

34TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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FEATURES 35+ EVENTS



Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest
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Post-fire generosity amazes, continues

By Mary Stamp

As neighbors and strangers have volunteered to rebuild uninsured homes since the 2014 Carlton Complex Fire and 2015 Okanogan Complex Fire, Carlene Anders of Pateros said the communities affected are emerging closer and stronger.

From three years of coordinating the Okanogan County Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG), she is amazed by stories of survivors, volunteers and donors.

"Survivors who helped each other have recovered much faster. When people helped, even if they were injured, they recovered faster because they felt connected," she said. "Some who did not lose their homes found that helping others relieved their survivor's guilt."

The Okanogan County LTRG has videos recording stories and progress from fire to ashes to recovery online.

Carlene will gather survivors, volunteers and donors to share stories at a Reflection and Appreciation Event July 18 to 22, 2018.

An Israeli man who immigrated from Morocco was overwhelmed by the generosity of people helping him in his time of loss and sorrow. He plans to pass on their kind-



Carlene Anders has prepared a presentation telling story of rebuilding from ashes.

ness: "The pond will never stop refilling," he said.

Carlene now is spending time in Texas sharing videos, tips, stories and what she has learned about long-term recovery. She has helped start the National Disaster Leadership Team to mentor groups starting long-term recovery organizations since Hurricane Harvey and flooding.

"I'm amazed," Carlene said over and over about how volunteers and donors from 32 states, four countries and local communities have stepped up to help.

The 2014 Carlton Complex Fire was the largest single wildfire in Washington history, burning 415 square miles, 576 structures, utility infrastructure, cattle and wildlife, vehicles and crops. Since the fire, she has helped coordinate efforts, first in Pateros/Brewster, the Methow Valley and the Chiliwist area. Then after the 2015 fire season, the Okanogan County LTRG added representatives from local Long Term Recovery Organizations (LTROs) in Chelan, Tonasket/Oroville, Omak/Okanogan and the Colville Tribe.

She now oversees the Multi-County LTRG, which has assisted

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Homeless Connect is an opportunity for assistance one day in one place

More than 50 agencies that serve people who are homeless will be in one place on one day as a convenience for more than 300 people who find it hard to access services because they focus each day on finding where they will sleep and eat.

Carrying their gear everywhere and lacking transportation add to the difficulty.

The Annual Spokane Homeless Connect is like one-stop shopping for medical and dental care, flu shots, foot care, haircuts, winter clothing, a food bank, a hot meal, a veterinarian, bike repair, new

IDs, "warrant quashing," housing and more.

It will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 25, at the Salvation Army Community Center at 223 E. Nora Ave.

Among the service providers who will be there are the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Department of Licensing, Social Security, CHAS (Community Health Association of Spokane), SNAP, Catholic Charities Spokane, Union Gospel Mission, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Veterans Administration, Goodwill, Vol-

unteers of America (VOA), the Salvation Army, the Community Court and many other nonprofit agencies, ministries and government entities.

The first two years—2011 and 2012—Homeless Connect drew about 150 people to meet with 20 service providers at Emmanuel Family Life Center.

It outgrew the space and may soon outgrow the Salvation Army Community Center where it has been since then, said Renee Norris, Rapid Rehousing case manager with Catholic Charities Spokane, a member of the organizing team.

"We do it to lower barriers to housing and jobs for people who are homeless, allowing them to do as much as possible in one day," Renee said.

Every year watching Washington State University (WSU) nurses as they wash people's feet, check their feet for diabetes and cut their toenails brings tears to her eyes.

"It reminds me of Christ washing people's feet," she said. "To

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Personal aid supplements larger relief organizations

With reports that power outages will continue into next year in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria flattened and twisted much of the island in mid-September, Jeanette Zaragoza De León, a doctoral visiting research scholar at Yale Divinity School and native Puerto Rican, thought of solar power when friends and colleagues asked her how they could help.

Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp, who worked with her in 2000 in New York City for five months, was among those asking.

After she raised nearly \$2,000, Jeanette flew there in mid-October—in part to check on her mother—taking three suitcases with solar lights, solar kits, medical equipment and other items family and the community could use.

Flying in over San Juan, she noticed the trees were a brownish color. The hurricane had blown off all the leaves. It looked like a war zone. Within three weeks, "new lime-green leaves were spouting." She also saw many blue FEMA tents and tarps covering roofs.

The solar kits, which help solve the temporary lack of electricity, are a renewal energy source that may "be a step in the right direction for Puerto Rico's energy sector," she said.

Jeanette noted that "washing on wooden planks is trendy these days."

"Gas generators cause environmental problems and people can't sleep because they are noisy," she said, "but they need the power for refrigerators and other needs.

Compounding the problems, people are not sleeping, because they don't have electricity for fans, and because of mosquitos, outside noise and stress. It's affecting their health and adding to their stress, she said.

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Around the World

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WCC reads interfaith statement at COP23

An interfaith statement the World Council of Churches (WCC) delivered to the plenary of COP23 on Nov. 16 said: "It is our moral and ethical responsibility to take collective and immediate actions to address climate change and to safeguard life on our planet."

Frances Namoumou, representing the WCC and the Pacific Conference of Churches, read the statement to the plenary of the High Level Ministerial Segment of the 23rd Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP23), in Bonn, Germany, where the United Nations Climate Change Conference took place.

The text emphasizes the urgent situation of the people in the Pacific, stating that it is "a matter of justice that wealthy nations responsible for the bulk of global emissions provide financial and other forms of support to income-poor, vulnerable countries, enabling the latter to adapt and build resilience to a warming climate as well as compensating for loss and damage."

WCC Executive Committee speaks to world issues

Speakers at the Nov. 17 to 23 World Council of Churches (WCC) Executive Committee meeting in Amman, Jordan, emphasized peace, justice and unity as it discerns its way forward and evaluates its work. The Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, All Palestine and Jordan, Theophilos III, said, "The world is united in the view that a vital Christian community is essential in the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious landscape of the Middle East."

WCC general secretary the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit said that as the WCC moves towards the mid-term between its 10th and the 11th assemblies, "we live in a world where the dividing and fragmenting powers are strong." As it prepares for its 70th anniversary in 2018, the WCC is demonstrating how it is alive and taking new initiatives for the sake of the unity of Christians.

During a recent visit to the Pacific region, he was reminded of "being united as humanity, as creation and as sisters and brothers in Christ," he said. "Hurricanes and extreme weather with drought, rain and wind in many parts of the world make more around the world feel what peoples from the Pacific have been experiencing."

- **The WCC body appeals "to the world community,** particularly countries involved in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, to support urgently and generously the reconstruction of infrastructure and communities (including psycho-social trauma healing programs) and initiatives to promote social and religious cohesion in Iraq."

- **They issued a statement on the detention** of and its belief in the innocence of Bishop Carlos Morales of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente and its concern about the situation in Mindanao, Philippines, where the bishop has advocated dialogue, justice and peace in the midst of escalating tensions and violence.

- **They expressed concern on how church institutions** and properties in Jerusalem are threatened because of disputed legality, efforts of settler groups and government policies.

- **They fear the cycle of confrontation** on the Korean peninsula might slide into nuclear warfare, even as steps are being taken towards the global elimination of nuclear weapons with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

- **They expressed concern that the Amazon River** and watershed, "the green heart of the earth, is mourning, and the life it sustains is withering," even though the forest loss has slowed since 2004 and has been reversed in the last two years.

- **As developments in Zimbabwe have led** to the resignation of President Robert Mugabe after 37 years in power, the WCC welcomed the joint statement Nov. 15 of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference and Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe reflecting the common mind and witness of churches there. The WCC affirms the call of churches for prayer for the nation, for calm and peace, for respect for human dignity and rule of law, for a transitional government of national unity and for an inclusive national dialogue to build a democratic state.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Eastern Washington Legislative Conference is Jan. 27

More directories will be printed in Dec.

Based on requests so far, The Fig Tree will publish another 1,200 to 1,500 copies of the annual comprehensive Resource Directory in early December. Anyone wishing copies should call 535-1813 or email mary@thefigtree.org.

"We are also seeking additional community partners to help cover the \$2,500 printing cost, said Malcolm Haworth, directory editor.

"**Framing Faithful Discourse** for the Common Good" is the

theme for the 2018 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference on Saturday, Jan. 27, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

Participating in a panel discussion on that theme will be Sandy Messick, executive minister for the Northwest Region Disciples of Christ, Bishop Gretchen Rehberg of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, Gregg Sealey, Inland District United Methodist superintendent, and Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane.

Plans are underway for the 2018 Benefit Lunch buffet on Friday, March 9, and the Benefit Breakfast buffet on Wednesday, March 14. Both are in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University. Speakers will discuss "Including Everyone: We Need Each Other" as the theme for the 2018 benefits.

The Fig Tree is recruiting hosts to invite benefit guests, and volunteers to help with deliveries, mailings, displays and at events.

For information, call 535-1813 or email mary@thefigtree.org.

Christmas Bureau ready to share joy

The Christmas Bureau, the annual holiday assistance program coordinated by Catholic Charities Spokane, Volunteers of America, and The Spokesman-Review is made possible by the funds and many volunteer hours donated by community members and organizations. It gives toys, books, and grocery store vouchers to thousands of low-income individuals

and families. The 2017 Christmas Bureau will be open from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday, Dec. 8 and 9, Monday through Saturday, Tuesday, Dec. 11 through 16, and Monday, Dec. 18, at the Spokane County Fair & Expo Center 404 N. Havana, AG Building.

In 2016, the Christmas Bureau raised \$540,073 to help 26,012

individuals, provide grocery gift certificates for holiday meals for 7,540 households and give 13,786 children new books and toys.

More than 500 volunteers assisted last year, said Sierra Heinen, Christmas Bureau coordinator.

Those seeking gifts need a photo ID and utility or phone bill, or rent receipt. For details, call 358-4254 or email sheinen@ccspokane.org.

Tree of Sharing marks its 35th year

Since 1982, the nonprofit Tree of Sharing has served "often forgotten" members of the community.

"With the support of volunteers, this December, we celebrate 35 years of service to the Greater Spokane Area and are now serving a total of 57 agencies," directors Carl and Joan McConnell said.

The Spokane Tree of Sharing program has grown to be the largest in the country, they said.

Tree of Sharing tables with tags for shoppers to pick up and fulfill requests are at the second floor of Northtown Mall, the first floor of River Park Square and the first floor of Spokane Valley Mall through Monday, Dec. 17. Tables are open during mall hours.

For the 2017 Tree of Sharing, there are 7,982 gift requests. Volunteers are at the tables and sign out the gift tags. Shoppers return new, unwrapped gifts to

those tables. The board of directors represents the diverse, area-wide participating agencies which they serve.

Sponsors include STCU, Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, KREM 2 TV, Thomas Hammer Coffee, Washington Air National Guard 242nd Combat Comm Squadron.

For information, call 808-4909 or visit treeofsharing.org.

Moody Bible Institute Spokane will close

Moody Bible Institute - Spokane recently announced that it will close the Spokane campus after the 2017-18 academic year, but Moody Aviation will continue to be offered in Spokane to equip students in missionary aviation technology.

Jack Lewis said he has been involved since first attending the school in 1973. He was an adjunct teacher beginning in 1983, a board member, taught as the only full-time faculty and became dean in 2005.

He said Moody is exploring the next chapter, including options for online classes, adjunct classes,

modular classes and video classes.

Moody Global Ministries in Chicago announced that it will be "repositioning the ministry" as they face "challenging ministry trends and financial demands" to build on its more than 130-year legacy of "equipping people with the truth of God's Word," said Paul Nyquest, president.

Moody Bible Institute - Spokane, housed at Fourth Memorial Church, 611 E. Indiana, had 40 students in 2004, 168 in 2008 and 260 by 2010, plus agreements with Gonzaga University and Whitworth University libraries giving MBI students access.

For information, call 487-1769 or email jack.lewis@moody.edu.

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JAN. 27	FEB. 20	FEB
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Stay up to date with the details:
<http://fanwa.org/interfaith-advocacy-day/>

FAITH ACTION NETWORK
 A Partnership for the Common Good

Contact: fan@fanwa.org ~ (206) 625-9790

Editor's friend visits home in Puerto Rico, reports on the conditions

Continued from page 1

Someone told her, "I can't sleep, so I'm praying for the day I can sleep."

"I found things worse than I expected," she said. "Recovery will take a long time. Many problems from before are flourishing, but people are finding community."

She is referring to the more than \$70 billion debt crisis and government corruption.

Jeanette believes, however, it's also a time of opportunities, a time to create a new history.

People were grateful for what she brought but need so much more.

Jeanette, an ordained United Church of Christ minister, delivered the solar kits to women survivors of domestic violence who live in transitional housing. Some solar kits went to rural areas. She brought some medical supplies and headlamps for an acupuncture clinic, and a tumbler hand washing machine.

"Because people are asking what they can do and where they can give, I connected with three local organizations and plan to raise \$25,000 on Go Fund Me for solar generators, which cost about \$1,300 each, water filters, and more. The organizations are Casa Julia de Burgos, women's shelter, the Salud para Puerto Rico, free public health clinics,



Jeanette Zaragoza de León, right, visits shelter. Staff, right photo, appreciate solar lights they will share with the women.

and Amanecer 2025, ecological and self-sustainable group.

"I'm not asking for money to give to people, but to bring services," she said, noting that right now there is more one-to-one help reaching people because of personal connections, people who know people, and people being present with people.

"Some people are leaving, but some who need help, like my mother, want to stay to be part of the resolution," Jeanette said.

"I will go again after I raise

funds," she said.

"There are relief organizations, but not enough relief is reaching people," Jeanette said. "The support may need to be decentralized rather than centralized because the government does not work."

She said FEMA has not yet gone to all the towns that were hit the hardest by the hurricane.

Many national denominations and faith organizations are now gearing up for the work of long-term recovery, which is typically their role after disasters.



"In some cases, it takes longer for bigger organizations to reach people," she said. "Even they cannot reach everyone."

Many people with connections are able to reach different parts of Puerto Rico, so that means more people are reached, she said, noting, "I don't have overhead. I can just go with what people need."

"We know the people who are donating. We are accountable to them," said Jeanette, who took pictures of what she purchased and pictures of giving the items to people.

"No one had yet taken things to the people I took things to," she said. "I try to find organizations not served so my efforts are not duplicating what others are doing."

Beside whatever help she can bring to Puerto Rico, Jeanette hopes to inspire other people to act and do more.

Jeanette serves as the multilingual and cross-sectional worship pastor at Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City, where she leads multilingual-multi rhythmic worship centered

in social justice.

Her bachelor's from Lesley College is in early childhood education and her master of divinity degree from Pacific School of Religion included studies at seminaries in San José, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico and Jerusalem.

In December 2011, she earned a master's degree in translation at the University of Puerto Rico. In 2016, she completed requirements for a master's degree in research in translation and interpretation studies from Universitat Jaume I, Castellón de la Plana, in Spain. Her thesis addresses a challenge to slavery through The Amistad Case.

In addition to her ministry, for 10 years she has been a professional court, medical and conference translator and interpreter.

This year, as a doctoral visiting researcher at Yale Divinity School, she continues research on The Amistad Case, Christian abolitionists and liberation.

For information, email jeanette.zaragoza@yale.edu or jaragoza@parkavenuechristian.com or visit gofundme.com/solkits4PR.

LeaderBuild offers to transform leaders

LeaderBuild Northwest is offering an action-oriented, collaborative experience to "transform leaders in the context of following Jesus" during four Thursday evening through Saturday gatherings in January, February, April and June.

Between the gatherings, mentors will lead small cohort groups to engage in peer consulting and action learning related to local organizations.

LeaderBuild was created for local leaders in businesses, churches, nonprofits, ministries, politics, education and public service.

"It is for people who want to lead their organization in a new direction.

"Leadership can be lonely, but it doesn't have to be," said Jan Stuart, who has the title "lead architect" with the program. "We have designed LeaderBuild as a collaborative way to equip leaders with relationships that will last beyond the sessions.

"Faculty are followers of Jesus Christ with real-world leadership experience, not primarily academics," she said. "LeaderBuild is not just a source of information, static tools, another seminar or a typical classroom. It is a fresh, unique collection of integrated, applied experiences, insight and practical tools that tackle the challenges and opportunities that leaders face."

Topics include engaging and involving others, holding people accountable, choosing the right strategy, implementing change and overcoming a resistant culture.

Faculty for the sessions include consultants, authors, CEOs, pastors, business leaders.

They are Scott Rodin of Whit-

worth Community Presbyterian Church; Wayne Williams, an elder at Real Life Ministries in Spokane Valley; Jan Stuart of Real Life Spokane; Kevin Parker of Life Center; Rodney McAuley of Victory Faith Fellowship and Spokane Youth for Christ; Derek Tyree of Valley Real Life and Liberty Lake Church; Richie Shaw, lead pastor at Real Life Spokane; Jeff Suderman of Indian Wells, Calif.; Scott Montgomery of Hamilton, Ontario; Deb Crossland of Westminster Presbyterian; Latisha Hill of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Katherine Morgan of St. Dominic's Chapel in Post Falls.

For information, call 703-0296 or visit <https://www.leaderbuild-nw.org/register/>.

Join in a new *Christmas Tradition* With Family & Friends *Fourth Annual Spokane Christmas Church Walk & Carol Sing* **Tuesday, Dec. 26** 2 to 4 p.m. start at New Community Church at 518 W. Third, then to Westminster United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, and then to Central Lutheran, 512 S. Bernard. **Sponsored by the American Guild of Organists** **535-7145**

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The breakfast and luncheon are complimentary. Guests will be invited to donate to support The Fig Tree.

CALL 535-4112 or 535-1813 email mary@thefigtree.org

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FAITH ACTION NETWORK A Partnership for the Common Good Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington THE FIG TREE Inland United Methodist District

Recovery and rebuilding are still underway from wildfire disasters

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2014/2015 fire survivors across Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, Stevens and Ferry counties, and Colville Tribal lands.

The mission is to see that everyone displaced by the fires develops a plan of recovery and has safe, secure housing.

Fire is not new to Carlene. It has been part of her life for 30 years. After graduating from Pateros High School, she studied communication and outdoor recreation at Washington State University full time for two years. Then she studied a semester a year for four years and paid her way through college by fighting forest fires.

When she was 18, she fought fires Carlene the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for two years. In 1986, she went to work with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), becoming one of the two first women in the state to smoke jump at North Cascades Smokejumper Base in Winthrop. She spent several more years into the mid 1990s fighting fires with the USFS.

She joined the Douglas-Okanogan Fire District #15 as a volunteer firefighter, responding out of the Methow and Pateros fire stations from the early 1990s to 2002.

Her grandparents moved from Montana to Brewster/Pateros in 1947. Her mother graduated in Brewster. Her father was a Navy pilot. Carlene was born in Chula Vista, Calif. In 1974, her parents bought an orchard and settled again in the Methow Valley.

In 1988, Carlene married Gene Dowers, whom she met in the rowing program at WSU. After she graduated in 1990, they were in Seattle a year for her internship with the U.S. Rowing Association, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and The Goodwill Games.

After coaching women's rowing two years at Gonzaga University, Gene completed a master's and coached rowing a year at WSU in Pullman. In 1993, they moved to her grandmother's place on the Okanogan River in Brewster.

Carlene taught PE at Pateros until her daughter, Jessi, was born in 1996. Then she opened a daycare/preschool and coached track and field. She was The Loup Loup Ski Bowl's ski school director for 17 years.

In 2002, their son Danny was born prematurely, at 24 weeks, weighing one pound 10 ounces.

"His birth changed our lives. The little frustrations of life melted away. We could clearly see what was truly important," she said.

She then resigned from the fire department to spend more time caring for their son. They spent most of 128 days with Danny in a Seattle hospital. The community rallied behind them, helping them keep their preschool/daycare open. For Carlene, the long-term recovery work has been a way to pay the community back.

In 2012, Danny was doing well,

so when Jessica was 16 and joined the Fire Department, Carlene joined again. Jessica graduated from high school in 2014.

On Monday, July 14, 2014, there were 256 lightning ground strikes in Washington. By Tuesday, four strikes still were burning in the Methow Valley and on Thursday, July 20, they merged into the largest wildfire in the history of Washington State.

"I have never seen such a fire. We were dispatched Tuesday at 5 p.m., and did not stop until 6 a.m. Saturday," Carlene said. "Thursday at 1 p.m. winds picked up to 70 mph and the fire went crazy.

"I was up the valley protecting a ranch and called my mother to tell her to prepare to evacuate. She could not see the fire," Carlene said.

Later that day, learning Pateros' water source was threatened, all Pateros units went there. They had to decide whether to save houses or the business district.

"We chose to save the business district. If it was lost, no one would come back to rebuild," Carlene said.

Some firefighters went around Pateros, Alta Lake and nearby areas with a megaphone telling people to evacuate. Thousands left.

Yancey's Hardware on the main street caught on fire. Firefighters put it out and saved downtown.

The fire burned through August. It was fully contained Sept. 8.

Pateros lost 10 percent of its houses, 40 in all, plus Alta Lake lost 52 homes. Carlene's mother's home up McFarland Creek perished as well.

About 40 percent had insurance and rebuilt. The LTRG has helped rebuild 21 uninsured houses to date. Before the fire, 660 lived in Pateros and after it, 525. Now there are 580.

After the fire, Carlene, who still fights fires, gave up her job at the preschool. She was appointed to the Pateros City Council in late 2014 and was elected mayor of Pateros two years ago.

She began with the Pateros/Brewster LTRO in September 2014 and became executive director of Okanogan County's LTRO Jan. 1, 2015.

With the LTRG, she connects with people she knows across the county and region. Thousands of people have been involved. In 2016 alone, people had given nearly 45,000 volunteer hours.

Volunteers came from Amish

communities across the U.S., AmeriCorps, Catholic Relief Services, Christian Aid Ministries, Jesuit Volunteer Corps NW, Mennonite Disaster Services, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, United Methodist Committee on Relief, World Renew of the Christian Reformed Church, and area Baptist, Catholic, Four Square, Independent, Latter-Day Saints, Presbyterian, United Methodist and other churches.

People from church and non-profit groups still come to help. Groups worked in November to build homes on four foundations poured in October.

"Now when folks come, they wonder where the fire was, because much of the area is green. They don't know what was once here," Carlene said. "Long-time residents know where a house, fence or shed once stood. We see what is missing all the time."

While people lost everything—including the documents they needed to file claims—people were resilient and resourceful, Carlene said.

For two years, a teen whose mother's uninsured home burned down recruited volunteers to help his mother and him collect and load metal from 127 burned homes. They sold it to rebuild their home.

Foundations of burned structures were compromised, so pieces were hauled to a city lot, ground up and used as new sidewalks.

Most had to rebuild on their own with no federal funding, because FEMA denied individual assistance, Carlene said.

The LTRG used volunteers, donations and grants to rebuild. In phase two, they finished replacing 15 homes. In phase three, eight more are planned, bringing the total homes replaced to 35. The final five will start in the spring with the goal to finish next fall.

There have been 1,700 cases referred to Disaster Case Management (DCM) for resources. Unmet needs go to the "Roundtable," donors who have met at 9:30 a.m. Fridays for three years to review anonymous cases. The Okanogan County LTRG has distributed more than \$680,000 in funds over the past three years on behalf of partner agencies and groups towards unmet needs.

In addition to visiting newly forming LTROs in Texas, Carlene has traveled extensively to visit and thank groups who came.

"The Pateros Methodist Church

is my church, but I used to ski on Sundays, so I didn't go often. Now I go to churches to visit people who helped us. I have gone to church more in the last two years than in the 10 years before," she said.

Media helped tell the story and draw volunteers, but tourists saw the devastation and stayed away.

While Carlene expects the loss

of tourism will impact the economy for a while, the economy has been strengthened by volunteers, who stay in hotels, eat at restaurants and shop in town, and by the influx/sale of resources needed for rebuilding.

For information, call 509-449-3235, email carltoncomplexrebuild@gmail.com or visit okanoganrecovery.com.

For more copies of the 2017-18 Resource Directory CALL 535-1813 TO HELP UNDERWRITE printing more copies, send check to The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202

No one should be alone for the holidays...not even the Grinch



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Symphony chooses churches as venues for two baroque concerts

In early December and again in March, Spokane Symphony musical director and conductor Eckart Preu will present baroque music in its intended setting—churches.

A “big fan” of baroque music, he said he chose churches for the concerts instead of the symphony’s home at Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, because they offer a smaller, more intimate setting than a concert hall, with acoustics appropriate to that musical genre.

Thirty-six of the symphony’s 70 musicians will perform “A Festive Baroque Christmas” at 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 9, at Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, and at 3 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 10, at Spokane Valley Church of the Nazarene, 15515 E. 20th Ave.

The repertoire will include sacred as well as non-sacred baroque music. The baroque period from 1600 to 1750 after the Renaissance includes such composers as Vivaldi, Handel, Bach and Corelli.

“We are going not only for intimacy, but also for outgoing, shiny, brilliant, joyful music,” he said.

The concerts will be filled with nostalgic Christmas music, trumpets, harpsichord, violin solos by Concertmaster Mateusez Wolski and Principal Second Violinist Amanda Howard-Phillips, and Handel’s Royal Fireworks Music.

“In early times, the church was one of the big employers of musicians like Mozart and Bach. Churches and aristocrats were the employers of baroque musicians. There was much music composed for churches in the baroque or classical styles, such as requiems, masses and cantatas,” he said.

For Eckart, music meets an inner need like food.

He grew up with music in a town near Dresden, then in East Germany. He was singing and playing piano at the age of four. At 10, he began singing in the Dresden Boys Choir, Dresdener Kreuzchor, becoming a soloist, rehearsal pianist and assistant conductor.

He earned a master’s degree in conducting from the Hochschule für Musik in Weimar, and also studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris in France.

As winner of the National Conducting Competition of the German Academic Exchange Service, Eckart came to the U.S. in 1996 for graduate studies at the Hartt School of Music in Connecticut.

To Eckart, music is more than



Eckart Preu plans two series of baroque concerts.

Photo courtesy of the Spokane Symphony

something he does just for himself. Because he performs music professionally, he shares his passion for it with others.

While performing symphonies is an art form, it is not like writing or painting that produce art to be read or seen later.

“Music is performed and the response is immediate in the energy and applause of the audience. Performing artists face the audience. There is no time separation between creating it and performing it. It’s right there. There’s risk in performing, but there is also spontaneity and immediacy,” Eckart said.

As a result, every time he performs the same piece it is different, based on the different atmosphere of the audience. Even if he knows a piece well, he said that each time it’s different.

“It never gets old. There’s always a renewal process, viewing the musical notes differently, so they do not mean the same,” he said.

Eckart likened it to reading Shakespeare. The letters and words do not change, but how it is read and interpreted every time changes, depending on one’s mood, maturity and age.

“Music is nonverbal, but similarly, even though the music notes are the same, they mean something different. The wonderfulness and cursedness of music is how we interpret what it means,” he said.

As Eckart prepares for the December and March baroque concerts, he said variations will result with the 36 musicians, the different instruments used and different interpretations.

“Even if the people in the orchestra are the same, their mood and atmosphere may be different. I am different. They are different. We are professional and we play the same notes, but the performance and flow, the presence and energy are different every time,” Eckart said.

That sets an immediacy to the expression. The orchestra rehearses and knows the tempo, but every time he adds something to the performance that was not planned, or something born out of the moment, changing the phrases and pace.

That’s why it’s important to be attentive to the conductor. The orchestra is not just playing notes and rhythm. The musicians are responding to the conductor’s interpretation.

“People can read, but it’s about how they read. People can cook, but it’s about how a chef cooks the ingredients that makes a difference,” said Eckart who lives in Spokane with his wife, Neelley, and daughters, Sophia and Victoria.

Eckart is in his 14th season as

music director and conductor of the Spokane Symphony. This fall he announced that next season (2018-19) will be his last one in Spokane.

This year, he added a new role as music director with the Long Beach (California) Symphony Orchestra and this summer he started conducting the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra. In addition to his Spokane Symphony duties, he, like many American conductors who are in demand, takes on several part-time conducting jobs.

“Spokane is my American home,” said Eckart, whose wife is from Spokane, “but I need to follow opportunities, as I will do after the 2018-19 season. We will return to Spokane to visit family and friends.”

Eckart said one of his goals during his tenure has been to improve the Spokane Symphony, and he’s pleased with the quality of the orchestra and its musicians.

“I’ve introduced new music and the idea that music can be fun to attract new audiences,” he said.

“Opening the Fox was a big deal. It has community connections, support and recognition as a major part of the community, even beyond people who come to performances,” he said. “It brings a civic pride.

“We go outside the Fox and

into the community and churches to broaden the influence of the orchestra, to create new access points,” Eckart said.

Going into churches for the baroque concerts makes the concerts meaningful to people of faith, as well as people without religious affiliations. Symphony collaborations with churches are a possibility for the future, too. This is a pilot year for the baroque concerts. If response is strong, they will continue.

On Saturday, March 17, and Sunday, March 18, Eckart will again perform baroque concerts at the same churches, with concerts titled, “Venice, The Magical City.”

For information on tickets for single concerts or the two-concert series, call 624-1200 or visit www.spokanesymphony.org.

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Homeless Connect is one-day opportunity for people to access resources

Continued from page 1

wash someone's feet is to pay attention to them. It's a moment of human connection."

Kari Chapman, a community health worker with United Health, has helped organize Homeless Connect since a group from the Homeless Coalition learned at a Stand-Down Idaho event for homeless veterans about a one-day Homeless Connect event in San Francisco.

Also on the planning team is Maurice Smith, media liaison with the Spokane Homeless Coalition, the parent organization for Homeless Connect.

The Homeless Coalition, which Bob Peeler of SNAP helped start 30 years ago with four others, is now a broad coalition of service providers.

Maurice has 728 names on the mailing list. They represent about 200 congregations, ministries, nonprofits and government agencies.

Three-fourths of them have attended meetings in the last 18 months to network. About 80 to 120 come each month from 9 to 10:30 a.m. on first Thursdays at the Gathering House at Garland and Post, a coffee shop and church.

Maurice has been in the Homeless Coalition since 2005, when he co-founded Feed Spokane. He has also been involved with Truth Ministries, serving men who are homeless.

When a business he started and ran several years went bankrupt, he and his wife lost their house and were homeless until a friend invited them to live at Living Springs Ranch near Deer Park, which they then managed for five years.

"It's amazing to see the diverse group work together on the common goal of serving people who are homeless and marginalized in the community," he said.

In a 2012 survey of 512 food banks, conducted with Second Harvest, he learned that for a third of them, transportation was a major barrier to accessing services.

Organizers scheduled Homeless Connect on Jan. 25, the day of the annual HUD Point in Time Count that determines HUD Continuum of Care funding agencies need.

"Federal dollars are funneled into social services based on those figures," said Kari.

Some funds for Homeless Connect come from sponsoring agencies, churches, businesses and individuals who donate \$250 to put their name and logo on T-shirts that are sold for \$15.

The event needs 30 to 40 volunteers to provide "customer



Kari Chapman, Renee Norris and Maurice Smith are on team organizing event.

service." They welcome people, serve food, change garbage bags, help vendors set up and take down, and more.

Ali Norris, Renee's daughter, has volunteered with Homeless Connect for three years. She recently graduated from Eastern Washington University with a master's degree in public health.

"I know what service providers assist with which needs, so I take people to tables with those services. Someone who lost an ID goes first to the DSHS table for a \$5 voucher to pay for a new ID, and then takes it to the Department of Licensing (DOL) table," Ali said.

Maurice said lost IDs are common. IDs are stolen from backpacks. People don't have money or the time to sit at the DOL.

"One woman lost her ID so many times that she had me put it on file in my office," Kari said.

They need IDs to apply for services, education, housing and jobs.

The last few years, Homeless Connect has provided the opportunity for people to "quash" warrants from municipal and district courts. This year the Superior Court is joining to quash felon warrants as well.

"Quashing a warrant removes a barrier that keeps people out of housing and jobs," said Kari. "A warrant for arrest is issued if someone does not show in court for a misdemeanor. At Homeless Connect, people can speak to a

public defender or judge to set a new court date so they won't be arrested."

Kari said many avoid accessing services if they have an active warrant.

Community Court, however, can reduce criminalization of people who are poor or homeless by reducing fines they can't pay and removing a criminal history they shouldn't have.

"People experiencing homelessness are often charged with 'sit and lie' loitering, trespassing or malicious mischief. Those charges become bigger issues if they can't afford to pay fines and don't go to court," said Kari.

Maurice—a 1982 graduate of Denver Baptist Seminary who in 2010 started a small Christian Publishing company, Rising River Media—said having a clean record is "one less hurdle."

Community Court is not in the Courthouse but at the downtown public library from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mondays. People show up there and report to the judge. On site each week there are about 20 of the 100 service providers that rotate being there.

Kari—who has a bachelor's in business, landed in Spokane through the Army and worked from Mead schools into YFA, VOA, ESD 101 Youth Build and other short-term, grant-dependent jobs—works with the population every day and sees how difficult it is for them.

Renee, who has a bachelor's in

social work and political science from Utah State University, came to Spokane in 1988. She was a caseworker at Family Promise from 2008 to 2016.

Maurice sees much fear and anger among the homeless population.

"How angry would you be to be in a shelter where someone tells you when to shower, when to use the bathroom or when to go to the refrigerator for a snack?" he asked. "People in shelters always have to ask permission to do everyday things.

"So some are angry at God for not answering prayers, or at the shelter staff or police for telling them what to do," said Maurice. "There is unresolved anger because their lives are not theirs and they don't know how to fix them. The hole is easier to get into than out of. Anger often leads to hopelessness.

"Eventually, they may let go and figure that there is no use trying," he said.

Kari said anger becomes a barrier as the trauma escalates into mental health struggles like PTSD, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.

On the streets, some homeless people approach others and demand they "drop pockets," or pull out their pockets and give them all

they have.

While there's that tough side, people donate plasma to get cash, and then give it to the next guy for what he needs.

"I've seen incredible camaraderie and incredible viciousness," Maurice said.

Kari said one man stood on the street and got \$60 for a hotel room, where he could stay clean and sober. He gave some of it away before he got there and had to go to a shelter.

Maurice has seen the gamut of emotions from compassion to violent hatred, because on a daily basis people do not know what they will experience. They only have a few hours in a safe place in a shelter.

Homeless Connect is a safe place for a few hours in the day.

Why do Maurice, Kari and Renee organize Homeless Connect?

For Maurice, as a Christian, it's what "serving the least" looks like.

Applying a lesson he learned from his friend, Mark Terrell at Cup of Cool Water, Maurice is now careful to speak of people who "happen to be experiencing homelessness," rather than labeling them "homeless people."

Kari said that if everyone helped organize or volunteered for such a day, the world would be a better place.

"It's what human beings should do for each other," said Renee.

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Teacher believes goal of education is to ensure all students succeed

At its recent Freedom Fund Banquet, the NAACP Spokane Chapter presented 2017 Leadership Awards to four members, Fay Baptiste, Fran Hammond, Jeanne Baynes and the Rev. C. W. (Chet) Andrews.

The stories of Fay and Fran were shared in the November issue. The stories of Jeanne and C.W. are featured in this issue.

Jeanne Aston Baynes, who grew up outside Pittsburgh, Pa., has lived in the Spokane area for more than 30 years and served on the Education Committee of the NAACP, Spokane Branch, for many of those years and is a Board Member at Large.

She received her bachelor's degree from Youngstown State University, Ohio in 1972, a master's from Atlanta University in Georgia in 1985, and a doctoral degree in education from Washington State University in 2000.

Before coming to the Spokane area in 1979 to teach at the Robert Reed Lab School of Eastern Washington University (EWU), Jeanne taught in the Howard County School District in Columbia, Md., for two years and part time at the University of the District of Columbia.

She then worked for Spokane Public Schools, including at Whitman Elementary, Grant Elementary and Shaw Middle Schools, for



Jeanne Aston Baynes active in many community groups.

30 years before retiring in 2013. She served as reading specialist, administrator and in language arts/accelerated English.

"One of my primary concerns is the disproportionate number of students of color who are disciplined, expelled and suspended," she said, seeing need for hiring more diverse staff in administration, counseling and teaching.

Related to discipline, the NAACP Education Committee

calls for use of restorative justice instead of typical discipline approaches. That means "talking it out when students have difficulty in the classroom, creating a plan for success and building relationships with students of color," said Jeanne.

She also calls for teachers to look at alternative types of discipline, rather than putting students out of the classroom so they lose class time. That loss makes it

harder for them to keep up and receive quality instructional time.

"For the district to be true to its strategic plan of commitment to respecting diversity, it needs to provide students with more mentoring and tutoring, instead of relying on discipline and suspensions to control behavior," she recommended. "The goal is to ensure that all students are successful."

Jeanne knows that the graduation rate of students for color can improve, because Rogers High School looked at those issues, changed their practices and moved from a 53 percent to an 83 percent graduation rate for students of color.

Another effort of the NAACP Education Committee is to urge that the curriculum be more inclusive, to teach everyone's history, especially given "the browning of America."

"Teachers need to understand how to teach children of color so that the curriculum is relevant to them, as well as to all students," Jeanne said.

Part of the solution is to recruit and retain more teachers of color.

In addition to addressing disproportionate discipline and curriculum relevance, the NAACP also encourages the school district to provide training so the teachers are more culturally competent.

That committee also selects stu-

dents each year to receive scholarships to attend higher education.

She has served on the Superintendent's Working Group and the Diversity Advisory Committee.

In addition, she has taught in the Education Department for EWU and has been a quarterly professor in the Africana Studies Department since March 2014.

This educator places a high priority on community service, specifically programs that support the success of youth.

In addition to actively supporting the NAACP, she is a member and president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and on its Farwest Reclamation and Retention Committee, plus The Links, Inc., Western Area Regional Elections Committee, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Capital Campaign Committee, African American Education Committee, Diversity Advisory Council for Spokane Public Schools and Superintendent's Work Group, and member of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

She and her daughter, Brittany Baynes Black of Atlanta, Ga., have published poems in the National Black Child Development Institute's calendars.

Her son, Samuel Baynes, III, is a pharmacist in Vancouver, Wa. She is grandmother of seven-year old Brielle.

For information, call 209-2425.

Pastor of state's oldest African-American church honored for leadership

The Rev. C.W. Andrews, Sr., a native of Minters, Ala., near Selma, is recognized for his leadership of 44 years as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, the oldest African American church in Washington.

The youngest of 17 children of Jesse and Edna Andrews, who were sharecroppers, Chester said his early education was at Street Manual Training School, where he graduated in 1957.

Growing up in times of segregation, he walked two miles to school and worked before and after school in the fields. After his siblings finished high school, they left the community. He later studied at several Bible colleges.

In 1959, he moved to Yakima, where he married Doris Chappell. Recently they and their five children celebrated their 58th year of marriage.

He served eight years in the U.S. Army as a staff sergeant SMSGT-E6 and later worked with Western Electric, starting in Yakima, traveling throughout the United States and settling in Spokane.

Feeling called to ministry, in 1963, he became assistant pastor at Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church, where the pastor mentored him.

While most of his preparation to



Pastor C.W. Andrews has brought witness to Spokane police.

be a pastor was through on-the-job training, he also did some studies at Selah Bible College in Yakima.

He first came to Spokane in 1968, and then he, Doris and their

family moved to Spokane in 1971. He was a member for three years at Morning Star Baptist until he came to Calvary Baptist in 1974, first as interim, and seven months later as pastor.

He has served on many boards and committees in Spokane and throughout the Pacific Northwest. He has been a longtime member of Spokane NAACP, serving on committees and bringing many new members into the branch.

Since the 1980s, he has been on the Police Advisory Committee, as several police chiefs have come and gone.

He has also served on boards of the Human Services Department, the Department of Health and Social Services and Spokane Ministers' Fellowship.

He is also a past president of the North Pacific Baptist Convention and previously served as an assistant chaplain at Whitworth University.

In 1998, Chester received an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Whitworth University, where he studied and taught many years.

"I believe in working for good, to help humanity and to bring Christ's love into people's lives, even if they are not in the church," he said reminding of Micah's words in Scripture: "What does the Lord require of us, but to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God."

"I'll keep preaching the Word and working with the police until the Lord calls me home," he said.

Beyond his own recent recognition for leadership, Chester on Sunday, Nov. 12, conferred the title of Deacon Emeritus on three deacons at Calvary Baptist, honoring them for their leaderships and their contributions that are "so great others will aspire to meet the standards they created," said Peggy Troutt, reporting for the church.

Those given the lifetime honor and the title Deacon Emeritus are Deacon Elmer Anderson, who has served more than 36 years; Deacon James Fisher, Sr., 40 years, and Deacon Manual Brown, for 64 years.

For information, call 747-8793 or 294-1636.

Cook starts an Oxford House to help men overcome their addictions

By Theresa Henson

Tyler Wiley lived in an Oxford House after he became addicted to heroin because of taking the prescription pain reliever OxyContin for a work-related injury.

Recently he has been working as a volunteer to open an Oxford House in Lewiston.

An Oxford House is a home where men in recovery live together in community and mutual accountability as they learn how to live in healthy ways, said Tyler, who now works as a cook at the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho.

"After men are out of prison or treatment, they are so used to people telling them what to do and having the system support them, they eventually have to break the reins and live life," he said.

In an Oxford House, up to eight individuals in recovery live together, each holding jobs to pay the rent. There is rigorous accountability: individuals are voted into a house and must take frequent drug and alcohol tests. They can also require each other to take a drug or alcohol test on the spot. If a test is failed, the individual must move out immediately because that person is seen as a risk to the whole house.

There is a house president, secretary and chore monitor. A house treasurer oversees a mutual account for utilities and household expenses.

If they do not have life skills such as cleaning, laundry and keeping a bank account, they soon learn them, said Tyler.

They also help one another by cooking, sharing meals and taking on household projects.

Because the Oxford House is intended to be a real home, significant others and children are welcome to visit.

"Most addicts blew trust with their families a long time ago," said Tyler.

"At an Oxford House, they can demonstrate change and rebuild trust. They have to stay clean and pay their way," he said. "They will also lift each other up and keep each other whole. They will love you when you can't love



Monastery cook Tyler Wiley starts Oxford House.

yourself."

Tyler knows because he has lived in an Oxford House.

Once addicted, Tyler said his once-stable life went into chaos until he decided he did not want to live anymore.

"I blockaded the door and took enough heroin to kill me," he said. "I should have died, but I didn't. I am a walking miracle."

A doctor intervened and saw the excessive prescription for OxyContin. He revised the medical treatment.

Tyler began working on the 12 Steps of Alcohol and Narcotics Anonymous. From there, he made his way to living in an Oxford House in Longview.

"I am proof it can happen to anybody and I am proof that the Oxford House works. I learned who I am there," he said. "The Oxford House is a way our society can deal with addiction."

Tyler has now been clean and sober for two years and is newly married to Carrie, who is also in recovery.

She has been a volunteer and counselor at the Recovery Center in Lewiston.

They are parenting a blended family of three sons.

Tyler feels it was his destiny to

work at St. Gertrude's Monastery, even though the intimidating sight of the chapel towers as he drove in for the interview almost made him turn around.

A strong feeling that he should accept the job remained. He even said no to another job offer.

"My higher power led me here. The sisters do a lot to help the community. I want to do the same," he said.

Tyler pointed out that it can be difficult to convince a property owner to rent to a group of recovering addicts, but the track record of Oxford House helps.

The worldwide organization has a policy of making all of its records available.

The program has just a 13 percent rate of relapse, and the property owners find that because of the strict rules and accountability, rent is paid with reliability and their properties often receive better care than if they had rented to the general public, he said.

Tyler spent six months talking to investors and his goal was featured in The Lewiston Tribune and local TV news.

Finally, he found someone willing to give it a try. The conversation took place with a local contractor over the grill at a recent

barbecue fund raiser for the Recovery Center.

The first residents were selected through an interview process and many had to be put on a waiting list.

When the men were shown the home, they immediately began making plans for gardens and other projects.

"The joy on their face was beyond what I was expecting," said Tyler.

Through his advocacy for the Oxford House and volunteer work at the Recovery Center, he sees more work ahead.

"I knew there was a need, but I did not know how great that need was," he said.

Tyler believes the area could use at least seven more Oxford Houses. His next goal is to help create an Oxford House in Lewiston for women and children.

At the recent world convention of the Oxford House organization in Washington D.C., Tyler received recognition for role in pioneering the first Oxford House in Idaho.

Now only Montana and the Dakotas remain as states without Oxford Houses.

"The only gratitude I want is the opportunity to freely give back what was so freely given to me," he said.

For information, call 208-791-4168.

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Parish offers educational events on refugees

Believing that one person can make a difference in the world crisis of refugees, parish volunteer Pamela Thompson-Finn organized a study at St. Joseph Catholic Church at 4521 N. Arden Rd. in Otis Orchards.

In conjunction with World Relief, she said, the parish's Charity and Justice Committee is offering a two-part educational event from 6:30 to 8 p.m., Wednesdays, Nov. 29 and Dec. 6.

"This is a critical moment with more refugees than any time in the last century," said Pamela. "More than 4.8 million people have fled Syria alone to escape war."

On Nov. 29, they will show the documentary, "Salam Neighbor," which is part of a campaign to connect the world to refugees.

"Our goal is to tell the stories of refugee neighbors with the dignity they deserve and the depth the world needs," Pamela said.

On Dec. 6, World Relief will present stories of refugees in the Spokane area and lead a discussion.

World Relief Spokane provides

refugee resettlement assistance, employment services, micro-enterprise loans and immigration services. It also raises awareness of and serves victims of human trafficking.

"As we approach the Advent and Christmas seasons, we think about the baby Jesus and the Holy Family. Last year's nativity scene at St. Peter's Square in Rome

included a traditional Maltese fishing boat to bring attention to the plight of refugees," she said.

"The Pope said he hoped those who visited would remember the message of fraternity, sharing, welcoming and solidarity at the heart of the nativity scene," Pamela said. "He reminds people that Jesus was a refugee."

For information, call 926-7133.

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Presbytery executive introduces churches to 'missional transformation'

While Sheryl Kinder Pyle recently attended closing services for two small, aging congregations—Curley and Lapwai Valley—she is helping create new possibilities as today's churches re-ignite relationships with people in their communities.

As executive presbyter of the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest, she is now applying insights from a four-month sabbatical on missional transformation.

- Knox Presbyterian, which recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of its building, is embracing the theology of the priesthood of all believers, with members sharing leadership and taking on pastoral tasks.

- Opportunity Presbyterian members recently took their Sunday coffee hour across the parking lot to the community center of an apartment complex where they sat and conversed with residents—no strings attached about inviting them to church.

- Shadle Park Presbyterian Church has a drop-in ministry, The Inn, for neighborhood youth.

- First Presbyterian has done mentoring with children at Roosevelt Elementary School.

- Clarkston and Wilbur churches are sharing pastors and services on campuses of two churches in their communities.

Inspired by the Presbyterian Church USA apology to natives in Alaska and Hawaii, Sheryl recently delivered apologies to the Nez Perce, going to Lapwai and Kamiah to listen and begin a presbytery reconciliation process.

From May to September this year, Sheryl explored missional leadership for churches. With a grant from the Louisville Institute,



Sheryl Kinder-Pyle seeks to ignite relationships with neighbors.

she studied ways regional body leaders can create a culture and space for missional transformation to happen.

"The term, 'missional' is common now, but I've heard it since the 1980s. It has been a thread in my 30 years of ministry," said Sheryl, who heard about it when she and her husband Scott served First Presbyterian Church in Spokane from 1988 to 1991 after graduating from Princeton Seminary.

They planted a new church near Philadelphia, where Scott grew up, and then returned to Spokane

in 2006 to start the Latah Valley Presbyterian Church. In 2010, she became executive presbyter.

In the past, mission has often been about "transaction," inviting people to come to be part of a church organization, rather than believers being transformed to live Jesus' mission, Sheryl said.

On her sabbatical, she interviewed 21 ecumenical denominational leaders across nine systems in North America and the United Kingdom, starting with an online survey, then video interviews and then face-to-face interviews.

The systems were the Lutheran

Synods of Vancouver, B.C., and Seattle, the Northwest Coast and Central Presbyteries, the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, the Church of England in Birmingham, Fellowship Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, the British Methodists and the Western England Baptist Association.

She made contacts through Al Roxburgh, a consultant and author on missional transformation, who recently began consulting with the Inland Northwest Presbytery.

Sheryl defines "missional transformation" as "becoming the people of God on God's mission in the world, and being part of God's work in the neighborhood."

The difference between mission and missional is about being out in the world in relationship with neighbors, recognizing that God is at work there rather than "the western arrogance" of "we have God and will give you God."

She further described missional transformation:

- It's about the church discerning where God/the Spirit is at work in the world and partnering with God there.

- It's a process, not a program.

- It's to listen to neighbors and build relationships, not a church growth strategy to get people to church.

- It's about listening for and seeing God in the neighborhood, in Scriptures and in each other.

- It's also about experimenting with ways to join God in what God is already doing, then reflecting on the action.

- It's acting and reflecting, and then acting and reflecting again.

- It's about humility and recognizing that we do not have all the answers," Sheryl said.

Regional bodies often do mission programs to serve neighbors. Missional is getting to know neighbors to be in relationship.

"Hospitality is a big theme," Sheryl added. "Often churches control hospitality, inviting people to come be with us within the four walls of our building. Transformation is to go out beyond the four walls to meet people to develop relationships.

Sheryl sees missional transformation happening in presbytery congregations and the presbytery

itself, as well as ecumenically.

"The UK faced the demise of Christendom before us," she said. "Even Evangelical and Fundamentalist churches that grew there, as here, have plateaued."

Ten presbytery congregations are intentionally participating in missional transformation.

The presbytery process includes ecumenical partners. Disciples, Lutheran, Episcopal and Methodist pastors and members are in a Learning Community.

"It's uncharted territory, gathering church folks to share stories and listen to where God is at work," Sheryl said.

The Learning Community for pastors meets four times a year from September to May and the one for congregations and pastors meets three times. There are 15 pastors. Fifty come to congregational learning communities to learn, try things, come back, share and reflect.

Each group picks one of two questions:

- How do we missionally engage neighbors?

- How do we live sustainably and faithfully in uncertain times?

The learning community has just started experiments and is in the first of two phases. The presbytery is doing experiments, too.

At business meetings, participants gather in groups of three. One with a smart phone takes a video of one telling of where he/she has seen God at work or on the road traveling with him or her.

The video is shared on the website Emmaus 160. That number is chosen because there are 160 miles east to west in the Presbytery from Ritzville to Montana and because the videos are 160 seconds.

Sheryl distinguished between church questions and God questions: "How can we get more young people in church? Vs. Where is God in the neighborhood leading you to partner?"

"Missional practices affect the presbytery's culture—how we process, think and decide," Sheryl said. "It has made us step back and look at decisions with perspectives informed by Scripture and the Holy Spirit—What is God teaching us?"

For information, call 924-4148 or visit presbyinw.org.

FAN marks 30th year of apology in Renton

More than 450 people from 20 faith traditions gathered in Renton on Sunday, Nov. 19 to celebrate Faith Action Network's statewide, interfaith movement for justice and raised \$53,175 to sustain their work.

Washington State Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu addressed the theme, "Justice Is What Love Looks Like in Public."

"Our union as a nation is more powerful than the forces of divisiveness," she said. "We must refuse to embrace hatred. We must be bold and we must be visible. There are more of us who feel compassion, seek justice, than there are voices of hatred."

Affirming that the call for social awakening is pertinent to these times, she said "history is watching. We stand at a historical brink, and we must be bold and visible."

Travel author and FAN supporter Rick Steves promised to match up to \$40,000 in gifts that night, expressing his belief that advocacy is the best response to these times.

"Advocacy is charity quadrupled. Think of the opportunity to speak up for the common good. It's just common sense to give back," he said.

FAN presented awards to community leaders for their social justice work.

Yakama Nation chair JoDe Goudy was recognized for his international leadership to dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery. In 2016, he and a delegation to Pope Francis asked him to revoke

the papal bulls from the 15th century that caused domination and dehumanization of Native Nations and peoples, and still impact case law and operations of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"The Creator does not put us here for domination," he said.

Those gathered commemorated the 30th anniversary of the 1987 Apology Letter from faith leaders to Pacific Northwest tribes. Two original signers were present.

Yakama elder Patsy Whitefoot was honored for her work on the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. She spoke of her own experience in a boarding school, and the need to repair relationships and make a different way for the children.

She and five girls from the Iksiks Washanal'a "Little Swans" Dancers danced a welcome.

Other awards went to the Mus-

lim Association of Puget Sound for interfaith leadership, Michael Ramos and the Church Council of Greater Seattle for organizing sanctuary and rapid response networks, and United Church of Christ pastor Rich Gamble as a founding board member and the UCC's Justice Leadership Program for young adults.

FAN co-directors Paul Benz and Elise DeGooyer celebrated 2017 victories and unveiled FAN's 2018 legislative agenda.

They invited the attendees to bring their voices and concerns to Interfaith Advocacy Day on Feb. 20 in Olympia.

FAN Governing Board co-chair Carol Jensen called for commitment to educate, organize, speak out, march, advocate in the halls of power, vote, stand together and not give up because "love will not be defeated."

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Recently beatified Fr. Solanus Casey was uncle of Fig Tree co-founder

News of a humble Franciscan Capuchin monk in Detroit, Fr. Solanus Casey, being one of only two U.S. men to be beatified on his road to sainthood in the Roman Catholic Church has significance in Spokane and for The Fig Tree.

His beatification Saturday, Nov. 18, in a Mass at Ford Field with 60,000 people came at this time because Paula Medina Zarate of Panama was instantly cured of a chronic skin disease when she prayed at his tomb in 2012.

Many people report changes in their lives after praying to him. Pope Francis said he met requirements for the rank of "blessed." His sainthood can be speeded up when there is a report of a second miracle.

Fr. Solanus was the uncle of Fig Tree co-founder and editor for 23 years, Holy

Names Sister Bernadine Casey.

One of her passions was working with the Capuchin monks in Detroit to promote his sainthood. She said he did not have the education to preach or hear confessions. For many years, he was the monastery doorkeeper, relating with those who came and went.

Sr. Bernadine said, however, he was known for his holiness as parents, unemployed people and those addicted sought his advice. Many asked him to ask God to heal them. He was a simple man who brought joy to the lives of many people, she said.

Sr. Bernadine helped his words of faith spring to life 43 years after his death in a collection of his letters that she selected and edited for the book, *Letters from Solanus Casey, OFM CAP.*

She often prayed to Fr. Solanus, revering him for his humility and the compassion with which he comforted families as they struggled with sickness and other problems. She suggested praying to him to help find things.

In one letter, Fr. Solanus told a friend, "God condescends to use our power if we don't spoil God's plans by ours."

In the introduction to the book, Sr. Bernadine pointed out that "Fr. Solanus, perhaps without being consciously aware of it, lived and preached a code that ran counter to the spirit and culture he knew in his 87 years of life. He died in 1957.

Not only did it bring him happiness and deep joy, living even in the midst of suffering, but also the wisdom and compassion growing out of it brought positive things to

the lives of thousands of other people, even in the midst of their suffering."

Fr. Solanus grew up in Oak Grove, Wis., and joined the Capuchins in 1897 in Detroit. He served 20 years in New York City before returning to St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit.

Later, when he was at a seminary in Huntington, Ind., people would go to visit him and wrote letters.

We at The Fig Tree could sense his gentle presence and peace through our association with Sr. Bernadine, who for many of us was a model of how to live, care and act in humility.

We rejoice with her and those who have worked to recognize the sainthood of a humble man.

Mary Stamp - Editor

We are meant to live in community, be good neighbors, not be armed to kill

Recent articles about mass shootings, gun control and attitudes of U.S. people about both have set me thinking. Several reports say Americans own many more guns per capita than do people in any other part of the world.

Sholeh Patrick, columnist for The Coeur d'Alene Press, recently observed, "It's our attitude. Americans in the U.S. prioritize personal freedom, while other places prioritize the common good."

Suddenly, it popped into my mind that the same people who are so caught up in concern about protecting personal freedom are those who pride themselves on their Christian values and hold up the Ten Com-

mandments as bedrock.

As I understand it, Moses went up on the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from God as a way of forming a loosely connected bunch of Hebrew people into a nation.

In order to do that, the Creator gave them a set of rules for how to interrelate with one another, holding the common good to be paramount if they were to live together peaceably.

Don't murder. Don't steal. Don't covet. There was nothing there about personal freedom. There was everything about treating others with respect and justice, that they might live in peaceful relationship.

Once upon a time, when I was much younger, I believed that we as a culture needed to recognize the individual and her or his needs more fully than we did. It felt like our worrying about what our neighbors would think was stifling us.

Now, I think the pendulum has swung too far in that direction and needs to shift directions, not so that we get hung up about what our neighbors think, but that we care about what is good for our neighbor, not just ourselves.

We are meant to live in community. We cannot do that when we're busy defending our own personal freedoms.

This is especially true with regard to

gun laws. We need stronger regulations in order to stop the senseless killing of which we've seen much too many in the past year. I find myself wondering where is next, when something like the Las Vegas massacre is going to make its way to Coeur d'Alene, this idyllic resort community, or to neighboring Spokane.

It's time for our legislators to take the responsibility to stop this! The lives and the peaceful coexistence of all of us in this country we call home are far more important than the rights of individuals to have the right to own absolutely any type of firearm that's out there.

Kaye Hult - Contributing Editor

We cheer women gaining voice, hoping it challenges the culture

Do we cheer for women finally speaking out? Do we weep that the assaults, harassment, groping and indecency happened? Do we cheer or weep based on the political affiliation of the person abusing power?

Who will stay in power and who will fall? Who will lose everything and who will maintain their fortunes and leadership?

We must be aware of how the violence against women plays out so that women do not lose rights and voice.

Never!! should men misuse their power or assume they know what women want. No man should do that, especially those who ostensibly advocate for women's rights, jobs, equality, safety and justice.

To violate women's dignity and respect in the workplace, in congregations, in com-

munities, in political halls, anywhere, has no excuse, no matter if the man is blind to the impact of his actions. The abuse is about not seeing another human being.

We must cheer as women feel freed finally to speak out.

Abuse of persons and abuse of power from the right, left or middle is inconsistent with democracy, human rights, loving neighbors or living faithfully.

Hopefully, the result will be looking at standards of behavior and engaging in a national conversation to raise the standards, so men and women understand what behavior is appropriate and what is inappropriate.

Meanwhile there are some cautions that those the "right" political views to the right do not get a pass and forgiven, while other

those more moderate or left leaning lose voice, power and money.

We must watch that media help foster conversation, and deal with the fact that there is too much sex in media. We hope media will not just have a heyday of covering reports because they are about sex, controversy, division and celebrity, and make money for media moguls.

We must watch that the freedom of women to speak not succumb under views that would silence and squelch women's rights.

We must use resources at hand, like the YWCA and Lutheran Community Services Northwest, which offer help for survivors, and chance to work for change for survivors and the culture.

Women need not only to disclose the

misconduct but also safe places to share, seek support and heal.

"Heal" is an important word for people of faith. Will we just leave a gaping wound for women who have shared and men who have violated them?

Will the shaming and loss of money, power and position be enough to make men accountable and change their ways? What do we need to do to change the culture that allows misconduct and assault to happen?

May we in the faith community engage in this discussion and bring to bear what we have learned through years of challenging clergy sexual misconduct, requiring ethics training and peer accountability as part of prevention.

Mary Stamp - Editor

Invitation to share

Sounding Board

Questions for reflection

As Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp has been following the news, questions have been piling up, questions that concern the faith community, cultural values, political divisions, media influence and other dynamics that have impact on lives of everyday people. She poses some of those questions to invite submissions to Sounding Board.

How do our holy days this season intersect with our lives, our visions, our hopes, our values? How do we make holy days in our everyday lives? How does the sacred and spiritual intersect with the secular and social justice to empower our action?

What stirs mercy, compassion and love for us? How do our fears and angers stir our efforts to overcome injustice, to seek peace, to challenge oppression?

Holy days of this season are about peace on earth, goodwill to all, fleeing injustice, welcoming refugees, the birth of religious leaders, the death of a religious leader, the shortest day and return of the sun, gift-giving, candle lighting, family and community, human rights, enlightenment, restoring the temple, a miraculous vision, leveling the powerful and the poor, and more.

The season includes Islam's Mawlid el-Nabi, St. Nicholas Day, the Buddhist Bodhi Day, Sweden's St. Lucia Day, Mexico's Las Posadas, Mormon's Joseph Smith's Birthday, Jewish Hanukkah, Christmas, African-American's Kwanzaa, Soroastrian's Death of Prophet Zarathustra, plus the celebration of Native Americans, Zoroastrians, Wiccans, Shinto and Scandinavians of the Solstice or Yule, the shortest day and rebirth of the sun.

Do these celebrations lend insights as we enter the political, social, cultural realm? What will be the impact on communities of faith of some recent policy proposals and changes pending in Congress, happening by executive order and challenged by judges?

Where do people of faith stand? Where are we together? What are our hopes and dreams? What solutions would we like to see? What do we value?

If a new tax code eliminates charitable deductions, will people still give generously to congregations, faiths, ministries and nonprofits out of their commitment to love and serve?

Do faith communities want to be able openly to endorse political candidates without losing their nonprofit status?

How else might the tax proposals affect communities of faith? If there's too much debt, will we resort to cutting programs that serve the poor and vulnerable?

Will tax cuts for most of us turn in a few years into tax increases? Will those benefiting most from tax cuts pay their workers fairly/more to improve the economy for everyone?

What if the Federal Communications Commission drops net neutrality that treats internet service providers as utilities and requires equal access? If they drop it and allow some to have the fastest internet and slow communication for the rest, how will that affect free speech? What if our communication with our constituents and our communities is cut down by ending it?

Will policies on student debt deferments and taxes on interest on that debt have an impact on the ability of colleges and universities to draw, educate and retain students?

As colleges and universities follow

the trend of budget-cutting and decrease tenured faculty and the underpaid adjunct faculty, will balanced budgets improve the quality of education? Or will fewer be able to afford higher education and fewer attend? Who benefits and who loses if fewer have college educations?

What is the role of the rumblings of war and nuclear annihilation in confronting North Korea? Are we proving the power of the U.S.? Where will the fear around the world and U.S. lead us?

What about welcoming strangers, loving neighbors, following the 10 commandments, meeting needs of those in need and other common calls of faith communities?

We face many questions that affect our lives and invite sharing about them.

Sounding Board is a space where faith and community leaders can share their reflections, discuss how faith can overcome divisions, and look for common ground and values. We have usually used excerpts from sermons and newsletter columns, but also invite 200-word submissions. They are due third Mondays before publication to news@thefigtree.org.

Calendar of Events

- To Dec 17 • Tree of Sharing** at Northtown, River Park Square and Spokane Valley Malls, 808-4919, mconnelltos@gmail.com
- Nov 25-Dec 10 • 16 Days of Activism** against Gender-Based Violence from the United Nations' International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women to Human Rights Day
- Nov 29, Dec 6 • "Refugees: A World Crisis,"** St. Joseph Parish, 4521 N. Arden Rd., Otis Orchards, 6:30 to 8 p.m., 926-7113
- Dec 1,2 "The Normal Heart,"** reading of play following New Yorkers in early days of AIDS epidemic, South Perry Yoga at the Actors Buddhio, 915 S. Perry, 7:30 p.m., 443-6241
- Dec 1-20 • Advent Individual Silent Retreats,** Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHC), 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Dec 2, 3 • 13th Annual Fair Trade Sale** Trinity Lutheran Church, 812 N. Fifth St., Coeur d'Alene, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 208-661-3795, origamifromtheheart@gmail.com, lutheransonline.com
- Dec 3 • "Ave Concert,"** Holy Names Music Center, Gonzaga University Chapel, 2 to 5 p.m.,
- Dec 5, 19 • Showing Up for Racial Justice,** 35 W. Main, 6 p.m., 838-7870
- Dec 5 • Respond Spokane** to Child Trafficking and Exploitation, Red Lion River Inn, 700 N. Division, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.,
- Dec 6 • Transitions New Leaf Bakery Café** Open Door Event and Bake Sale, SNAP Building, 3104 W Ft. Wright Dr., 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., help4women.org/events/2017/12 or mreibold@help4women.org
- Advent Day of Prayer,** "Kindling for the Fire: Five Warm Ways to Welcome the Christ Child," Sr. Mary Eucharista, SMMC, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Dec 7 • "Last Stand: The Vanishing Caribou** Rainforest," KYRS and the Lands Council at The Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main, 7 p.m., 747-3012
- Dec 7, 21 • Peace & Justice Action Committee,** 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Dec 8 • Transitions Holidays at the Hearth,** 920 W. Second, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., 328-6702, mtracey@help4women.org
- "Whose Streets?"** Documentary on police shooting, The Magic Lantern Theatre, 25 W. Main, 7 p.m., theblacklensnews.com
- Dec 8-18 • Christmas Bureau** (not Sundays Dec. 10 and 17), Spokane County Fair & Expo Center, 404 N. Havana, AG Building, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., 358-4254, sheinen@ccspokane.org
- Dec 9 • Advent Day of Prayer,** Sr. Patty Novak, OSF, "Birthing Forth the Child Jesus in Our Lives," The Ministry Institute, 405 E. Sinto, TMI Chapel, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., 313-5765, bartletts@gonzaga.edu
- Handel's Messiah Sing-Along,** First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 3 p.m. (rehearse 1:30 p.m.), 747-1058
- Dec 9, 10 • "A Festive Baroque Christmas,"** Spokane Symphony, Westminster Congregational
- United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, 7 p.m. Saturday; Spokane Valley Church of the Nazarene, 15515 E. 20th Ave., 3 p.m. Sunday, 624-1000, spokanesymphony.org
- "Emmanuel, God with Us,"** Whitworth University Christmas Festival Concert, Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 8 p.m. Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday, 777-4589
- Dec 10 • Gingerbread Build Off** Christ Kitchen Benefit, The Davenport Grand, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., 323-4343, christkitchen.org
- Smorgasbord,** St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. seatings, 747-6677
- Bishop Umezu of the Buddhist Churches of America,** Kieshiki Ceremony, Spokane Buddhist Temple, 927 S. Perry St., 10:30 a.m., 534-7954
- Affiniti – Celtic Christmas Concert,** Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague Ave., 7 p.m., 227-7638
- Dec 13 • Inland NW Death Penalty Group,** 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Speaker Jacqui MacConnell,** director of strategic initiatives with Spokane Police Department, Hispanic Business/Professional Association monthly luncheon, Perkins Restaurant, Downtown at Division and Olive, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., hbaspokane@gmail.com
- Dec 14 • PJALS Holiday Party,** 35 W. Main, 6 to 8 p.m., 838-7870
- Dec 16 • "We Need Diverse Books!"** Storytime (ages two to four) with Local Authors, Spark Central, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy., 10 a.m., 279-0299 sparkwestcentral.org
- Dec 16, 17 • Singing Nuns Christmas Concert,** "Bethlehem's Child," Mt. St. Michael, 8500 N. Saint Michaels Rd., 2 and 7 p.m., Saturday; 2 p.m., Sunday, singingnuns.com
- Dec 17 • German American Christmas Service,** St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E 24th Ave., 3 p.m., 747-6677
- Dec 18 • NAACP Meeting,** 35 W. Main, 7 p.m., spokanenaacp.com
- Dec 19 • Clarion Brass,** "This is What Christmas Sounds Like," Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 12th Ave., 7:30 p.m., 489-4633, figarotunes.com/clarion
- Dec 20 • "How Saint Nicholas Became Santa Claus,"** Deacon Tom Heavey, Cocoa and Contemplation for children, parents and grandparents, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 to 11 a.m., 448-1224
- Dec 26 • American Guild of Organists,** Christmas Church Walk and Carol Sing, New Community (former Central United Methodist) at 518 W. Third to Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, to Central Lutheran, 512 S. Bernard, 2 to 4 p.m. 535-7145
- Dec 31 • First Night Spokane,** "Be a Hero" Renaissance Theme, Downtown Spokane, 6 p.m., 795-8691, firstnightspokane.org
- Jan 3 • Fig Tree mailing and delivery,** St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave., 9 a.m., 535-1813
- Jan 4 • The Fig Tree Benefit and Board meetings,** 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., Benefit at noon, Board at 1 p.m., 535-1813

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Christmas Carol Walk visits three downtown churches

The Spokane Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) will offer the 4th Annual Christmas Carol Walk to the Spokane community, providing an opportunity for music and carols of the season to be enjoyed on Tuesday, Dec. 26, at three downtown churches.

Organists from the AGO will provide Christmas music and lead the singing with song leaders from each of the host churches.

The event will begin at 2 p.m., at New Community Church (formerly Central United Methodist Church) at 518 W. 3rd Ave.

At 2:30 p.m. the group will walk three blocks to Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, again to listen to music, sing carols and enjoy the church decorated to celebrate the season.

At 3:15 p.m. the group moves two blocks to Central Lutheran

Church, 512 S. Bernard, where there will be refreshments after music.

"It's an event for families to attend with their children, friends and neighbors," said Carolyn Payne of the AGO.

Parking is available under the freeway or on the street.

Participants can drive between each of the churches, if they prefer.

For information, call 535-7145.

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World Relief calls for doing more, not less for world's 65 million refugees

World Relief celebrated with fanfare its welcoming of the 10,000th refugee to the Inland Northwest since the regional office first opened in Connell in 1989. In 1992, the Spokane office opened.

In October, Tatiana and Olav Bichir, and Tatiana's parents, Ivan and Galina Zgherea, from Moldova brought the number to 10,002. A large welcoming party greeted them when they arrived at the airport.

This year World Relief helped 150 refugees it has recently resettled become citizens and helped 279 find housing, said Mark Finney, the director of the Spokane office, speaking at the gathering of about 700 people at Life Center Foursquare Church.

Songs by the Neema Choir of refugee children from Africa, a procession with the flags of the 48 countries of people who have resettled in Spokane, and speakers sharing insights into changes over the years were part of the ceremony.

Linda Unseth, who founded the Connell and Spokane offices, told of starting in a small office in the original location of Life Center in a small building in North Central Spokane.

World Relief Spokane, which is connected to the National Association of Evangelicals, grew from a staff of one to 30.

Mark said the staff includes a resettlement team helping when refugees first come to find housing, jobs and English classes; the employment team to help refugees gain skills to find jobs that fit their interests, and the legal team to help refugees file for permanent residence and citizenship.

Staff also help recruit volunteers as individuals, congregations and other organizations to be involved in nourishing the lives of refugees so they flourish and "fold into the fabric of Spokane," he said. "Volunteers become the hands and feet of God."

Joe Wittwer, pastor of Life Center through its years of partnering with World Relief, said, "Refugees are fascinating people with amazing stories. They add much to our churches and communities. Just as food tastes better with spices, they add flavor to our lives."

He also cited biblical reasons (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) to welcome refugees and immigrants in the repeated references to the Israelites having been mistreated as slaves in Egypt and being called in freedom to treat people not only with respect, but also to love them as themselves.

Joe reminded that Jesus' family were refugees in Egypt fleeing Herod and that all Christians are foreigners where they live, because they are "citizens of heaven."

As refugees come, he sees that God is bringing "all nations to our doorstep so we can love them and share our faith."

In addition to refugees joining some churches out of gratitude, they have established Russian-, Burmese-, Bhutanese-, Swahili- and Chin-speaking churches, which help resettle new refugees.

Mark said that 119 churches have partnered with World Relief, along with many school, health and social service agencies, and employers.



Neema Choir with refugees from many African countries brings messages of faith and hope.

Shamsa, a young woman from Somalia, told of fleeing war in Mogadishu when she was 18. Her twin sister and brother were shot in front of her. Her family stayed in a refugee camp in Ethiopia, where there was no education or jobs. Her father died of a stroke.

"Coming to America is my

dream come true," said Shamsa, who arrived last year. "Here I feel safe and free. I go to school and work."

She expressed appreciation for people who helped her have a new life and called for people to continue to receive other innocent people who face death.

Mark reminded that refugees, by international law, have fled their home country and cannot return because of persecution for political, religious, cultural or other reasons.

Only 13 countries receive refugees as the U.S. does, and he said the refugees go through two

years of security, medical and background checks. Many wait up to 10 years.

Looking forward, he said that the world has 65 million refugees, more today than at any point in history.

"While many are calling us to do less than ever and have us turn our backs on victims of war and violence, we need to stand with the vulnerable."

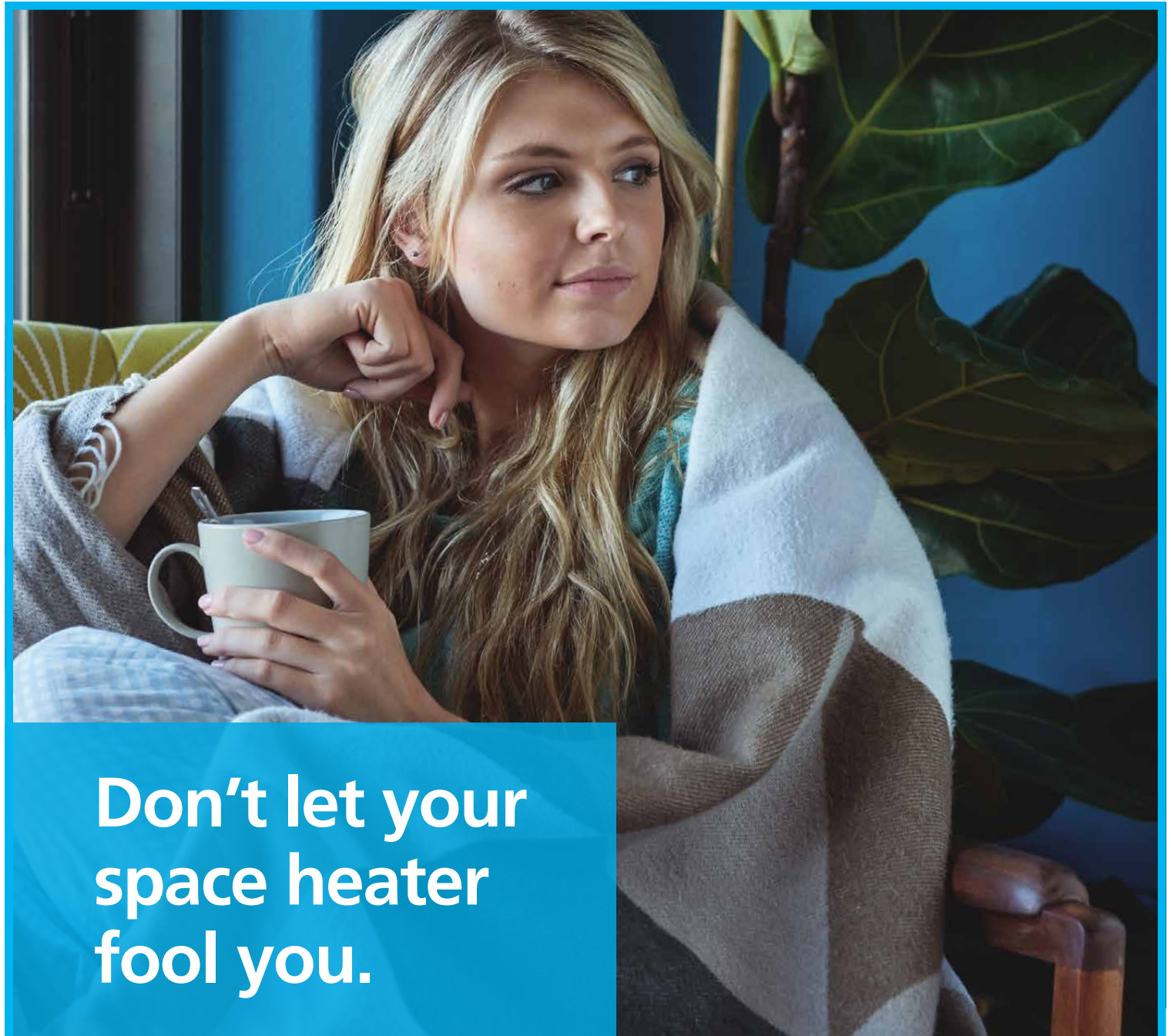
Fewer than 45,000—down from 85,000 in 2015—refugees have been allowed into the U.S. in this year, one-tenth of one percent of the world's total.

Along with calling people to be involved as volunteers with refugee families, he said World Relief does advocacy to educate elected officials and the community on the value of refugees and the U.S. heritage of welcoming refugees.

"We should not let our fears divide us. We need to be a community that cares," he said.

To reinforce that point, the Neema Choir closed with the song, "We Are not Forgotten."

For information, call 484-9829, email agoodwin@wr.org or visit worldreliefspokane.org.



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