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Micah 4:4

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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest  
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# Bundle of ministries bestows love

By Mary Stamp

Bundled in Stephy Nobles-Beans' life are ministries of prayer with Whitworth University students, a home for victims of abuse, preaching at the Church of Berachah, poetry books to share her values, and local-to-national motivational speaking.

"I love to serve," she said of the combination of ministries that fill her life.

Whether concerned about students' struggles, angered about the plight of abused women, supporting efforts to feed the hungry, communicating insights through poems or inspiring others to rebuild their lives, she seeks to turn anger, frustration and challenges into making a difference and changing lives.

Stephy is grateful Whitworth saw she had more to give than the administrative assistant job she started with 15 years ago. They placed her in the chapel to pray for and with students, faculty and staff.

In that role, she helps with the online prayer blog, "On Bended Knee," where students can send prayer requests, and a prayer wall where she writes requests on butcher paper in her office.

"We pray for widows, for babies in Africa, for those involved in sex



For Stephy Nobles-Beans, prayer is central to healing lives.

trafficking," she said. "There's never a lack of things to pray for. Along with praying, I'm watchful and thankful."

Students come to her office in the chapel every day to have conversations, to discuss issues such as the death of a family member or a tough time they are having. Stephy often wears a Tallit, a Jewish prayer shawl, when she prays with and for them. The tassels and knots are reminders of the Hebrew scriptures and laws, and the expectation that the Messiah would bring healing, she said.

In 2001, she completed a bachelor's degree in humanities at Whitworth.

Ten years ago, Stephy also began to dream of opening a home for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and divorce.

That dream is now a reality in the Field of Diamonds House of Blessings.

"I have a heart for women and children who need a safe place because I was sexually assaulted as a teen," said Stephy. Growing up in Dallas, Tex., in a safe, Christian home helped her heal and keep focused on her commitment to preach and be in ministry.

*Continued on page 4*

## Consequences of proposed budget cuts would devastate many and cost more

Anticipating increased needs people will have if proposed state budget cuts are approved in December, Scott Cooper, director of parish social ministries, and Ann Marie Byrd, director of development, said Catholic Charities Spokane has increased its annual Christmas Collection goal from \$750,000, which it surpassed in 2010, to \$800,000 for 2011.

Recently Rob McCann, executive director of Catholic Charities Spokane, Marilee Roloff, director of Volunteers of America of Eastern Washington and North Idaho, and 42 other directors of

nonprofits and social services wrote an open letter to legislators and the community on the expected impact of cuts to disability benefits, domestic violence programs, mental health care, homeless programs, subsidized child care, housing assistance, homeless shelters, food assistance and health care reimbursements.

"We are standing for the poor and marginalized, telling legislators and the community how the cuts will affect these individuals," Scott said. "Even smaller nonprofits that do not receive state funds will also be affected by

greater demand for their services."

"Catholic Charities believes that each and every person is made in the image and likeness of God and deserves respect, compassion and dignity. We have been concerned about references in some media to the poor as lazy and being architects of their own suffering," said Ann Marie.

"We have to take care of our brothers and sisters," she said. "It is not easy for someone suffering from mental illness or substance abuse simply to find a job."

In his 16 years in social services in Spokane, Scott remembers nothing like the agencies' coming together to make this public statement.

He said the Disability Lifeline program was intended to cover people as they transitioned to SSDI and SSI. People dropped from the state's program in November may have had no time to complete the process and now receive only food stamps.

Ann Marie explained that Catholic Charities provides a continuum of care for homeless

*Continued on page 5*

## Christmas Bureau seeks to raise \$525,000 in 2011

The 2011 Christmas Bureau, open from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., daily except Sundays from Dec. 9 to 20, at the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center, 404 N. Havanna, expects to give gifts to more than the 35,612 people served in 2010, said Marilee Roloff, one of the coordinators.

As executive director of Volunteers of America in the region, she has traditionally provided books—14,800 last year and 16,000 in 2011. The local teachers and retired teachers sorority provides volunteers who give out the books.

Overall, the Spokesman-Review raised \$533,000 last year and 363 volunteers—100 a day—worked three days each to give away gifts and vouchers. Its 2011 goal is \$525,000.

"My everyday work leads me to expect that we will see more people," she said. "We are seeing more women than we can serve in our housing, more are on waiting lists and more are cut off from disability checks."

Marilee said that there have already been \$10 billion in cuts for programs for the poor and needy.

"If we cut another \$2 billion, the safety net we had will disappear," she said. "People are barely holding on."

Although heartened by all the ways churches and social service agencies are serving the poor, she's aware they cannot make up the \$2 billion.

"It's good so many people care so deeply," she said.

Started about 60 years ago, the Spokesman-Review, Catholic Charities of Spokane and Volunteers of America have cooperated to raise funds and staff the Christmas Bureau.

For information, call 358-4270, email [bkrause@ccspokane.org](mailto:bkrause@ccspokane.org) or visit [catholiccharitiesspokane.org/?page=146](http://catholiccharitiesspokane.org/?page=146).

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## Religion News Briefs

### Around the World

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#### WCC churches ship food to North Korea

A group of World Council of Churches (WCC) member churches recently shipped food aid to North Korea for infants, toddlers and people who are weak and vulnerable because of chronic malnutrition and starvation because of reduced food rations.

The shipment follows a fall visit of several South Korean church leaders to Pyongyang, North Korea. It is the second food shipment this year, initiated by the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKK) supported by South Korean churches and the North Korean and European members of the Ecumenical Forum on Peace and Security on the Korean Peninsula.

Reports from western aid agencies, who visited North Korea this September, said large numbers of people were suffering chronic malnutrition and faced starvation because of reduced food rations.

The shipment of 180 tons of wheat flour was sent to the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) of North Korea and transferred by truck to the border between North and South Korea. In May, 172 tons of wheat flour was sent through Amity Foundation in the People's Republic of China, facilitated by the WCC.

During a recent visit of NCKK leaders to the WCC offices in Geneva, the Rev. Lee Young-Hoon, senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, moderator of the Assemblies of God in Korea, joined in a worship service, praying for peace and reunification of Christians in North and South Korea. Lee's church, The Assemblies of God in Korea, has been a partner in the Korean ecumenical movement, involved in increasing understanding and relationships between the ecumenical movement and the global Pentecostal movement.

Churches participating in the fall shipment included the Korea Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, the Anglican Church of Korea and the Ecumenical Forum for Korea—United Church of Canada, the Methodist Church in Britain and the Evangelical Church in Hesse and Nassau, Germany.

#### WCC concerned about human trafficking in Sinai

In the past year thousands of people from North Africa have disappeared in the Sinai Desert region while crossing the border between Egypt and Israel. Father Mussie Zerai, a Roman Catholic priest from Eritrea, said they are "falling prey to human traffickers, employment scams, harassment, organ thefts and forced deportations." He is the founder of Agenzia Habeshia, a charity for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

"Churches have been the voice of the voiceless. The ecumenical family has a responsibility to be engaged in global advocacy on behalf of these people, as their rights are being violated," he said.

The Sinai Desert is a traditional transit route for people from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and sub-Saharan Africa, escaping political turmoil, hunger and poverty and hoping to end up in Europe.

More than 30,000 people have fled to Israel, mostly from countries like Tunisia, Libya, Ethiopia, Sudan and others, since 2009. Of them, about 10,000 died during travel, and 3,000 fell prey to brutal organ thefts," he said, encouraging WCC churches to challenge their governments on the inhuman treatment of refugees, reported by the United Nations' and other human rights groups.

#### North American Christians call for focus on poverty

A November WCC consultation on poverty, wealth and ecology in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, issued calls to action and reflection in a time of global financial crisis, environmental threat, and resistance to the ways of Wall Street and its economic structures. Representatives of North American churches urged their ecumenical and interfaith partners "to undertake a decade of action on eco-justice encompassing both ecological and economic justice."

The consultation released a document, "There's a New World in the Making," analyzing the state of global affairs and calling for member churches "to transition from carbon-based to renewable energy," "to narrow the gap between those of us who are rich and those who are poor" and to call business "to commit to principles of integrity."

## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

### Julia Stronks keynotes legislative conference

Julia Stronks, Lindaman Chair and professor of political science, gender and law at Whitworth University, will address the 2012 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference theme, "Render Unto Caesar: Reclaiming Our Prophetic Voice," in a presentation that will precede a discussion by a panel of local and regional church leaders.

The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 21, at the Episcopal

Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave.

The panel of leaders, which will include Episcopal Bishop Jim Waggoner, United Methodist District Superintendent, the Rev. Dale Cockrum, and Spokane Ministers Fellowship president the Rev. Jimmie Pierce, will discuss their denominations' recent stands on economic justice.

An afternoon workshop will provide an opportunity to interact with the panelists.

There will also be workshops on the state budget, advocacy in congregations, moving from despair to hope, and environmental issues.

The Rev. Paul Benz, co-director of the Faith Action Network of Washington, and Scott Cooper, director of Parish Social Services of Catholic Charities Spokane, will present summaries of issues before the state legislature.

For information, call 535-4112 or 206-625-9790.

### Bowling raises funds for water projects

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane plans a "Bowling for Water FUNdraiser" from 7 to 9 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 14, at the North Bowl, 125 W. Sinto Ave., for the Maia Water Project of the Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA).

Funds raised from pledges per game, sponsors for individuals or teams of four to bowl, and donations will buy a water filtration system for children at the Khan Younis Refugee Camp in Gaza, Palestine, said Marianne Torres of PJALS, who visited the Middle East in 2010 with a Christian Peacemaker Team. She said she is a friend of Barbara Lueben, the founder of MECA.

Dec. 12 is the deadline for

bowlers to sign up.

The Peace and Justice Action League has raised more than \$600 toward \$4,000 needed for the water system in their adopted kindergarten.

"The only source of water available, the Gaza Aquifer, cannot support the population," said Marianne, "and the water it generates has been steadily deteriorating for more than 60 years."

The funds will provide clean water for a kindergarten, so children can drink clean water during the day and take jugs of water home to their families, she explained.

"Military attacks on Gaza have devastated its water infrastructure," she said. "In addition, Israel

does slant-drilling, taking potable water from the Gaza aquifer."

The Maia Water project began when children at the United Nations school in Bureij Refugee Camp, Gaza, were given the opportunity to hold an election to choose one thing they most wanted for their school. They chose to have clean drinking water.

The project seeks to bring clean water to 14 schools and 13 kindergartens in refugee camps.

"PJALS decided we could raise \$4,000, so we chose this camp. Small purification units serve 150 to 450 children," said Marianne who is coordinating the benefit.

For information, call 838-7870 or visit [www.pjals.org/bowling-for-water](http://www.pjals.org/bowling-for-water).

### Tree of Sharing provides gifts for people

Through the Tree of Sharing at North Town, River Park Square and Spokane Valley malls, shoppers can buy gifts for people who are struggling. This year, 76 agencies have submitted 7,000 gift requests for clients. In previous years, the Tree of Sharing has provided about 6,000 gifts.

Shoppers pick up tags describing the recipient and gift request, such as a 70-year-old man who wants mittens or a seven-year-old boy who wants a game. Shoppers take tags, buy gifts and return

them by Dec. 12 to the Tree of Sharing location with the peel-off tag affixed to the wrapped gift.

The Tree of Sharing, which started as a project of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ in 1980, became an independent nonprofit in 2011. KREM-TV became a sponsor in

1982, and is now joined by Asuris Northwest Health and the Air National Guard.

During a one-week "Christmas in July" in 2011, donors gave gifts or made donations.

For information, call 999-3956, email [treeofsharing@gmail.com](mailto:treeofsharing@gmail.com) or visit [treeofsharing.org](http://treeofsharing.org).

**Advent Lutheran**  
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### Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, Dec. 10  
9 am to 5 pm  
Bake Sale, Chicken Soup  
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CALL Penny - 951-850-7764

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Hayden	293 West Prairie Shopping Center	(208) 762-2141

### Deepening Our Roots Benefit Breakfast & Luncheon



Wednesday  
March 14  
7:15 a.m. Breakfast

Friday  
March 16  
11:45 a.m. Luncheon

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## Fig Tree receives Holy Names grant

The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in the U.S.-Ontario Province recently awarded a \$2,000 grant to The Fig Tree for its work.

"We recognize the impact of The Fig Tree in the Inland Northwest and the value of its work, wrote members of the committee that decided on the 2011-12 SNJM ministry grants. "We hope these funds will help you continue to educate people to build peace, justice and faith."

The award was made because of the ongoing volunteer work of Sister Mary Ann Farley on The Fig Tree board and the volunteer assistance of Sister Rose Theresa Costello with editing, archives, mailings and other facets of the work. The Fig Tree's co-founder was Holy Names Sister Bernadine Casey, who was co-editor until her death in 2006. For information, call 535-1813.

## St. Lucy's Breakfast benefits ministry

Shalom Ministries will host its fourth annual St. Lucy's Candle-light Breakfast Benefit from 7:30 to 9 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 10, at the Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave.

The breakfast benefits the "dining with dignity" program that feeds hungry people at Central United Methodist Church (UMC), 518 W. Third. The church began the program in 1994 as part of a national United Methodist Communities of Shalom effort to create urban ministries.

Shalom Ministries serves breakfast Mondays through Fridays and a Monday evening dinner, serving 3,200 meals a month. It is a collaboration of Central, Manito and Moran UMC; St. Mark's Lutheran; Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ; St. Stephen's and St. John's Episcopal; Starr Rd. Baptist, and Second Harvest, Northwest Harvest, Feed Spokane, Rotary 21 and Rockford Lions Club. Volunteers from congregations, agencies, businesses and the community make the ministry possible.

For information, call 455-9019 or email shalomministries10@gmail.com.

## Institute receives grants for programs

The Human Rights Education Institute (HREI) in Coeur d'Alene has received two grants from the Idaho Humanities Council to fund two programs in 2012. The cultural education and human rights awareness programs will reach thousands of students and adults in Kootenai County, said Marilyn Muehlbach, president of the institute board.

One grant will fund Living Voices presentations at Kootenai County schools during the spring. In these multimedia presentations, one actor narrates and interacts with historical film footage to provide students perspective on historical human rights events, said Heather Keen, director of programs and community outreach.

A Nov. 29 to Dec. 2 presentation, "Through the Eyes of a Friend," portrays the Holocaust through the eyes of a fictional friend of Anne Frank. HREI's spring offering will cover another topic.

HREI, at 414 Mullan Ave., will use a second grant for its "Peace Lives Here: A Challenge for the 21st Century" program, which runs through 2012.

The series of films, speakers and forums will highlight Mahatma Gandhi's teachings on the seven social sins: politics without principle, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice.

Bioethicist Kelly Edwards of the University of Washington School of Medicine discussed "Science without Humanity: Ethics in Health Research" in November, looking at the role ethics and humanity play in emerging science and health technologies. For information, call 208-819-7770 or visit www.hrei.org.

## Chicago pastor speaks at Martin Luther King events

The Rev. Stephen Thurston, pastor of New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago and president of the National Baptist Convention of America, is the featured speaker for the 2012 Martin Luther King Day community celebration and rally.

Expecting more than 3,000 people, especially because of the bomb threat last year, planners have set the rally to begin at 10 a.m., Monday, Jan. 16, at the old Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd. across from the Opera House where marchers have traditionally gathered on the

steps. In recent years, the crowd has overflowed outdoors.

The Rev. Happy Watkins, co-chair of the planning committee with Ivan Bush, said there will be several other events.

At 6 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 14, there will be a musical celebration, "Hear the Dream, Feel the Hope," at Calvary Baptist Church, 508 E. Third.

The Commemorative Celebration at 4 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 15, is at Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, 806 W. Indiana.

Thurston, who will preach on the theme, "His Hope, His Dream:

Our Responsibility," is in the Chicago chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was the youngest president in the National Baptist Convention's history when he was elected in 2003.

In addition, civic leaders and clergy will give presentations.

On Monday after the rally, marchers will walk to Riverpark Square for the Community Resource Fair from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and to the STA Plaza for the Children's Resource Fair the same hours.

For information, call 455-8722.

## Union Gospel Mission builds shelter in CdA

Several Kootenai County pastors and churches have banded together to offer shelter, warmth and comfort to women and children suffering from poverty, abuse and addiction, said Debi Pauletto, advancement director at Union Gospel Mission Ministries (UGM) in Spokane.

They are partnering to support UGM's Center for Women and Children, which is under construction at 196 W. Haycraft Ave. in Coeur d'Alene.

Churches collected special offerings on Nov. 20, and some pastors are asking members to give a day's pay to raise \$560,000 for the first year of operating expenses after it opens in August 2012.

The center will provide short-term emergency shelter for women and children in crisis and long-term residential recovery.

Debi said the number of homeless people in North Idaho increased 54 percent from 2009 to 2010 with 27 percent in shelters and 73 percent with no shelter. Of them, 43 percent were women and 21 percent were under 18.

Since 1951, the Union Gospel Mission has provided food, shelter and clothing to people in crisis and has offered ministries of rescue, recovery and restoration to address the underlying issues of homelessness and lead individuals toward lasting life change.

Several pastors recently gathered at the construction site to

discuss their collaboration.

"If we can partner on a mission like this, what else can we partner together on?" said Mike Rima of Lake City Community Church.

Kurt Staeuble at Coeur d'Alene Bible Church said: "I can't come up with any reason to say we wouldn't band together."

Dan Christ of Coeur d'Alene Assembly said, "We want to see broken lives put back together by God's grace. It is a tangible way to be engaged in compassion—to suffer with people."

Serving the poor and ministering to the hurting is a rallying cry for local churches, said Mike. "In transforming lives of women and children who are navigating difficult times, Union Gospel Mission

helps with immediate needs and provides a strategy for people to move beyond symptoms.

"The Body of Christ is about transformed lives," he said.

The pastors' commitment goes beyond financial support, Debi said.

Tim Remington, who runs Good Samaritan Rehabilitation in addition to serving The Altar, said: "It takes a whole community to put feet to the Gospel."

Gary Fox of New Life said the church should not be a museum to attend each week: "We're trying to mobilize everyone to do their part."

For information, call 532-3812 or visit ugmspokane.org/kootenai/ or call 509.535.8510.

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## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DAY CELEBRATION 2012 - SPOKANE

*His Hope,  
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Saturday, January 14

**Hear the Dream, Feel the Hope:** A Musical Celebration  
6-8 p.m. Calvary Baptist Church, 203 E. Third Ave.  
Scholarship Fundraiser for the Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center

Sunday, January 15

**Commemorative Celebration**  
4-6 p.m. Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, 806 W. Indiana Ave.  
**The Rev. Dr. Stephen J. Thurston**  
Pastor, New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church of Chicago  
President, National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., International

Monday, January 16

**Annual Unity March**  
10 a.m. Old Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.  
Community Resource Fair, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
1st & 2nd Floors, Riverpark Square, 808 W. Main Ave.  
Children's Activity Fair, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
2nd Floor, STA Bus Plaza, 701 W. Riverside Ave.

Questions? Call 509-455-8722  
www.mlksokane.org



## Render unto Caesar Reclaiming our Prophetic Voice

2012 Eastern Washington

Legislative Conference

Saturday, Jan. 21, 2012

8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Episcopal Cathedral of St. John  
127 E. 12th Ave. - Spokane

Keynote by **Julia Stronks** of Whitworth University  
Panel on Economic Justice Statements of Churches

**For information, contact**

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FAITH ACTION NETWORK

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# Struggles are not the last word for pastor

*Continued from page 1*

In her 32-year marriage, her husband's military career took her to Idaho where she began studies in psychology, Pennsylvania where she was an emergency room coordinator, and Maine where she volunteered at the base's Family Support Center, as well as to the Philippines, California and Illinois.

The "horrible stuff" Stephey saw in the emergency room and hearing military wives at the base family support center tell of domestic violence were both building blocks toward her compassion and desire to help people.

When her marriage ended in divorce in 1990, she moved to Spokane where her oldest daughter, Rekishia, now 41, was stationed at Fairchild Air Force Base.

That's when she had the vision of having a big house for women and children. Pearl Tadema, a friend at the base chapel she calls "Mama Pearl," challenged her to open the house. Her best friend, the Rev. Patricia Ledlow, pastor at the Church of Berachah, also supported her dream.

"When Pearl said it was time, I told her, 'I have no money.' She said, 'God has lots of money,'" Stephey said. "We started praying and found a realtor."

In 2007, Ophelia Araujo-Islas, director of Spokane ARMS, Abuse Recovery Ministry and Services, introduced her to a benefactor who said, "Tell me your dream." Stephey did and he bought as a gift the five-bedroom house she found on the South Hill overlooking the city.

With an empty house to fill, she and her friends prayed.

Then she began to invite individuals and churches to adopt a room to furnish. KREM-2 reported her request, and soon people adopted rooms, donated food and other necessities, and of-

fered to make repairs. She opened the House of Blessings on Sept. 17, 2007, and welcomed the first two residents in October.

Since then, Stephey as executive director, Patricia as president, and Joy Diaz as program coordinator, have served 12 women and 20 children, who stay up to 16 months.

The program has multiple components—spiritual, educational, emotional, financial, parenting, anger management, basic life skills, nutrition, exercise and employment, Stephey said.

The first goal is for the women to learn to live in community as they recover from domestic violence, abuse and sexual assault.

Another goal is for women to be employed when they leave. One owns a beauty salon. Another is gainfully employed.

Now the goal is also for women to leave with a vehicle, a place to live, furniture and options for their futures.

"It's heartening to see women step out and be successful," she said. "The program works because it's for more than six months. One who was not ready at 16 months stayed two years."

The House of Blessings has that option, because it receives no government funds. It is funded by individual and faith community donations. That gives Stephey, who lives there, the freedom to walk with women and model the power of keeping her eyes on Jesus.

She was recently heartened when a resident's two-year-old said, "We're home," on returning to the house, and said, "Let's pray," when sitting down to dinner.

As assistant pastor at the nearly 50-member Church of Berachah, Stephey has another avenue to serve people.

"The foundation of Berachah, which means 'blessing,' is love. Without love, we have nothing,"

said Stephey, who was ordained in 1999.

Along with preaching and other duties, she prays for Berachah's ministry team who feed homeless men Tuesday evenings at the Truth Ministries shelter on Sprague.

The Church of Berachah, now at Lighthouse Tabernacle, 508 E. 25th, recently affiliated with the Christ Holy Sanctified Church of America. Stephey and Patricia had attended Lighthouse but left eight years ago to form the church, which first met in Patricia's home. In 2003, the church moved to St. John's Lutheran downtown. From 2007 to 2011, it was at 1225 N. Cochran in West Central Spokane, until returning to Lighthouse Tabernacle this year.

When she was 10, Stephey knew she would preach one day, like her father who was a Baptist pastor. At that age, she also began writing poetry as a way to share her conversations with God.

Still writing poetry, she recently wrote a book of poetry for children, *Beeny Weeny Christian Series*.

"I wrote it as a legacy to let my children and grandchildren know how much I love Jesus," she said.

She is completing a third book, *Taste and See*, to help people realize that "once they taste the Lord they will see God is good."

Beyond sharing her values as a prayer warrior, shelter director, pastor and poet, Stephey, 57, is a motivational speaker for K-12 schools, universities, churches and community groups.

She talks about women's issues, self confidence, self esteem and being conquerers, empowering women to do what they put their minds to, encouraging them to go to college, helping them know there's life after divorce and instilling positive attitudes to aging.

For information, call 777-3275 or email sbeans@whitworth.edu.

## Interfaith service uplifts call to care for poor, oppressed

During the 2011 Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at Temple Beth Shalom, speakers uplifted biblical and current call to care for the poor and oppressed.

Rabbi Michael Goldstein of Temple Beth Shalom, quoted from Isaiah's saying, "I hate your feasts," and pointing out that the sacrifice God expects is to free the oppressed and care for the poor, hungry and homeless.

Isaiah pushes people of faith from their comfort zones in piety to link their faith with acts of compassion, justice and humility, the rabbi said, and using their time, talents and treasure to meet needs of those who struggle.

Melissa Cloninger, community relations manager at Second Harvest, reported that the region's food banks are serving more families than even in its 40-year history, feeding 20,000 a week.

Joe Niemiec of the Spokane

Interfaith Council, which organized the event, said the council gathers people of different faith paths to learn to honor and respect each other.

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# Knowing state budget cuts will bring more need, charities educate, advocate, appeal

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*Continued from page 1*  
people with its emergency sleeping programs and shelters to transitional and permanent housing.

For example, St. Margaret's Shelter first provides women shelter and then helps move them to transitional and then permanent housing.

Scott wonders if the state is doing what the City of Spokane did last year, when it said it could not fund the House of Charity's sleeping program in the summer.

"The community stepped up to fund the program rather than see it shut down," he said, "but there are only so many times we can go to our donor base with the threat of programs shutting down."

Catholic social teachings say that the government has a role to play in caring for the needy, he pointed out.

"It is not solely the role of private citizens and nonprofits," he said. "There is a role for the state, as well. We may try to fill the gap, but we'll be overwhelmed."

"What would it really mean for congregations to take responsibility for people seeking services?" he asked. "They come with a spectrum of issues that need specialized care—criminal backgrounds, sexual offenses, mental illnesses, developmental disabilities and substance abuse."

"How equipped are congregations to meet those needs?" he asked, repeating: "Faith communities have a role and responsibility, but so does the state. We have to work together."

In fact, he said, the proposed budget cuts will not bring savings in the long-term, because there will be more deaths, more crime and more poverty. There will be more fights and injuries on the streets, because more people will be living on the streets. He said everyone will also pay through increased health insurance premiums as more people rely on emergency rooms for health care.

Ann Marie added that providing overnight shelter for someone at the House of Charity costs \$4 to \$6 a night, in contrast with the



**Ann Marie Byrd and Scott Cooper**

cost of more than \$100 to house someone in jail overnight. "We will all pay for that," she said.

Scott said he is concerned about effects of the cuts in small, rural communities that some state programs do not reach, because some low-income people may have moved to those communities where the cost of living is lower.

"If disability checks disappear and there's no homeless shelter, where do people go?" he asked.

A Catholic Charities staff member in Colville reported receiving eight to 10 calls a day for assistance as more people there become homeless.

The precursors are power shut offs, loss of employment, families being cut off TANF and people with mental or physical health

issues losing support.

On the increased goal for the Christmas Collection, Ann Marie said Catholic Charities Spokane uses 93 percent of its income for direct services. She added that the community's support of Catholic Charities "help us provide vital, life-saving programs and services to help us meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our midst."

For information, call 358-4266 or visit catholiccharitiesspokane.org.

*Summary of letter to legislators and community is on page 10.*

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# Providence sister seeks to preserve compassionate tradition in health care

By Yvonne Lopez-Morton

As the only Sister of Providence employed at Sacred Heart Medical Center and Children's Hospital, Rosalie Locati said her calling is to honor founder Mother Joseph's vision to help the poor and vulnerable.

Her goal is to preserve the tradition of compassionate health care established in Spokane 125 years ago.

Sr. Rosalie, who has been director of mission and values for Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center and Children's Hospital since 2000, continues to offer guidance to medical and operational staff on how to continue the sisters' mission to reveal God's love for all through compassionate service.

"We have a mandate for employees and physicians at Providence to be true to our mission," she said. "Because I know the Sacred Heart story, my gift is to help people remember it as we write our new story."

In 1887, Sacred Heart welcomed the first patient to the frontier town's first hospital, which had a signed contract from the county to care for the poor at a rate of \$1 per day.

Sacred Heart expanded over the years under the Sisters of Providence, particularly under the leadership of Sister Peter Claver in the 1970s. She was the order's 19th and final administrator. After her retirement in 1988 and as their numbers declined in the 1990s, the Sisters of Providence developed a team of lay ministers to administer their ministries.

The lay leaders were not affiliated with a religious order, but believed in Catholic values and how those values related to providing health care to those in need.

In 2006, Sacred Heart joined the Providence Health and Services system with a common mission of integrating operations and sharing their expertise.

More than 55,000 people serve in the nonprofit Providence network that spans five states—Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Montana and California. More than 8,000 serve in the Inland Northwest alone.

Today Sacred Heart's campus features a 14-floor medical center, a children's hospital, a doctor's building, a women's health center, a neonatal intensive care unit, a surgery center and a faith and healing center.

While Sr. Rosalie said serving the poor and vulnerable has been the core of Sacred Heart's work and that the legacy of the sisters runs deep, she also believes the hospital is more than the ministry of the Sisters of Providence.



Providence Sister Rosalie Locati tells Sacred Heart story.

"It is Jesus' mission," she said. She encourages the physicians, nurses and staff to embrace and tell stories about those who went before them, such as Mother Joseph, Sister Peter Claver, other women religious, and lay men and women.

"I tell employees they are writing the new story about compassionate care and in 50 years the story will be theirs," she said.

Sacred Heart is intentional about hiring people who have a call as servant leaders, she pointed out.

"Part of the mission is to help employees become transformed, be compassionate and become good stewards," she said.

Sr. Rosalie believes the workplace must be a place where people are treated with dignity, respect and justice, and the employees who address the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of those they serve should also be supported.

"It is how we carry out the mission people see everyday," she said. "They know when they have been loved."

She recognizes the challenges of a difficult economy and what that means to institutions that provide critical services.

"We see the needs of the community broadening and escalating when coupled with a poor economy," she said.

In 2010, Providence in Eastern Washington provided free and discounted care to more than 14,000 patients and invested \$87.4 million to ensure people in the region have access to essential services including health care, family support, nutrition, shelter and more.

"I experience deep concern about how we at Providence can be vigilant in service to the poor

and vulnerable, while understanding the challenge of being financially able to provide services," she said.

The early sisters had to make difficult choices and practiced prayerful discernment, Sr. Rosalie said.

"It was not always easy, but it enabled us to be where we are today," she said.

"I see our leaders struggling today with a desire to be faithful to our mission while finding the resources to take care of the needs. We always need to find new ways to provide services," she said. "We're not here to make people happy, but to make them whole."

Sr. Rosalie acknowledges that healing is more than physical. It includes emotional and spiritual wellbeing, such as programs at the Faith and Healing Center.

"Healing is emotional and faith is a partner with physical health. We're not afraid to pray with people," she said.

Sr. Rosalie grew up in an Italian-American family in Walla Walla. At 18, after graduating from DeSales High School, she entered the Sisters of Providence.

After earning a degree in social sciences and her teaching credentials, she spent nine years teaching elementary school in Montana. She also holds a master's in theology from St. Mary's College in Moraga, Calif.

She moved to Spokane in 1980 to serve as co-director of vocations for the Diocese of Spokane.

In 1984, Sr. Rosalie moved to Pullman, where she was part-time and then full-time campus minister at Washington State University for 15 years.

While her heart was in education, she was always aware of health care ministries. After two

years of discussion and discernment and a year's sabbatical, she left WSU to assume her current duties at Sacred Heart.

She recognizes that Providence ministries are part of a larger community to which they must be faithful and in regular dialogue. Sacred Heart partners with people of many faiths and expects the diversity within the ministry to grow as demographics change.

"I see our mission as offering the hope we need so we serve as a guiding light for compassionate health care," Sr. Rosalie said.

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## Gonzaga Law School's clinical education gives access to legal services

Gonzaga University law students make house calls on elderly people as part of their clinical education through University Legal Assistance.

For some, it's their first encounter with low-income people, someone living with many cats or with boxes of possessions accumulated over 50 years.

"Elderly clients have good rapport with students, who spend hours going to their houses, drinking tea, conversing and learning about their lives," said Larry Weiser, the clinical law director.

The clinical law program, now in its 35th year, provides practical experience that serves the community and ties into Gonzaga University's Jesuit mission to serve the community and to bring justice, love and peace.

Larry, who is involved at Temple Beth Shalom, said his motivation comes from the Jewish tradition of "tikkun olam," which means to heal the world.

It's also a way for the law school to show students how law really works.

"Students come with a professional mindset that transcends any personal political ideology or faith," he said. "They find the clients' legal options and advocate for them."

"It's eye-opening for many students, blowing stereotypes as they come to see people as human beings," he said.

Larry said that students achieve more than legal victories. As they research and argue cases, they gain real-world experience and help shape the world in which they will practice law.

The elder law program was established but was not common when he came to Gonzaga Law School 31 years ago to head it. He previously served five years in Legal Services offices in Colville and Mt. Vernon after graduating in 1976 from Gonzaga's Law School.

Larry, who grew up in Fall River, Mass., came to Gonzaga after completing undergraduate studies at Boston University. At Gonzaga, he was among the first students working in the in-house clinic, which Mark Wilson founded in 1977 based on medical schools' residency programs.

Gonzaga's legal services clinic, which was among the first in the United States, began as an elective program. Now three credits of clinical practice at University Legal Assistance or with a public interest law firm are required.

When clinical education was



Larry Weiser oversees law students providing legal services.

an option, about 40 percent of students participated.

"The student-teacher ratio is small and the practice is intensive. It is like a law firm with paralegals, files, staples and all the needs for a law office," said Larry.

Now, there are seven clinics: for business, consumer, environmental, federal tax, general practice and Indian law, in addition to elder law.

In handling 400 cases a year, Larry said University Legal Assistance provides significant services to the community, with Gonzaga University as a major financial supporter to make it possible.

"We do appeals on Medicaid or Social Security, and cases for people exploited out of the equity in their homes or for people abused by a family member."

Some are major legal cases and some are short services like writing a will.

"We moved from a general practice clinic model to seven focused clinics so faculty is able to supervise more students," he said.

Today the American Bar Association demands that law students have an experiential component in their legal education.

"Gonzaga is at the forefront, innovating curricula to provide legal experience, as well as teaching classes with substantive and analytical skills and ethics," Larry said.

"Within the experiential training, ethical issues arise as students interact with clients. There are difficult clients and difficult cases that are not reflected in the case

books," he said. "Our role is to find the facts for meaningful resolution of clients' problems."

Many who went to high schools and colleges in the suburbs had no contact with low-income people.

Students leave Gonzaga understanding experiences of people in need and having contributed to the community, he said.

Larry hears of students who leave and practice public interest law, do pro bono work and serve on nonprofit boards.

"With the recession, people are in greater need across the spectrum. Many elderly people can't meet expenses. When a spouse dies, the income of one disappears, leaving the other destitute or inundated with medical expenses for long-term care or adult family home care," Larry said. He added that elderly people are often exploited by unscrupulous business practices, scams and family members because they are frail and vulnerable to coercion, influence, abuse, exploitation and fraud.

In one case, a client who couldn't function well because of a brain tumor gave financial responsibility to a son. Because he encumbered equity on the house, the bank was ready to foreclose.

In another case, a woman took the equity in her house and refinanced several times until nothing was left. Another person with Alzheimers was put in a facility that cost \$7,000 a month, leaving her husband on the brink of bankruptcy. Another was kicked out of his house for not paying, because

he forgot to pay. Still another elderly couple needed help to keep their medical insurance.

During these times with the increasing need for legal services, funding is dropping for such programs as the Northwest Justice Program, the Volunteer Lawyers Program and University Legal Assistance.

With the recession, there are more divorces and domestic violence cases. With people needing legal services, but with there being less funding, some, for example, are taking classes to do their own divorces. When there are children and custody issues, Larry said, it's wise to have legal assistance.

"Many legal issues are social issues," said Larry, who mentors eight to 10 students a semester.

Each has four to five cases.

Sometimes students don't complete a case during the semester, so Larry either transfers the case to another student the next semester or completes the case himself.

About 35 faculty serve 450 students—down from recent years—in the three-year law program.

Larry knows students now face hard economic times after graduating, but also knows from the bar association that a significant number of the 35,000 lawyers in Washington are over 50, so many will retire in five to 10 years. He advises students to find any job, even go out on their own for now with the hope that job prospects will improve in the next few years.

For information, call 313-5791 or visit [www.law.gonzaga.edu/Academic-Program/law\\_clinic](http://www.law.gonzaga.edu/Academic-Program/law_clinic).



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## Monument honors history of sisters in NW

Catholic Cemeteries of Spokane recently constructed and dedicated the Sisters Memorial Plaza, a commemorative monument in landscape, granite, statues and waterfalls to honor the history and the ministries of women religious in the Northwest.

Jim Falkner, executive director of Catholic Cemeteries since 2008, decided to build the memorial in Holy Cross Cemetery, 7200 N. Wall, after reviewing records and finding 255 Providence, 240 Holy Names, 67 Dominican, 20 of two Franciscan orders (Sisters of St. Frances of Philadelphia and Sisters of Perpetual Adoration), 16 Poor Clare and 12 Good Shepherd among the 27,000 people who are buried there.

The monument, which tells the story of sisters and their ministries in health care, education and social service with people in the region, was dedicated in an Oct. 15 Mass.

The idea for the monument started in 2009 when the Sisters of the Holy Names contacted Jim to buy more graves. Reviewing the records and finding how many were buried at Holy Cross, he decided that it would be an appropriate site for a way to honor their contributions.

There is a history wall for each group.

"I worked with nuns for 35 years," said Jim, who grew up in Spokane, graduated from Central Valley High School and attends St. Mary's Catholic Parish in Spokane Valley.

In 1975 after graduating in business and accounting from the University of Washington, he began his career working with Lemaster and Daniels, which included five years as auditor with the Dominican Sisters and doing audits for Holy Family, Mt. Carmel and St. Joseph hospitals.

When their treasurer left, he served as their treasurer, working 15 years in that capacity and then 12 years as president of the Dominican Outreach Foundation.

Jim also served on the Holy Names investment committee and 30 years with Providence Sisters hospital board committees. He recently completed a three-year term as chair of the Providence Health Care Board.

To create the memorial plaza, he worked with Dominican Sisters Judith Nilles and Bernadette Ries, with Holy Names Sister Celine Steinberger and with Providence Sister Joanne Showalter.

"As many sisters are aging and dying, we wanted to put a permanent recognition of what they have done and who they are," he said, "so future generations can read about them, know their stories and



Jim Falkner sits beside Dominican monument, top. Overview, below, shows the design of the Sisters Memorial Plaza.

Courtesy of Jim Falkner

stop to reflect and pray."

The monument includes some individual stories, along with stories of contributions of the orders and scriptural references.

Jim also said the two-level monument is symbolic, with the granite stone representing the sisters' long-term impact and the water reflecting their collaboration with the wider church. Three streams of water represent the three largest communities with the most sisters buried at Holy Cross—Providence, Holy Names and Dominican.

He said people have bought and donated paver bricks etched with the names of sisters or ministries.

The 80-acre Holy Cross Cemetery, which was established in 1931, paid for the memorial.

When former Bishop William Skylstad asked Jim to be executive director of Catholic Cemeter-

ies of Spokane, he agreed.

"It's a different way to serve in ministry, using my skills from the business world," he said. "The ministry piece drew me."

Jim sees his work as the corporal work of mercy in burying the dead, serving people at a time when they are vulnerable because they have lost a loved one.

"I am respectful and reverent as I help them make decisions about a family member's resting place," he said.

"This work is about the end of life that we hear and think about, but think won't happen," he said. "It happens every day here. We see the good and bad grieving. It's difficult to deal with the end of life, but the ministry side of this work says we are also dealing with the beginning of new life."

For information, call 467-5496 or visit [cathcem.org](http://cathcem.org).

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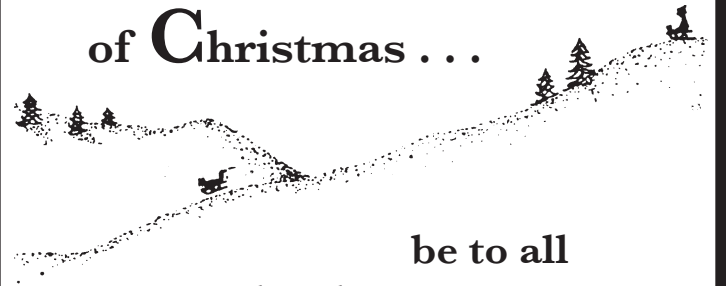
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# Twists and turns lead couple to Mongolia to teach

With the many twists and turns in their lives, the Rev. John Tusan had not realized God was leading him and his wife, Barbara, on a straight line to teach English and assist at a church in Mongolia.

For 15 years, he has served as director of the Greater Spokane Association of Evangelicals, working with pastors to strengthen their ministries.

Barbara has been teaching 27 years at Northwest Christian School—currently fourth grade.

Their global experiences grew when they decided several years ago to host Korean high school students. They had previously hosted Japanese students from Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute for weekend stays.

They also visited a daughter when she studied in Holland and went on a mission trip to Mexico.

Barb taught English as a second language for a month at a camp in South Korea in 2005 and 2006. She earned an ESL certificate in 2008 at Gonzaga University.

At a Mission Catalyst Conference last year at Calvary Spokane, they met a representative of the English Language Institute (ELI) who had taught in Beijing. He said the ELI was looking for English teachers in Cambodia, China, Laos, Vietnam and Mongolia.

That started them more consciously on the path to Mongolia. They were accepted in May.

After five months of training in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, they will teach junior and senior high school English teachers. They will also be assigned to assist at a church.

After graduating from Rogers High School in 1964, two years of college, four years in the military and three years completing undergraduate studies at George Fox College in 1974, John went on to earn a master's degree in theology at Western Evangelical Seminary in 1976 and a master's of divinity there in 1986.

He and Barb, a Ferris High School graduate, met at George Fox. She earned a degree in music education in 1973. He served churches in Oregon, Washington and Idaho. Barb earned credentials to teach elementary school and taught in Priest River before they moved back to Spokane.

John worked five years with World Relief and three with evangelist Luis Palau before he began GSAE.

At GSAE, he has been a pastor to pastors and an ecumenical leader among Evangelical churches. The association's executive team, which helps plan workshops, events, retreats and benefits, currently has a temporary replacement ministry leader.



Barb and John Tusan prepare for mission in Mongolia.

John said his job has three basic responsibilities.

First, he works beside pastors to create healthy churches and with pastors through one-to-one relationships, seminars and workshops on effective ministry.

Second, he is an evangelical voice in Spokane through his relationships with pastors, paraministries—such as Teen Aid, YFC, Cup of Cool Water and City Gate—and business leaders.

Third, he seeks to keep evangelism alive. For him that means to be "spreaders of Good News." It means serving as a connector between pastors, ministries and laity. The GSAE's annual directory is a tool to provide that linkage.

With the three-pronged focus to his work, John said he uses the image of a triangle to symbolize that all parts of his ministry, like the sides of a triangle, are connected. A triangle also represents the Trinity—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—as three in one.

"As pastor to pastors, I spent quality time with pastors because they need support," he said. "Pastors can be hurt. I'm a neutral person and provide a listening ear."

As a people person, he enjoys hearing their stories and speaking to them about their lives. He expects to listen to stories and speak to people in Mongolia, too.

John said the final influence on his decision to go to Mongolia was reading the book, *Radical: Taking Your Faith back from the American Dream*, by David Platt.

Barb said her decision seemed to be "the next step in being available to how the Lord was preparing me for teaching in other cultures. I have been praying, saying yes 1,000 times in advance, knowing that whatever opportunity God would bring we would follow. Nothing happens without prayer."

"Once God opens up a door," John said, "it's an opportunity to make a clear decision."

John said he and Barb make this leap as others in their generation are moving into retirement, ready to kick off their shoes.

"Being healthy and the GSAE leadership team, Barb's school and our daughters giving us the green light, we begin this ministry as an open-ended picture with the paintbrush in the hand of the Painter," he said.

"We have the opportunity to invest spiritually in a young church of people becoming disciples," he said.

"Before last year, it was not on our radar," said John. "It's a step of faith because we have to raise our own support to go and live there."

With a benefit concert at the end of October, they were halfway to their goal. They leave the end of February. His last day at the GSAE is Jan. 15.

For information, call 487-7429 or email [jbtusant@gmail.com](mailto:jbtusant@gmail.com).

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## How are media the message? How do they shape perceptions of faith?

Congregations generally feel anxious about declining numbers and difficulty attracting youth. Given that insecurity, even fear, many may feel pressured to be popular, “with it” and, in my era, “relevant.” In the 1960s, during my journalism studies, the slogan, “The medium is the message,” was coined. Media tend to define the culture. Some may play to insecurities of readers, viewers, listeners and visitors, hoping to foster repeat consumption of their media.

People of faith need to be attuned to best practices in media. Today, we no longer mimeograph newsletters. More congregations are going online to communicate with members and the wider world. Just as the mimeograph had its limits, so do today’s media.

There’s need to use today’s media, sensitive to effective use for credible communication consistent with faith, so the messages and values of the faith community do not become lost in or subsumed by the style of the media.

We hear in communication circles of the faith community that young people are online, so we have to be online. Often the push to be online includes ageism that overlooks that people of all ages are online. Appeal only to young people may miss the mark of who’s online.

Because it is touted as the youth media, however, faith communities race to embrace the ever-changing website and social media tools, which require continual learning. As The Fig Tree does more online, we reflect: If media can easily frame or become the message, how do we avoid having the message of faith distorted by it?

Given the overwhelming maze and information glut online, how much information is enough and how much is so much that is ignored and not read? Do online media keep people busy online consuming content? Do they draw people to events for face-to-face encounters or inspire involvement in community service?

Does the faith community allow its mes-

sage to be changed by trying to fit it into the media? While some mainstream media follow the old definition of “news” as the unusual, conflicts, sensation, violence, sex, celebrity and popularity, others realize that that formula often exacerbates polarizations, stereotypes and exclusion. Some faith groups fall into the trap of allowing themselves to argue polarized perspectives captured in simplistic sound bytes or catch phrases, rather than engaging in thoughtful, respectful discussion, sensitive to the people behind the issues and ideas.

Yes, faith communities hold differing perspectives, but years of ecumenical and interfaith dialogue have brought some areas of convergence that allow for understanding and collaboration. Some media, however, still overplay differences, turning them into shouting matches that turn many people away from *any interest* in faith.

If we remember the adage “divide and conquer,” we may also realize how power politics accentuates differences, particular-

ly related to attitudes about sexual morality.

Media may also chase any hint of hypocrisy in faith communities, overplaying it and making it seem more widespread than it is. What impact does that have on the voice of the faith community? Does polarization on issues of personal morality divert attention from ethical issues related to economic justice, human rights and human dignity?

When people are informed by media that undermine the credibility of faith communities, it’s no wonder many reject religion.

Even though the latest media may be a means to reach young people and new people, we need to be discerning, if it is to enhance faith life and communities. Does it help overcome divisions and isolation? Does it build respect of diverse opinions and people so we can talk with each other? Does it encourage people to think? Does it give tools to help resolve problems?

We need to discuss how media influence faith formation in our society and lives.

Mary Stamp - Editor

## Lectionary readings, other tidbits of wisdom remind us of absurdities

Many churches follow the lectionary list of Bible readings for use in worship services on specific dates. As is often the case, the readings for the day commonly mesh with current headlines. Some in congregations unaware of the lectionary may think a pastor is cherry-picking Scriptures to fit a topic he or she wants to talk about anyway.

Lately Jesus’ parables have been the Gospel readings. Social justice issues illustrated in parables are tightly interwoven with current problems. Once we become attuned to issues we begin to hear connections with other bits of wisdom.

On a recent KPBX Writers’ Almanac, Garrison Keillor said it was Voltaire’s birthday, and read two quotations. One is familiar: “If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.” The other reflects on issues today: “As long as people believe in absurdities they will persist in committing atrocities.”

One absurdity we deal with repeatedly is the idea there must be one ideal solution to a complex problem. If we just find that one solution, we can avoid having to think through details.

Consider homelessness—a gargantuan monster in our midst.

We’re not going to find *the* solution to homelessness. We will have to take many measures, including supporting shelters and transitional housing, and building houses with Habitat for Humanity and other organizations while dealing with the multiplicity of individual and societal problems associated with homelessness.

While the situation grows worse, one candidate for President says cuts in our social safety net will not create more serious problems because churches and other nonprofit organizations will take up the slack. Does he think churches are not being affected by the recession, homelessness,

foreclosures and unemployment?

How would your church manage to find health, food, housing and educational services for, let’s say, 50 homeless people with their variety of serious special needs?

Then imagine how your church would add those costs to its budget.

Various suggestions are being made for dealing with parts of our current predicaments.

Frequently, the main fault found with a proposal is that it won’t take care of the whole problem.

Much of our infrastructure is antique, and it’s more expensive to take care of emergencies, such as burst water mains, than it is to replace the system methodically. However, public works programs won’t completely eliminate unemployment, so that is not the answer to the unemployment problem.

Tax loopholes rob the treasury of billions of dollars, but eliminating them will not

completely finance the social safety net. Deep six that one, too.

We aren’t going to find *the* solution to any complex problem. We need individual action, small group action, large group action, government action at all levels, and thoughtful cooperation among all of them.

With the failure of the so-called Super Committee in Congress, we may face across-the-board budget cuts with intended and unintended consequences. One is the automatic cutting of wasteful spending for the military budget, which tends to be invisible in rhetoric on budget cuts. Wars are an unspoken reason for much of the deficit.

The necessity for an over-simplified approach is a failure of will and an absurdity.

May lectionary readings continue to make us uncomfortable and Voltaire’s gem keep us wary of stumbling into absurdities.

Nancy Minard  
Editorial Team

Service providers

## Sounding Board

Letter to Community

### 42 service providers run ad, ‘We are standing for the poor’

Forty-two social service agencies and faith-based ministries—serving 150,000 people a year, employing thousands and often the last source of hope—signed an open letter to state legislators and to the community to announce: “We are standing for the poor.”

With support of an anonymous donor and discounted ad rate, they ran the letter as a full-page ad in the Spokesman-Review on Thanksgiving.

“Our missions and values demand we stand for the poor,” they said. “We believe legislative decisions involving budget cuts cannot continue to be made at the expense of the poor.”

They said their stand is based on “a moral and fiscal imperative to preserve services for our most vulnerable people.” They point out that if services are delayed or eliminated, “the ultimate costs to our communities will multiply.”

The people they serve are already hurting—many just barely hanging on. They know more cuts will be devastating.

They ask the legislators and community to consider:

- On Nov. 1, adults with mental and physical disabilities lost GAU/Disability Lifeline benefits of \$197 per month. Now only 51 percent of them will receive six months more of rental assistance. Their disabilities will not disappear in that time.

- Requests for domestic violence services in Spokane have increased 21 percent in three years, but the Department of Social and Health Services recommends a

substantial decrease in funding to these programs.

- Untreated and under-treated mental illness is the largest factor driving individuals into poverty. At Catholic Charities, Volunteers of America and Transitions, at least two thirds identify a mental health issue as a reason they sought help. This year Spokane Mental Health has seen a 20 percent increase in the number of assessments for involuntary hospitalization. The state continues to cut funds that help the poor access mental health care.

- A third of the homeless in Spokane are children. The number of homeless families with children increased 38 percent in the past five years.

- The number of parents receiving Working Connections subsidized child care has dropped 26 percent in the last three months. Funds for child-care centers serving poor families and for programs confronting and preventing child abuse and neglect have been or will be cut drastically. Sally’s House, emergency foster care, and Transitions’ Edu Care child care for homeless families will close if cuts are not restored or local funds secured.

- In August, nearly 700 households asked SNAP for housing or rental assistance. The House of Charity, Hope House and St. Margaret’s homeless shelters are filled every night. More than 900 people were turned away last year at those shelters. State dollars for homelessness services and shelters have decreased. Several of Spokane’s largest homeless service pro-

viders are considering program closures or scale backs.

- Second Harvest has seen a 30 percent increase in requests for food assistance in the past two years. More cuts to Human Services and Emergency Food and Shelter Grants are scheduled in coming months. Elimination of State Food Assistance Programs will affect 13,000 people. Where will people in need go for food and shelter—the most basic components to life? they asked.

- Providence Services, which includes Sacred Heart and Holy Family Hospitals, projects a \$34 million budget shortfall in 2011 and a \$61 million shortfall in 2012, with much of those losses coming from public funding cuts in reimbursements for health care. Meanwhile, Providence already spends nearly \$100 million a year in charity care and community benefit donations.

- Signers also expressed concern about angry rhetoric against the poor. “These are our children, brothers, sisters, parents, aunts, uncles and cousins,” they said, troubled by descriptions of the poor and fragile as lazy or “being architects of their own suffering.” As a society, they said, “we are judged by how we take care of our most vulnerable neighbors.”

Signers ask legislators to consider the common good and needs of people who are voiceless, powerless or invisible. They call for people of compassion and faith to contact their legislators and stand with the poor.

For information, call 358-4264.

### Lutheran Community Services holds rally for victims’ rights

A Rally for Victims’ Rights will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Friday, Dec. 2, at 210 W. Sprague.

The state’s proposed budget cuts would terminate the state fund for grants to 39 community programs that deliver prevention and treatment services to victims of sexual assault, said Gaela Baker of Lutheran Community Services (LCSNW).

The Sexual Assault and Family Trauma (SAFeT) Response Center, she said, is the areas’ only certified sexual assault center, providing 24-hour Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Crisis lines.

LCSNW advocates offer support for crisis intervention, medical advocacy and legal advocacy to help people navigate the legal system.

“In 2011, more than 4,000 people called the crisis line seeking services, an average of 11 calls per day,” Gaela reported. “We provided services to 1,429 children who experienced extreme trauma or sexual assault. Our crisis response advocates also provided medical advocacy at local hospitals an average of five times a week.”

For information, call 747-8224.



## Bishop says cuts are a matter of life and death

More than 60 faith and social service providers met Nov. 17 at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church for an emergency summit to learn about and protest Washington Governor Christine Gregoire's budget proposal with \$2 billion in cuts that those gathered believe will slash crucial lifelines for the poor in housing, disability and health care assistance.

"The answer is not to keep shrinking services," said Spokane's Episcopal Bishop James Waggoner, Jr. "We know that if state budget cuts go as projected, people will die. It is a matter of life and death."

With difficult economic times and cuts in state and federal programs, service providers, government agencies, nonprofits and faith groups said they are pressed to the limits of their resources. The agencies are analyzing how cuts will affect their missions.

Panelists from Catholic Charities, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Volunteers of America answered questions on the effects of cuts.

The Rev. Kris Christensen, urban missionary at Holy Trinity and one of the summit organizers, said, "The longer I work in

### Cheney will distribute Christmas gifts to kids

Sally Shamp, director for the Christmas Gifts for Cheney Kids project with Cheney Outreach Center, said distribution of gifts will be the evening of Tuesday, Dec. 13, and the morning of Wednesday, Dec. 14.

Cheney Outreach and Cheney's Emergency Food Bank are now back in the Wren Pierson Building, 615 4th St., which was renovated after a roof collapsed two years ago.

"Many parents in Cheney wouldn't be able to give gifts to their children without our help," said Sally, a member of Cheney United Church of Christ.

Last year, parents of 207 children shopped for free gifts at the gift distribution, staffed by the volunteers. Families must register children by Wednesday, Dec. 7, at the Cheney Outreach Center entrance at 616 Third St. in the Wren Pierson Building.

Donors can put gifts in a collection box or leave them at Cheney UCC, 423 N. 6th St., or can send money to Cheney Outreach, PO Box 444, Cheney 99004.

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ministry, especially in West Central, the more I recognize that the problems of poverty are systemic. We are seeing more hunger and homelessness in our neighborhood, and numbers are increasing at Holy Trinity's Dinner Table."

She said Christians are called to act on behalf of the poor. She quoted the Episcopal baptismal covenant that asks new Christians: "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?"

According to an Oct. 27 Spokesman-Review story, the cuts to social services may be nearly \$381 million from child care, substance abuse treatment and economic services; \$333 million from health care, eliminating the Basic Health plan and Disability

Lifeline; \$365 million from education, including \$150 million in levy equalization, increasing the tax burden on low-income areas.

Through sharing, service providers learned of some programs they had not known about. They also discussed options to increase revenue, close tax loopholes and make smart use of resources. They encourage people to increase support of local charities through their time and talents as volunteers, and through donations. They also urge people to write their elected officials to express their views on the cuts.

For information, call 995-3288 or email [kris@trinityspokane.org](mailto:kris@trinityspokane.org).

Article compiled by resources provided by Sam Fletcher, communications officer for the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane.

## Calendar of Events

- Dec 1-15** • **Silence the Christmas Noise,** advent retreats at Spirit Center, 465 Keuterville Rd., Cottonwood ID, 208-964-2000
- Dec 2** • **First Fridays with the Bishop,** "News from Baltimore: Report from the Annual Bishops' Conference," Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr, 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m., 448-1224
- Dec 2-4** • **Journey to Bethlehem,** South Hill Adventist Church, 5607 S. Freya St., 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, 448-6425
- **"Being Conscious of God's Contact with Us,"** IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr, 448-1224
- Dec 3** • **"Justice Rising: The Advent Call to Solidarity,"** Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center, Providence Auditorium, 20 W. 9th Ave., 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 208-223-1138
- **Gathering of Relations Winter Round Dance,** Healing Lodge of Seven Nations, Garry Middle School, 725 E. Joseph, 7 to 11 p.m.
- Dec 7** • **"A Christmas Carol,"** The Ministry Institute benefit, Spokane Civic Theatre, 1020 N. Howard St., 6:30 p.m., 313-5765
- Dec 8** • **"He Who Is to Come,"** Advent Day of Prayer, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr, 448-1224
- Dec 9** • **Gonzaga Candlelight Christmas Concert,** St. Aloysius Church, 330 E. Boone Ave., Friday, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, 2 p.m., 313-6733
- Dec 10** • **St. Lucy's Candlelight Breakfast,** Benefit for Shalom Ministries, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 7:30 a.m., 455-9019
- **Evening Chanting for Peace in our Community** and the World, Radha Yoga Center, 406 S. Coeur d'Alene St., 7 p.m., 838-3575
- Dec 10, 11** • **Whitworth Festival Christmas Concert,** The Fox, Martin Woldson Theater, 1001 W. Sprague Ave., Saturday, 8 p.m., Sunday, 3 p.m., 777-3280
- Dec 11** • **Messiah Community Sing-along Concert,** First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar St., 4 p.m., 747-1058
- **"Still Your Soul Sabbath Tea,"** St. Joseph Family Center, 1016 N. Superior St., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 483-6495
- Dec 13** • **Holiday Open House and Volunteer Appreciation,** Peace and Justice Action League, Community Building Lobby, 35 W. Main, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., 838-7870
- Dec 14** • **Bowling for Water: FUNdraiser** for Maia project, North Bowl, 125 W. Sinto Ave., 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., 838-7870
- Dec 16-18** • **Ignatius Weekend Retreat,** Father Armand Nigro SJ, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr, 448-1224
- Jan 4** • **Fig Tree distribution,** St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m., 535-1813
- Jan 5** • **Fig Tree Board,** Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1 p.m., 535-1813

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# Wall of crosses, shelves of bread speak of Caritas' caring ministry

A wall of crosses adjacent to a wall with shelves of bread greets people beside the reception area at Caritas Outreach Ministries in Spokane.

Supporting churches and individuals donated the crosses as a visible, unspoken reminder that the help people receive there is from the caring and love of the faith community.

The Latin word, "caritas," is "charity" in English, equivalent to the Greek word, "agape," which means "unlimited loving-kindness to others."

Everyone who comes in receives two loaves of bread and a package of sweets donated by two supermarkets. The bread and sweets line three tiers of shelves on the wall.

Kaye DeLong, executive director, said her role is to pick up the phone, make a call and network to help meet specific needs of people who come in the three days a week Caritas Outreach Ministries is open.

Its small office, food bank and necessities bank at 2929 N. Monroe are staffed by 21 volunteers from a coalition of 14 supporting churches in Northwest Spokane.

The center is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

During those hours, Kaye has four appointment times to meet with people to assist with their needs. Sue Miller, coordinator of Volunteer Chore services, contacts the 18 chore volunteers to meet requests of people.

Volunteers assist with welcoming people and running the food and necessities banks.

Caritas started in 1993 to provide a "Christian caring" presence in North Spokane. It originally served people who live from Wellesley north to Mead and Chatteroy. Those communities are no longer in the service area.

In 2005, Caritas absorbed OMEGA, a similar ecumenical outreach ministry serving North Central Spokane.

Caritas now serves people who are "the working poor" who live from Montgomery north to Hawthorne Rd. and out Waikiki Rd. to Nine Mile Falls. It serves that area from Division west to the Spokane River.

When Caritas started, it was in Assumption Catholic Church. It moved in 1999 to Immanuel Baptist Church and in 2009 to its present location on Monroe.

South of Montgomery, Our Place Outreach Ministries, started in 1987 by Benedictine Sister Meg Sass—who also started OMEGA and Caritas—serves West Central Spokane.

Kaye said Our Place serves



Sue Miller and Kaye DeLong serve people at Caritas.

more people who are on welfare or disability programs. A Rogers High School graduate, Kaye knows the neighborhood. She earned a bachelor's degree in education at Eastern Washington University in 1978 and a master's in counseling and psychology at Gonzaga University in 1983.

Before working at Caritas, she worked 13 years as an adoption social worker with New Hope Child and Family Agency.

Kaye said Caritas reaches out to individuals and families in the neighborhoods of the supporting congregations to address needs that are often "unseen or neglected" with financial, material and volunteer help.

She told of recently meeting with someone who lost his job of 25 years in a specialty trade. She

made calls through her network to find opportunities for him.

"In one family who recently came, the father worked for a fast food restaurant and the mother for a department store chain," Kaye said. "One lost his job and found it hard to find another job. Most work minimum-wage jobs."

Kaye meets with just four people each day Caritas is open because, even though needs may be greater, she has time to work with only a few.

She wants to give each "a chunk of time" so she can learn about what is going on in their lives and what their needs are. Then she helps the people draft a plan of action to meet their needs.

Some don't realize that it just takes a phone call to be on track to earn a GED, she said.

Some may need oil for heating. With the cost now \$4 a gallon, she can arrange for the delivery of only 100 gallons.

With utility assistance, she used to be able to offer to pay the last \$50 of a bill, because there were other sources for utility assistance. Now Caritas may assist with \$200 and negotiate with Avista to give the family six weeks more of utilities. Private donations and a grant from Avista help provide for utility assistance.

Kaye helped a carpenter who came in after he had cut and seriously injured his hand be accepted at the Washington State University engineering school.

"I facilitate things to happen with a phone call," she said, telling of a recent call from someone upset about bird dung accumulating outside a business.

She called and asked someone in her network who arranged to clean it up.

Such success stories are part of her reward.

"I want people to leave here better than when they came because of our assistance, guidance and hope.

Caritas' small food bank is part of the Second Harvest network. Supporting churches also donate food directly.

The Volunteer Chore program helps people with light house-keeping, raking, shoveling and lawn care, said Sue.

"We want to help keep people in their homes," she said.

Churches that work together to make a difference in the lives of "God's children" who are their neighbors are Assumption Catho-

lic, Country Homes Christian, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox, Immanuel Church, Messiah Lutheran, New Beginnings Christian, New Hope Christian Reformed, Pilgrim Lutheran, Prince of Peace Lutheran, Rock of Ages Christian Fellowship, St. Andrew's Episcopal, St. David's Episcopal, Shadle Park Presbyterian and Spokane Friends churches.

The churches help provide funds and volunteers to assist families in crisis needing utility and heat assistance, transportation, food and necessities. Each church contributes what it can.

Volunteer, who come primarily from the churches, supplement the work of three part-time staff—Kaye, Sue and a bookkeeper.

The Catholic Foundation has also provided grants for four years.

For Christmas, Caritas contacts families they have helped to assess their need, rather than have them apply.

"We give the adults age-appropriate gifts to give to their children," she said.

Sometimes her assistance comes through a prayer with a person who comes in, not for proselytizing, but a prayer that expresses the "caritas" or "love" from which the assistance and caring emerges.

Kay added that the aim is to try not to give repeated help to families so they don't build dependency.

Instead she seeks to connect people so they are empowered with the tools to make the contacts they need.

For information, call 326-2249.

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