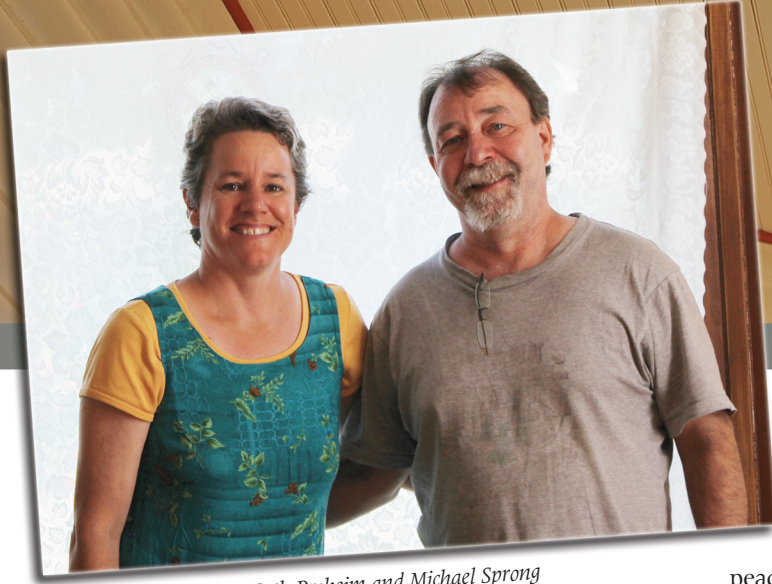


Emmaus House



Beth Preheim and Michael Sprong

Living...

Emmaus House is the result of a little band of Catholic Workers with a "stated mission" to open a house of hospitality for women and children visiting loved ones in prison. Owned by Michael Sprong and Beth Preheim, the stately Victorian home located on 4th and Green underwent a substantial transformation, with the help of many, to become a house of hospitality.

Beth recalls one man who came with his family to visit Emmaus House after being released from prison. "The family traveled out of their way to come here and thank us. The man stood in the kitchen with tears in his eyes, and said, 'I heard all about you. I knew they had a safe place to stay and be supported, to deal with their emotions.' This is a way to be with families on their journey. It creates a center of support, and that's service at its best, for me."

Neither Beth nor Michael are strangers to service. In regards to Emmaus House, when asked why they do it, their response is simple, "Service is simply part of our life."

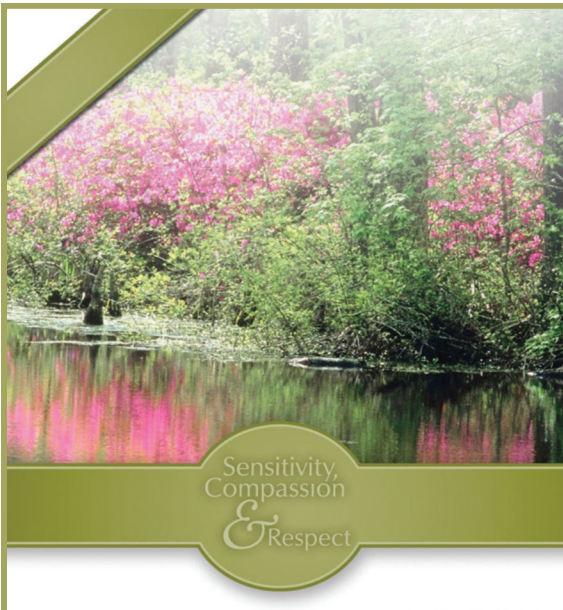
Beth spent most of her growing-up years as a "Mennonite kid" –

her parents worked with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), mostly in Akron, Pa. When Beth was in 4th grade, the family moved to Kinshasa, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) as MCC volunteers. "I grew up with that grounding of peace, theology and service," Beth says, "and also seeing people put their college degrees into practice."

Beth spent two years studying for a teaching degree, but in Beth's word she was, "Mostly trying to find my way". She went on to volunteer as a community organizer in Kansas City and was introduced to the Catholic Worker movement, and her husband Michael Sprong. Born in Chicago and raised in Northern Indiana, Michael has spent most of the past three decades in the peace, resistance, and Catholic Worker movements, living and working in South Dakota and throughout the Midwest.

While not a Catholic herself, Beth has lived with Catholic Worker communities for 20-plus years. "I chose [the model of] a loosely knit network that is still grounded in tradition," she says. "That fit with my Mennonite upbringing."

Beth and Michael were married in 1987. "We wanted service to be our whole life. My husband is skilled at strategizing and organizing campaigns. The challenge was: How do you deal with the economics – have a job but still be able to take the time for organizing



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