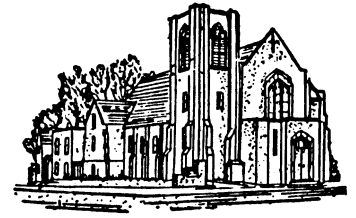


Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

341 Hamline Avenue South • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105 • 651-698-6138



Marilyn Sellars and “People of Hope” to Play Benefit Concert in Mac-Groveland January 27

For Immediate Release

January 10, 2006

ST. PAUL -- Metro Hope Ministries’ “People of Hope” -- featuring Marilyn Sellars -- will perform a concert of gospel music in the Mac-Groveland neighborhood, 7:00 pm, Friday, January 27, at Calvary Lutheran Church, 341 Hamline Avenue South. While admission to the event is free, proceeds from an offering will benefit Metro Hope Ministries’ new “Healing House” residential recovery center for hurting women and their children.

“People of Hope” features graduates of Metro Hope Ministries’ New Hope Recovery Center, joined by several other talented musicians and singers, including nationally-known singer Marilyn Sellars, best known for the million-selling hit song “One Day at a Time.”

Metro Hope Ministries is based in Minneapolis at 2739 Cedar Ave. South, where the organization also operates New Hope Center, the Midwest’s oldest Christian recovery center for men fighting addiction. Metro Hope Ministries traces its roots back to 1926, when founder Ole Olsen created the Gateway Gospel Mission. In 1961, recognizing that many people struggling with addiction needed more than a meal, a bed and a sermon, the Gateway Gospel Mission shifted its focus to long-term residential discipleship for addicted men. In so doing, the New Hope Center was created, and it became the first Christian addictions ministry in the United States.

In creating Healing House, Metro Hope Ministries is working to address the specific needs of women with children. According to Pat Watkins, Healing House program director, no similar residential recovery center for women and their children exists in Minnesota, or in the region. “All existing addiction recovery centers in the Twin Cities require women to find alternative care for their children,” Watkins said. “Women fear losing their children, and they will not seek help if it means losing their children.”

Healing House will be unique in providing housing and programs for both women and their children. A children’s learning center and staff will provide after-school support, including help with homework.

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According to Watkins, Healing House will focus on reaching women struggling to recover from addiction, imprisonment, prostitution, and chronic poverty. During the 12-18 month residential program, Healing House will offer women healing for their hurts, spiritual growth, basic education and life skills training, and employment readiness.

“Healing House will be a place where mothers can bring their wounded children and receive healing for the entire family,” Watkins said. “They will have an opportunity to grow and live and to be equipped to come into the community as contributing members.”

Watkins said the dream of Healing House became a reality thanks to the generosity of an anonymous “angel” benefactor, who bought the former Concordia Care Center building in north Minneapolis, and offered it to Metro Hope Ministries at an unbelievable price: \$1 for the first year’s lease, after which ownership of the building will be handed over to Metro Hope Ministries. Since then, the organization has been remodeling the building in anticipation of an April opening, and is nearing its goal of raising \$2 million to fund the Healing House program. Volunteer contractors and building trades professionals are also contributing their skills through the “Hammers for Healing” program. (Volunteers should call Metro Hope Ministries at 612-721-9415 to offer their services.)

A short presentation about Healing House will be given during an intermission in the concert. Following the concert, there will be an opportunity to meet the musicians, and enjoy refreshments and fellowship.

This is the third benefit concert Calvary has hosted in the past year. A concert by the House of Mercy Band in May benefited the Union Gospel Mission. An October concert by the Blessings Gospel Trio raised money for the Salvation Army’s disaster relief efforts. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has matched donations up to \$800 for each concert.

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church has been a neighborhood fixture for 88 years, and is a member of The American Association of Lutheran Churches (TAALC). The congregation worships every Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m., following Sunday School for all ages at 9:15 a.m. Calvary’s “Kids Club” provides after-school fun and Christian learning for elementary school-age kids on Tuesdays at 3:45 p.m. Call the church office (651-698-6138) for more information about the concert.

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