



THE GREEN LAKE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

THE GREEN LAKE
FOUNDATION

“God save the foundation!” (Shakespeare)

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Green Lake Foundation

2017 Q2

A New Endowment

2017’s endless Seattle winter—with gloomy rainfall and dreary skies setting new records—eventually gave birth to a spectacular spring of flowering plants. Never have the rhododendrons and blossoming trees surrounding Green Lake Church been more memorable.

One member remarked on a recent Sabbath, “If the church’s bell tower had a voice, it would be saying, “Hallelujah!” Even the grass looks greener this spring.

But the reality is that Green Lake’s pristine grounds are not maintained without constant effort. In this case, “beauty” is spelled w-o-r-k or perhaps also c-a-s-h. Somebody trims the trees, prunes the rhododendrons, fertilizes and mows the lawn. Even the beds and shrubs require weeding. It costs time and money. Like all of God’s work, it’s never finished—and it’s a privilege to pitch in and help.

No family has been as vigilant in overseeing the maintenance of the Green Lake grounds as the Mehrer family. Don Mehrer has headed up the landscaping committee for many years, even decades.

Now Don and Shirley have again shown their leadership by making a gift of \$20,000 to set up a Landscape Endowment Fund with the Green Lake Foundation. Their explicit goal is to build the corpus of the endowment to

\$200,000 before any money can be spent. That gives others in our church community a challenge to build the endowment to hasten the day when the landscaping is automatically taken care of and does not require major funds from the church budget. As Don and Shirley stated:



“The endowment, when complete, will free up church budget money for other programs.”

Kurt Mehrer, a longstanding Green Lake member, noted, “My parents have always felt the way a property looks is as important as its function. They have always taken great pride in the appearance of a building’s landscaping for the enjoyment of those who use it. This endowment for Green Lake Church’s grounds is an amazing way to help maintain the same professional standards for the pleasure of the generations to come.”

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Don and Shirley spearheaded the elevator project in 2000, and now have seen and seized this new opportunity—the chance to start an endowment for the care and beautification of Green Lake’s plants, trees, grass, flower beds, and grounds.

Alvin Kwiram, Foundation Board Chair, noted that the Mehrer gift follows a tradition of pursuing excellence at Green Lake: “There is a certain standard that has guided activities at the GLC, whether it is the quality of the sermons, the music, the church building, or the openness of

Test Your Knowledge



An endowment is:

- A. Money to support the Green Lake softball team.
- B. Like a weekly allowance kids get if they behave.
- C. Money invested for the future for a noble cause.
- D. Money for the church budget.
- E. Money for Social Security checks for aged Green Lakers.

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A New Endowment

the congregation. One of the most visible of these is the landscaping. This has been a labor of love provided largely by the Mehrer family. Now, that quality is assured for the future thanks to the generosity of Don and Shirley Mehrer, who have established the Landscaping Endowment

There are very few aspects of the life of the GLC that have not been touched by Don and Shirley. The beautiful landscaping and well-kept grounds should and will continue to remind us of their devotion and care. – Alvin Kwiram, GLF board chair

Fund. There are very few aspects of the life of the GLC that have not been touched by Don and Shirley. The beautiful landscaping and well-kept grounds should and will continue to remind us of their devotion and care.”

In the past, the Mehrers have been notably entrepreneurial in their giving, seeing needs and taking action by establishing new endowments, all the while encouraging others to contribute and participate. The Cypress Adventist School endowment is an example, begun in 2007. Since its beginning ten years ago with their initial gift of \$23,000, new contributions, coupled with investment gains, have doubled its size.

The members of the Foundation Board formally accepted the Mehrer gift to set up the Landscaping Endowment Fund at their January 2017 meeting and thanked the Mehrers for their foresight and generosity.

Don and Shirley hope many friends and members of Green Lake will contribute to the new endowment: “When the Foundation set up the Landscaping Endowment, it was our hope that it would generate enough money to pay for all the maintenance and watering of the church grounds. If all of us who are able would contribute to this goal, we could aid in securing a first-class facility in this corner of the city for many years to come.”

If you are inspired by the beauty of Green Lake’s landscaping and want to contribute to the Landscaping Endowment, contact the pastor or any member of the Foundation board, or you can send your contribution to Green Lake Foundation or Green Lake Church. Make sure you clearly designate it for this purpose, and it will be invested in a perpetual Landscaping Endowment Fund. ✧



Ibsen Photo

SAVE THE DATE!

Weekend of October 6-8

Green Lake Church Retreat

WWU Rosario Beach Marine Laboratory

Don't miss:

Fun
Hikes
Food



Campfires
Singing
Inspiration

Your cabin housing is FREE!
(prepaid by Green Lake Foundation)

Save the date on your calendars NOW!

Ways You Can Give to Give to the Green Lake Foundation (Part 1)

Green Lake Foundation exists to support the Green Lake Church and its programs and to facilitate and invest legacy gifts from members and friends of the Church. If you are planning your estate and wish to establish a legacy that will live on long after you are able to give on a current basis, the Foundation is here to help.

In an effort to help Green Lake Members understand some of the many ways they can give to the Green Lake Foundation, from time to time we will include a series of articles describing the various gift instruments available. Please contact your attorney or financial planner if you have questions or would like some assistance in your giving.

One of the easiest ways to give to a cause you love is to write a check. Consider giving your check to the Green Lake Foundation and specifying that it be placed in an Endowment Fund for the benefit of the Church.

The Green Lake Foundation has set up a permanently restricted General Endowment Fund that will be used to earn money for the needs of Green Lake Church. The Church may make grant requests for current projects, and the Foundation will fund those requests with the earnings from the General Endowment. The dollars you give will never be spent, but instead will continue to earn money for the benefit of the Church in perpetuity.

The General Endowment will accept gifts of any size and will accumulate them over time. With your generosity, this can become a sizable fund that will earn income to supplement the current needs of the Church’s budget. If, however, you are interested in funding an endowment for a specific church need that you specify, this may be done with a gift of \$10,000 or more. You will then be able to specify the specific area of church life that you want to support with your endowment gift.

All gifts to the Foundation and its investments are governed by various policies. For a copy of the current policies, please contact the Church office. ✧

Test Your Knowledge Answer: C. ✧

A Conversation with Hanna Helmersen

Ken Walters interviewed Hanna Helmersen, a member of Green Lake Church since 1957. Edited for length and clarity.

You are originally from Norway.

I grew up in a small community across the harbor from the city of Narvik, north of the Arctic Circle.

Were you raised SDA?

I grew up in a Lutheran church. My mother went to some lectures and became a Seventh-day Adventist. The little Adventist church I attended raised up a lot of important people, among them a General Conference president, Jan Paulsen.



You have published a wonderful book about your childhood in Norway, including the World War II period. The title is *War and Innocence: A Young Girl's Life in Occupied Norway (1940-1945)*.

I wrote it for my children and grandchildren, and it has had a great reception, with four printings. I have received letters about it from all over the U.S.

You and Hjaltar (Hal) came to Seattle in 1957 and soon thereafter visited Green Lake Church?

We walked into Green Lake Church in March 1957, and have stayed ever since.

What was the first thing you noticed?

That this did not look like an Adventist church. It had a bell tower. It had a pipe organ. It had the gorgeous stained-glass windows, even one above the baptistery. And the people were so friendly.

What else surprised you?

Between the foyer and the narthex was an inscription: "Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." I thought: Not only for Adventists but for all people! This has been to me a trademark of the church, making it a welcome place for all people.

Your husband, Hjaltar, worked hard to link Green Lake church into the greater Seattle community and the world.

As a Sabbath School superintendent, he brought in speakers he met through the Shoreline Rotary Club and other places. He brought the president of Seattle Pacific University to speak, and reporters from a Seattle newspaper, a man from the Islamic community, someone from Union Gospel Mission, and the president of World Concern, a division of CRISTA Ministries.

Hal also made a trip to Leningrad (St. Petersburg) during the height of the Cold War period?

He was on the Seattle-Leningrad sister city committee for the Church Council of Greater Seattle and brought Bibles there. They were guests of the Russian Orthodox Church. He had a marvelous time celebrating Russian Easter there, and he also spoke at the local Seventh-day Adventist church.

Didn't a Russian group subsequently come to Seattle?

Yes, the Metropolitan Alexei, a high church official, with his whole entourage came to Seattle together with a big Russian choir. Many of the choir members stayed in our homes.

Were other Green Lake families opposed to all this Helmersen innovation?

No, not at all. We just jumped in. That's what happened.

Did you easily make friends with other families at church?

Paul and Genevieve Johnson were pillars of the church, and they were some of the first to befriend us. They were wonderful. Dr. and Mrs. Ernest Ching—lovely, lovely people. The McAdoos—Benjamin and his wife, Thelma. All these people reached out to us.

One day you received a surprise visit from the pastor?

Yes. Norwegian Adventism was a little different from American Adventism—we were not vegetarians. Norwegians eat fish. When Elder Froom came to our house unexpectedly, my whole house smelled of fried fish! I was so embarrassed.

Do you remember any sermons?

I especially remember a sermon that Alvin Kwiram gave: "Can you be an Adventist and excellent, too?" That was such an inspiring sermon! Green Lake stands for excellence.

Many Green Lake members have sought to practice excellence at the church, not just to talk about it.

Exactly. We needed a new piano for the sanctuary, and there was strife about it. The musicians wanted a beautiful Bechstein, and many felt we could do with a less expensive piano. Hjaltar gave a rousing speech that this church stands for excellence, and we should not lower our standards! And so we got the Bechstein—which we still enjoy.

You led out in the Sabbath School divisions for many years.

We wanted the children to learn the Bible stories since we felt they were so important to life. That was the emphasis.

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Green Lake Foundation Board

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Donations to the Foundation:
<https://www.adventistgiving.org/about/About.aspx>

Church History Quiz

True or False:

1. Olive White, who passed away in April 2017, was a charter member at Green Lake and saw the opening of the church in 1947.
2. All four of Olive's grandparents were born in Norway.
3. Olive grew up in Mount Vernon and graduated from Mount Vernon High School, moving to Seattle in 1937 during the depths of the depression.
4. Olive and her husband Malcolm were regulars in the Green Lake choir for decades.
5. Olive and Malcolm met at a church roller-skating party and married soon thereafter, in 1941.
6. Olive was raised Lutheran up until age 11—when her father and mother became convinced of the Adventist message.
7. Olive knew every one of the pastors of Green Lake, from the first to the current, and was noted for corresponding with them and their spouses each year -- for the rest of their lives.

Answers: 1.T; 2.T; 3.T; 4.T; 5.T; 6.T; 7.T.

A Conversation with Hanna Helmersen, *Continued from Page 3*

You asked Dr. Grauman to give the children a special tour of the church?

Yes, as part of my Sabbath School responsibilities. He was very pleased that I asked him. He showed the importance of the high ceiling, the Gothic structure, each of the windows, why we did not have padded seats, and the stained-glass windows. He also described the baptistry, the communion table, and the symbols of Jesus' death and resurrection. He talked about the choir and the choir loft, the organ and the pipes, and the importance of music in worship. He was the head honcho of this church, larger than life.

You taught us the Chicken Dance at a Saturday night party downstairs.

And that was not the first dance! One Christmas we put the Christmas tree in the middle of the room, and we formed a circle, walked around the Christmas tree, and sang Norwegian Christmas songs.

You and Hal recognized the importance of the social component of church life.

The Augustinian confession mentions "the communion of the saints." The most valuable thing I have received from Green Lake was the everlasting friendships.

You also helped introduce jewelry.

In Norway, Adventists wore wedding bands, which were forbidden in America. Someone told me to take off my wedding band. I thought that was crazy, but I took it off. Then one day I said: "I don't understand the American rules, and, in fact, I am finished with them right now!"

And on the jewelry front, things relaxed further. When was that?

In the '70s, I decided that earrings looked nice, and I would like to wear some. Pretty soon other people were wearing earrings. I could not understand the obsession with rules over externals like dress and jewelry.

You brought in another Scandinavian tradition—hot drinks.

At Christmas time, I decided it would be nice to serve a hot drink during song service. So I put the chairs in the Sabbath School room in a circle and served a hot drink. The next year people brought cookies, and that developed into the Christmas breakfast.

You've been a strong supporter of the Lecture Series over many years.

Yes, I think Pastor Magne Fuglheim started the Spring Lecture Series. Magne had been a friend of mine in Denmark.

Why has Green Lake attracted such a diverse group of people, from all walks of life?

It's love and acceptance and respect for each other. It's genuine, not something just put on, not done out of duty. People care and people love. Love has been very important here.

You have demonstrated love, honesty, friendship, innovation, and energy through so many decades at Green Lake. We are so grateful to you for all your amazing contributions to our community. ✧