). Among the available merchandise will be books, toys, clothes, videos and household items. Proceeds will benefit mission projects.

For more information, please call the church office at (908) 233-4211.

*Join Us This Saturday, March 10th*  
*As We Begin our Celebration of The Feast of St. Patrick...*  
*... around 1p.m. we will be paid a visit by the "Kelly School of Irish Dancing..." throughout the day we will be serving tea and Irish soda bread...*  
*So plan on stopping by - We look forward to seeing you!*



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## Genealogical Society to Hear Talk Today on Web Sites

WESTFIELD - The Genealogical Society of the West Fields will present a program on "Web Sites - Our Community and Your Own," today, March 8, at 1 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Westfield Memorial Library, located at 550 East Broad Street.

The program will be presented by Darryl Walker, who serves as webmaster for the towns of Westfield, Fanwood and Springfield.

He will address the growing inter-

assist parents with young children.

The church has embarked on a year-long study of the Bible, entitled "Look at the Book." This chronological study of the Bible is being taught in the Sunday School classes, the Sunday morning and evening services and during the Wednesday evening Bible Study program. All are welcome to participate.

For more information about the church and its programs, please call (908) 233-4946.

est among genealogists in both the use of Internet sites for research and developing Web sites for their own family communications. Mr. Walker will also discuss the wealth of information available on Web sites and how anyone can set up his or her own Web site.

A question-and-answer period will follow and light refreshments will be served. The meeting is free and open to the general public.

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Bruch: *Violin Concerto*  
Tchaikovsky: *Symphony # 6 "Pathétique"*

**Tchaikovsky Society**

Tickets pay only one third of WSO costs. The remainder must be raised through the generosity of contributors. The March 2001 concert will feature Tchaikovsky's Symphony #6 "Pathétique". Persons who contribute \$150 to help fund this outstanding concert become members of the WSO Tchaikovsky Society. Their contribution will be gratefully acknowledged in the program for the March concert.

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