

36TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest
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Director sees Jesus in refugees he meets

By Mary Stamp

As director of World Relief in Spokane, Mark Finney sees Jesus in encounters with immigrants and refugees.

“Each day I pray Jesus will help me meet him that day,” he said. “I see Jesus in people who are suffering.”

At the U.S. Mexican border recently, he met a man named Jesus.

Last year at an overcrowded refugee camp in Bangladesh, Mark took a photo of a Rohingya woman and her child, “a classical Madonna.”

As director, his work is not about being an educated man sitting in a comfortable office. It’s everyday work with refugees. He and his staff of 30 help people who have suffered trauma fleeing violence and lived for years in refugee camps settle in Spokane, learn English, find education and job opportunities, adjust to a new culture and go shopping.

Mark helps staff work as a team, coordinating involvement of 400 volunteers, helping staff and volunteers stay healthy as they help refugees navigate paperwork and stresses of their lives in a new system.

He informs the community of



Mark Finney saw a Madonna image in a Rohingya woman and child at a refugee camp.

the value of having immigrants and refugees living here, and challenges the societal hostility of recent years.

Mark grew up in Coeur d’Alene and graduated in communication from Whitworth University in 2003. He was a youth pastor for two years at First Covenant Church before completing a master of divinity at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. He and his wife, Becky, who also has a master of divinity, spent a year training leaders in Thailand at a church serving recovering sex workers.

Returning to California, Becky was a counselor and Mark completed a doctoral degree in homiletics at Fuller from 2012 to 2017.

In 2015, they moved to Spokane to plant a church, but it didn’t work out. He serves as quarter-time pastor at Emmaus Church.

In 2016, he began as a resettlement case worker with World Relief, welcoming families at the airport, taking children for their first day of school and building relationships with families as they settled into Spokane.

Because World Relief has lost some federal funds with fewer refugees being resettled, Mark

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Mission co-workers empower women and men in Guatemalan communities

By Debbie DuPey

The indigenous communities of Guatemala continue to inspire Sandi Thompson-Royer and her husband Brian, who settled back in Spokane in April 2019 after five years as mission co-workers in Guatemala with the National Presbyterian Church USA.

Accepting the mission position was “a God thing,” said Sandi, who believes her invitation to do mission work was an invitation to walk with the people, as Micah 6:8 says, “to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

The couple recently reflected on their time in community and fellowship with Guatemalan people.

Sandi was invited to Guatemala to help develop leadership skills in women in Presbyterian churches throughout the country. The passions and skills Sandi and Brian brought to the experience shaped how they integrated their work with people’s needs.

Sandi has been going to Guatemala since 1999. Her relationship with the country deepened with time.

“In the beginning, I focused on

connecting with women and sharing their challenges. I was taken by their commitment to community and family,” Sandi said.

The Presbyterian Church USA has had a partnership in Guatemala for 100 years and a relationship with the church women for 20 years.

“We didn’t know what facilitating leadership development with women in churches would entail. We met with women leaders from all over Guatemala,” Sandi said. “Because they knew I had worked in domestic violence and sexual assault, women wanted to learn about that. So, we started doing workshops for women.”

In those workshops, she taught about abusive relationships. The women could share their struggles, know they were not alone and support their sisters. Workshops destigmatized the issue and removed the burden of blame from the women.

“Women bear so much, including violence of all kinds. Their courage and enthusiasm are amazing. They would take a bus for

Continued on page 9

Fig Tree nears goal in ‘Branching Out’ drive

As of publication on Friday, Nov. 22, day 30 of the 35-day “Branching Out Beyond 35 Years” challenge grant campaign, The Fig Tree has received donations and pledges of nearly \$13,000 from more than 90 donors toward the \$17,000 match, for a total of \$26,000. It needs \$4,000 more plus \$1,000 beyond that to meet the goal of \$35,000 by Wednesday, Nov. 27.

The campaign was designed to give a boost to

The Fig Tree and Resource Directory communications in the region—sharing stories of people making a difference and connecting people in need with resources to improve their lives.

The effort will help this nonprofit media venture add staff, financial and online resources; reach new people with stories and resources; share more life-transforming stories, and spread its model of journalism.

In doing this campaign, The Fig Tree staff and board have gained new tools and skills to reach new people through social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and an email program. It has updated its presence on the national Guidestar nonprofit registry.

Board members and others set up fundraisers on Facebook and made personal contacts. They used comments of speakers from recent benefit events and clips from the last benefit video to help inspire giving.

The Fig Tree will join in Giving Tuesday on Facebook as a part of year-end giving and to support its ongoing efforts in media literacy and responsibility, said editor Mary Stamp.

For information, call 535-1813, email info@thefigtree.org or visit thefigtree.org/donate.html.

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WCC leader says ecumenical movement moves

At the recent general assembly of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches in Bern, World Council of Churches general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit spoke on the ecumenical movement today and where the WCC should take it in the future.

"The ecumenical movement moves," he said. "More churches and people are taking up the invitation of the WCC's 10th Assembly in 2013 at Busan, Republic of Korea, to participate in a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, and engage in transformative action. The movement is a vibrant renewal of the churches for the sake of God's kingdom. It has never been more relevant."

Ecumenism is the dynamic, counter-inertial, renewing force of Christian love, Olav said. "It compels us as disciples of Jesus always and everywhere to open ourselves to empathy and to place ourselves at the service of others. Ecumenical Christianity is an authentic alternative and counter-witness to consumerist Christianity, therapeutic Christianity, the prosperity gospel, xenophobic or racist Christianity, and nationalist forms of Christianity."

Ecumenism is the perennial self-critical, renewing impulse in Christian commitment that demands and enables people to transcend the narrow boundaries and parochialisms of self-interest, race or class, confession or creed. Olav said, "I believe that wherever Christ's pilgrim people and communities of faith are willing to test those boundaries and divisions of our world in the name of the authentic gospel, ecumenism lives and thrives."

"Ecumenism leads us to choose creative collaboration over stubborn insistence on tradition," Olav said. "It has much to offer an imperiled world today: a deeply grounded, energetic love that is also critically conscious and fully accountable and models a creative collaboration that the world so desperately needs."

He called for connection to God and reconciliation in the world: "The world needs an end to the rule of sin. We need reconciliation with God, with each other, with creation, with ourselves."

WCC develops a Green Village on its property

Green Village, a sustainable neighborhood, the first Geneva development project to qualify for the One Planet Living (OPL) label, is being developed on property of the World Council of Churches.

One Planet Living neighborhoods aim to: 1) reduce CO2 emissions and gradually abandon fossil fuels—with buildings powered by renewable energy, like solar panels, and access to sustainable mobility; 2) conserve and nurture biodiversity; 3) improve the quality of life and well-being of the community.

WCC general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit, said: "The WCC is committed to protecting the environment locally and internationally alongside with its member churches. By applying the standards of One Planet Living to our Green Village, we are fulfilling our undertaking to fight global warming right where we live and work each day."

Green Village will provide six new buildings in the municipality of Le Grand-Sacconnex, around the Ecumenical Centre, WCC's historic building. There will be administrative buildings, designed for international organizations and service-sector firms, plus a hotel and a residential building.

Each building in Green Village—in a landscaped park at the heart of Geneva's international district—will symbolically bear the name of an international treaty in sustainable development: Kyoto, Montreal, Rio, Lima, Durban and Stockholm. The first construction phase—with the Kyoto building (administrative) and the Montreal development (residential)—should be completed by the end of 2022 or the start of 2023.

The construction will respect standards set by the OPL label, with priority to use construction materials from the local economy, and recycled materials from the existing structures. Buildings will be powered by renewable energy, through photovoltaic solar panels and networked energy. The goal of zero waste will be reached via an on-site eco-center and through the policy of waste reuse put forward by the Le Grand-Sacconnex municipality.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Legislative Conference includes six workshops

The Faith Action Network (FAN) and the Washington State Catholic Conference will open the 2020 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference with briefing on issues coming before the State Legislature.

"Making It Happen" is the theme for the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 25, at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, 115 N. Raymond Rd.

Registration and viewing resource displays by local agencies will begin at 8:30 a.m.

The event, organized by The Fig Tree, Catholic Charities Eastern Washington, the Faith Action Network, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and other partners will feature an afternoon panel on gun violence and six workshops.

In the panel, individuals will share perspectives related to law enforcement, faith, youth, parents and education.

The workshops will address shareholder advocacy, climate change, affordable housing and homelessness, facing racism and confronting white supremacy, the census and justice work, and refu-

gees and the numbers cap.

The planning committee is finalizing speakers, workshop leaders and resource fair participants.

Volunteers are needed to help with arrangements.

For 2020, the FAN legislative priorities are economic justice and reducing poverty; the criminal justice system, housing opportunities and preventing homelessness, climate change, protecting immigrants, civil and human rights, and access to health care and mental health.

For information, call 535-4112 or email kaye@thefigtree.org.

Resource Directories are still available

About 1,800 copies—30 boxes—of the 2019-20 Resource Directory are available for distribution to individuals and agencies, and at events. Delivery of copies has been completed.

"Requests continue to come in from people impressed with what a valuable resource it is," said Malcolm Haworth, directory editor.

"Because Griffin Publishing

sold to the Lewiston Tribune, we are looking at options for publishing it next year," he said. "That may give us the opportunity to look at formatting to improve the quality."

The Fig Tree continues to reach out to invite agencies and businesses to be community partners, helping underwrite the costs of publication so more copies can be put in the hands of more people

to keep up with the increasing demand, Malcolm said.

"The first of the year, we will be sending out update forms to gather the new data for the 2020-21 Resource Directory," he said. "Corrections and updates may be submitted at any time, because they are added to the online copy."

For information, call 535-4112 or email resourcedirectory@thefigtree.org.

Tree of Sharing sites set up for gift buying

The annual Tree of Sharing connects the community through acts of sharing to the often forgotten during the holiday season.

For the 37th year, volunteers are stationed at tables at Spokane Riverpark Square, Northtown Mall and Spokane Valley Mall to distribute tags for shoppers to buy gifts for those in need.

This year, there are 8,000 tags from 60 agencies that may be

picked up from Friday, Nov. 29, to Sunday, Dec. 16.

Shoppers will purchase the gift requests and return them to any of the three malls. From there, they go to a warehouse, where they are sorted to go to the agencies.

The Tree of Sharing began as a project of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ and is now an independent non-profit supported by Westminster,

KREM-TV, Thomas Hammer Coffee Roasters, Sir Speedy and Goodwill.

Goodwill transports gifts to a donated warehouse where they are sorted.

Mall coordinators recruit volunteers to work the Tree of Sharing tables at the three malls.

For information, call 808-4919, email tospokanedirector@gmail.com or visit treeofsharing.org.

Volunteer honored for 43 years at GSV-MOW

At the Greater Spokane County (GSC) Meals on Wheels recent Volunteer Recognition, its longevity prize went to Norma Trefry for 43 years of volunteering.

She was in a group of parents who helped their children deliver meals as a church youth group service project in 1975.

Beginning with a handful of volunteers and one route with eight people, GSC Meals on Wheels has grown to 43 routes over 1,800 miles of Spokane County with 12 Silver Café restaurant-style sites where seniors eat.

Several volunteers have served more than 30 years.

Norma has driven thousands of

miles and dozens of routes with GSC Meals on Wheels, headquartered in Spokane Valley.

Being a driver involves more than dropping off a hot, nutritious meal. For 58 percent of clients, the driver is the only person they see in a day. For 92 percent, volunteers provide eyes-on health checks and companionship that enables people to stay in the

homes they love.

Volunteers deliver more than 250,000 meals each year.

GSC Meals on Wheels continually needs volunteers.

Two orientations are held each month. Volunteers can choose their days, hours and how they want to help seniors.

For information, visit gsmealsonwheels.org.

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Census 2020

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Learn about the Census & give feedback
Coffee & snacks provided
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Astronaut tells youth to step out of comfort zones to realize their dreams

"It isn't about dreaming, it's about doing," NASA astronaut Anne McClain said she learned in the pursuit of her goals.

She spoke Sunday, Nov. 17, at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church to young people and their families from St. Stephen's, St. John's Cathedral and St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

In her presentation that included videos from her space travels, the first slide was her at age three ready for the first day of pre-school. Before going, she told her mother, "I going to school to learn to be an astronaut."

Anne grew up in Spokane, attending Catholic schools. She also spoke at Gonzaga Prep while in Spokane.

In the International Space Station, she said, astronauts from different nations work together to accomplish missions and take care of each other.

Working together is critical on the space station. Each astronaut has to take into account the others' strengths and weaknesses to let



Anne McClain talks with church youth. Photo by Bob Redmond of St. Stephen's

others strengths compensate for their own weaknesses, she said.

Anne listed the five things astronauts in the space station do every day: station maintenance, scientific experiments, robotics, space walks and exercise.

Space walks are "both terrifying and exhilarating," she said. The first time she was outside the station, she looked down and saw her feet and nothing below them except the earth so far away.

Anne offered the youth other lessons for life, inviting them to repeat after her four affirmations:

- I am loved.
- I am proud of myself.
- I am brave.

• I can do hard things.

To realize dreams, she said, people have to be willing to get out of their comfort zone. She showed a slide of two circles, one labeled "Comfort Zone" and the other, "Where the Magic Happens."

"The circles are separated from each other to show that we can't stay in our comfort zone and still get to a place where our dreams come true," she said.

It's important for people to know what their passions are and what it takes to achieve them, Anne said, aware everyone has doubts, but "we are smart enough and strong enough to realize our dreams. It means we need to be a little bit

braver than we are scared."

Anne also discussed scientific experiments done on the station.

For example, crystals grow larger in space than on earth. A particular crystal needed in experiments to cure Parkinson's disease grows much larger in space, which is better for that research.

While in town, Anne also shared her adventures on the space station

between musical numbers for the Spokane Symphony's "50th Anniversary of the Moon Landing."

For information, visit nasa.gov.

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Northwest and Montana Disciples regions merge Jan. 1

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Northwest and Montana Regions are merging.

"Effective Jan. 1, 2020, we will be one region, the Northern Lights Region," said Sandy Messick, regional minister and president.

"As our finance team prepared

the 2020 budget, we saw blessings of this partnership in increased invested funds and decreased duplicate expenses," she said.

The region will merge financial and human resources for security and sustainability into the future to support congregations and pas-

tors as they make a difference in their communities, Sandy said.

"Maintaining and increasing financial giving will improve our shared ministries," she added.

For information, visit disciple-snw.org / northernlightsdisciples.org.

Mid-City Concerns/Meals on Wheels serves 330 meals a day

Mid-City Concerns/Meals on Wheels Spokane feeds more than 750 seniors a year, keeping them in their homes. It has delivered hot, nutritious meals to elderly, disabled and home-bound seniors in Spokane since 1967.

The Mid-City Concerns, a senior center downtown, offers activities, nutrition, advocacy, education and recreation.

With 400 volunteers, the program serves 330 meals daily and more than 110,000 meals a year.

MOW Spokane is participating in Giving Tuesday on Dec. 3. It relies on fund raisers, grants and private donations, not government funding.

For information, call 456-6597 or visit mowspokane.org.

Catholic Charities will use grant on Gonzaga Family Haven

Catholic Charities Eastern Washington (CCEW) will use a \$5 million Bezos Day 1 Families Fund grant for the Gonzaga Family Haven project in Northeast

Spokane. This housing complex, at the corner of Hamilton and Foothills Dr., will provide life-giving housing and supportive programming to more than 70

homeless families in the Spokane region, said Rob McCann, president and CEO of Catholic Charities.

For information, call 455-3039.

Spokane study finds child care is vital for everyone

Representatives of Transitions, Spokane Regional Health District, Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery, Community-Minded Enterprises and NAOMI recently surveyed low-income area parents.

The common concern was: "I am not able to get child care until I find a job, but I am not able to find a job if I have no child care."

The coalition found that 50 percent could not access affordable childcare for half the year or more; a third had challenges finding child care flexible with their work schedules, and nearly half stayed home or used family for child care.

It found that accessible, quality child care is vital for everyone in Spokane. The question is who will

provide it and fund it.

For information, call 994-9580 visit www.help4women.org.

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World Relief wants doors open to receive more refugees in the U.S.

Continued from page 1
 raises funds to fill the gap. The national World Relief organization contracts with the federal government to support refugees during their first three months. Some who are fast-tracked into employment can receive support for six months.

In 2016, the State Department admitted 110,000 refugees nationally, and Spokane welcomed 597 of them. Since 1992, World Relief has helped resettle more than 10,000 refugees in Spokane. In contrast, from Oct. 1, 2019, to Sept. 30, 2020, the U.S. will admit only 18,000 refugees. In 2018, World Relief Spokane welcomed just 161 refugees.

“That’s a 75 percent cut. Of the 300 refugee resettlement offices, 100 were closed since 2017,” he said. “World Relief dropped from 25 offices to 17.”

World Relief is among nine agencies resettling refugees. The others are Church World Service, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, the U.S. Committee for Immigration and Refugee Services, and U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“**The lower numbers** of refugees the U.S. is receiving are not a sign that there are fewer refugees. In fact, there are more now—25 million globally—than ever before,” Mark said.

When he started as director of World Relief in 2017, he said he did not know much about refugees, even though he had lived abroad, was drawn to cross-cultural relations and felt called to work with people around the world.

“Because the political climate has shifted since I started,” he said, “it is important for faith communities to challenge how the country thinks about and acts towards immigrants.

“Most people welcome software engineers coming to work,” he said, “but refugees, asylum seekers and Hispanic people are the objects of negative rhetoric and may feel unsafe.

“We help people of faith speak up in this environment that is not shaped by faith values,” he said.

A recent Lifeway Research survey found only 12 percent of self-described Evangelical Christians say the Bible is the main source for their attitudes on immigrants and refugees, he said.

“The Bible says much about immigrants and refugees,” Mark said. “Most people are more influenced by media than by scriptures.”

So he visits congregations to educate members. Members also learn by volunteering.

World Relief partners with 30 faith communities—Christian, Unity, Unitarian and Latter-Day Saints churches, plus Jewish congregations—to resettle new refugees and support them for two years.

“Faith communities who partner with World Relief agree to serve people without pressuring refugees to change their faith, but we are transparent that we at World Relief are motivated by our faith as Christians,” Mark said. “As a Christian, I’m comfortable with Jesus’ model of helping without expecting people to change their beliefs.”

While congregations help resettle some refugees, many have family here. Those from Slavic areas often begin attending one of the 12 Slavic churches in Spokane.

“Faith communities can play a critical role as cultural companions and friends for new refugees as they learn English, and learn about going to stores, parks and schools,” Mark said.

Last year, World Relief volunteers and programs served 2,000 people.

World Relief partners with Refugee Connections Spokane, Global Neighborhood Thrift Store and Lutheran Community Services counseling programs. It also partners with schools, clinics and employers that hire refugees, he said.

“While there are fewer refugees, there is more need for education, given the hostility among people who do not know refugees,” said Mark, who seeks to learn so he can teach others.

“I learn from every person’s story,” he said. “It has impact on my faith.

“Ten years ago when my wife and I volunteered at Mother Theresa’s center in Calcutta, I saw a

quote: ‘I look in the face of someone dying and I look into the face of Christ.’ As I work with people who suffer, I see Jesus and understand the Gospel in new ways.”

To inform 12 Spokane faith leaders about the situation at the U.S.-Mexico border, Mark led a service-learning trip to San Diego and Tijuana Oct. 8 to 9.

The leaders were from Presbyterian, Foursquare, Slavic, Evangelical and nondenominational churches, and Whitworth University.

They visited people in churches serving immigrants, asylum-seeking families in Tijuana, and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) agents, who said the system is complex and broken, and there is need for better solutions.

“Because historically most migrants were once men seeking work, CBP agents are not trained to deal with families—women and children. Many cross the desert rather than waiting more than three months to cross the border at Tijuana, where only a handful of asylum-seeking families can enter each day,” he said. “Harsh policies do not fix the system, they just increase suffering.”

For Christians called to love God and love neighbors, Mark said Jesus’ example of the neighbor in Luke 10 is a Samaritan—someone of another religion and culture on a journey—who aids a vulnerable traveler.

“Churches in Tijuana and San Diego are ‘good Samaritans,’ acting as Jesus’ hands and feet, and as voices advocating for justice,” Mark said.

Caring for vulnerable people and seeking justice are not about political sides, but about seeking durable solutions to a crisis, he said.

He said many flee Central and South America to escape violence of governments destabilized by the U.S. and violence of drug

cartels/gangs feeding drugs to the U.S. market.

“**To reduce migration** that endangers families, we need to urge elected officials to stabilize those countries,” he said. “Given the labor shortage in the U.S., the immigration system needs to grant visas so people can legally come to work.”

Mark and others on the October trip are available to speak to educate people and decrease the hostility toward immigrants and refugees.

World Relief’s annual dinner, “Around the Table,” is at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 4, at the

Davenport Grand Hotel. Wilmot Collins, the mayor of Helena, Mont., a former refugee from Liberia, West Africa, will speak.

For information, call 484-9829 or visit worldreliefspokane.org.



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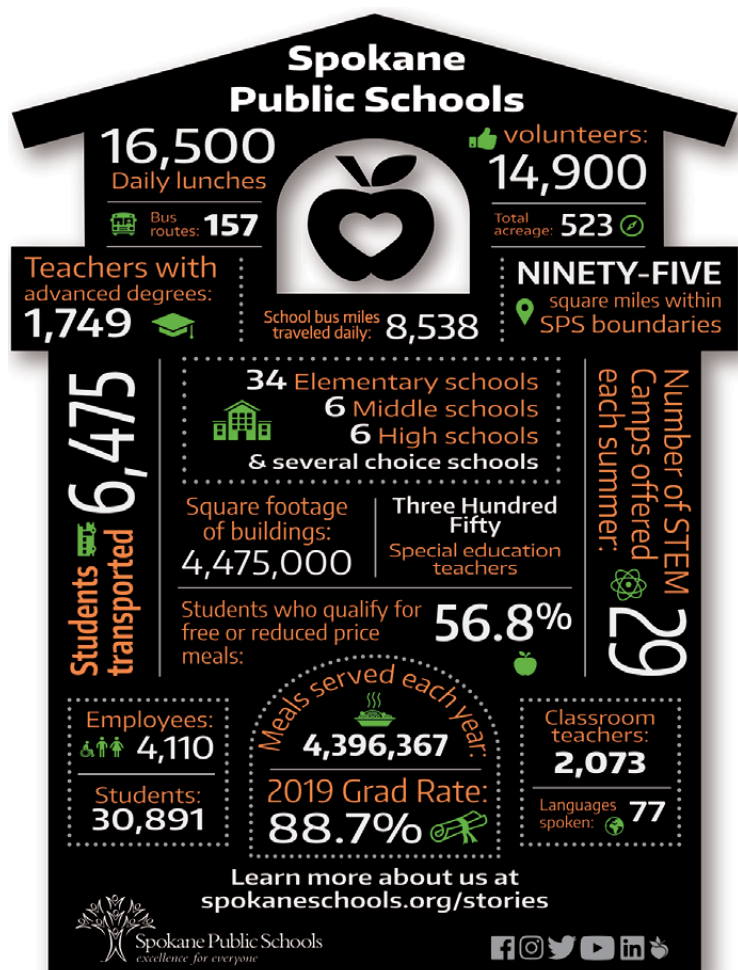
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Cathedral's dean values Episcopal Church's 'via media' role for today

The Very Rev. Heather VanDeventer, dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Spokane since August 2018, believes the Episcopal Church's "via media" is a gift in today's divisive world.

"Via media" means the middle way or way between two extremes.

The Latin phrase is from Aristotle's philosophy and came into use when theologian Richard Hooker in the 1590s invited Anglicans to see the Church of England as a middle way between Roman Catholicism and Puritanism.

"Anglicans/Episcopalians see ourselves as neither Catholic nor Protestant but both. We are a creedal church, not a confessional nor dogmatic church, but a creedal church recognizing that additional matters of doctrine and dogma change over time," Heather said.

"To live into via media means to hold conversations," she explained. "The Episcopal church is a gift to the wider community where people are fractured and today often do not come to the table to discuss concerns."

For Heather, it means she is careful not to preach in a partisan way, but is aware faith is political.

"People came to church to seek refuge from partisan politics," she said, "but Jesus said things we see as political. Via media means inviting people into the center and conversation—to listen more than speak, hear more than debate."

Last spring, she led the adult forum on "Civil Discourse," a curriculum developed by the Episcopal Public Policy Network.

"People of faith have different perspectives on values about issues like freedom," she said.

She and other forum leaders also meet differences in the Bible study this fall—as some read the Bible from a literalist perspective and some read it from a progressive, deconstructionist perspective.

When looking to move from Alexandria, Va., Heather, who was serving the historic Christ Church, and her husband, the Rev. David Gortner, who was teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary, took the idea of a middle way seriously. They decided to look for a place that would be "purple" politically.

Having lived most of their lives together in "blue" regions in the West, Midwest and East—Chicago, Berkeley and Alexandria, they were looking for "a purple place, where we could seek to hold the middle in conversations." They sought to live into the via media Anglican commitment.

"We looked for a place in a purple zone, so we could look at different issues and bridge differences," she said.



The Very Rev. Heather VanDeventer communicates in purple reality.

After David's father died in 2014, they chose to come west to be near Heather's family in Post Falls and Salt Lake City, Utah.

Heather said that growing up Episcopalian in Salt Lake City, she experienced being a religious minority in a culture that carried assumptions of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, which is dominant there.

Her experience of interaction with diversity continued in her undergraduate studies at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., where her roommates were a woman from Texas with British parents, a woman from Beijing, a Puerto Rican Seventh-Day Adventist, a Reform Jewish woman and a Conservative Jewish woman.

Heather shifted from majoring in physics to medieval history.

"My sense of call came early. I was active in the church, singing in the choir, attending youth group and on the diocesan youth team," said Heather, who now, as mother of 14- and 16-year-olds, appreciates opportunities for their involvement in church life.

Her call to ministry was gradual and natural. She applied for the priesthood as a junior in college after discerning that her call was to teach church history and life as a priest in a church setting, not in a secular setting.

She graduated from Yale in 1994, graduated from Chicago-area Seabury Western Theological Seminary in 1998 and was ordained as a priest when she was 25.

After seminary, she was associate for six years at Wilmette, a suburb north of Chicago. She was responsible for Sunday school and youth, and was mentored by colleagues in the many aspects of parish life—preaching, worship, adult education and pastoral care.

While there, she married David, who earned a doctoral degree at the University of Chicago and was

ordained. They moved to Berkeley, Calif., where he taught seminary for four years, and Heather was a stay-at-home mother, doing supply preaching.

Their next move was to Alexandria, Va., where she was a part-time chaplain and teacher at an Episcopal boarding high school, challenging students who had grown up in literalist traditions in the Southeast U.S. to think critically and with a new theological eye about the Bible.

After three years at the school, she returned to parish ministry at Christ Church, a historic church founded in 1773. George Washington had been on the vestry. The church not only drew tourists and presidents, but was active in outreach to the city. She served there seven years.

Heather was called to the Cathedral of St. John in Spokane. David recently began as priest at St. Luke's Episcopal in Coeur d'Alene. Although they had visited her father, who has lived in Post Falls 16 years, they had spent their time in Idaho and knew little

of the cathedral or Spokane.

Heather appreciates how the cathedral is open to the community.

Many come to concerts the cathedral presents or hosts.

Along with being "an amazing space for music," the cathedral is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays for prayer and tours.

In 1924, Bishop Edward Makin Cross, the third bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, began his ministry envisioning a cathedral that would be a light on the hill. He combined St. James and St. Peter's churches with All Saints Cathedral downtown, and oversaw construction of the Gothic cathedral at 12th and Grand during his service as bishop from 1924 to 1954.

"The cathedral is open for the community," Heather said, telling of people with loved ones at Sacred Heart Hospital coming up the hill to pray. "Anyone is welcome."

The idea of being open to everyone is behind Yoga in the Cathedral, which a parishioner offers once a month. About 150 children to grandparents fill the aisles—the age range of members.

"Something holy goes on in Yoga in the Cathedral," she said.

Heather finds it in tune with U.S. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's invitation "for us to walk in the way of love as we follow Jesus."

The cathedral will also be open to the community for a spring conference the weekend after Easter and before Earth Day.

"A Hope for Creation" will gather people to talk about the environment and the stewardship of creation. Heather sees it as an opportunity for different strands of Christianity with different understandings about care of creation to gather. The cathedral's Environmental Stewardship Ministry is partnering with Whitworth University to plan the event.

That ministry is involved in

several environmental efforts. With Ponderosa Spokane, members helped replant ponderosa pine on the North South corridor last spring and had volunteers help water them during the summer.

The cathedral is also exploring ways to have solar power and changing out hundreds of incandescent and fluorescent lights to LEDs in the whole building."

To spread Bishop Curry's message of love, the cathedral invited him to be keynote speaker and preacher for the fall 2020 Diocesan Convention in Spokane. He will also give a public talk.

"We live in God's love," said Heather in a recent sermon. "We are the apple of God's eye."

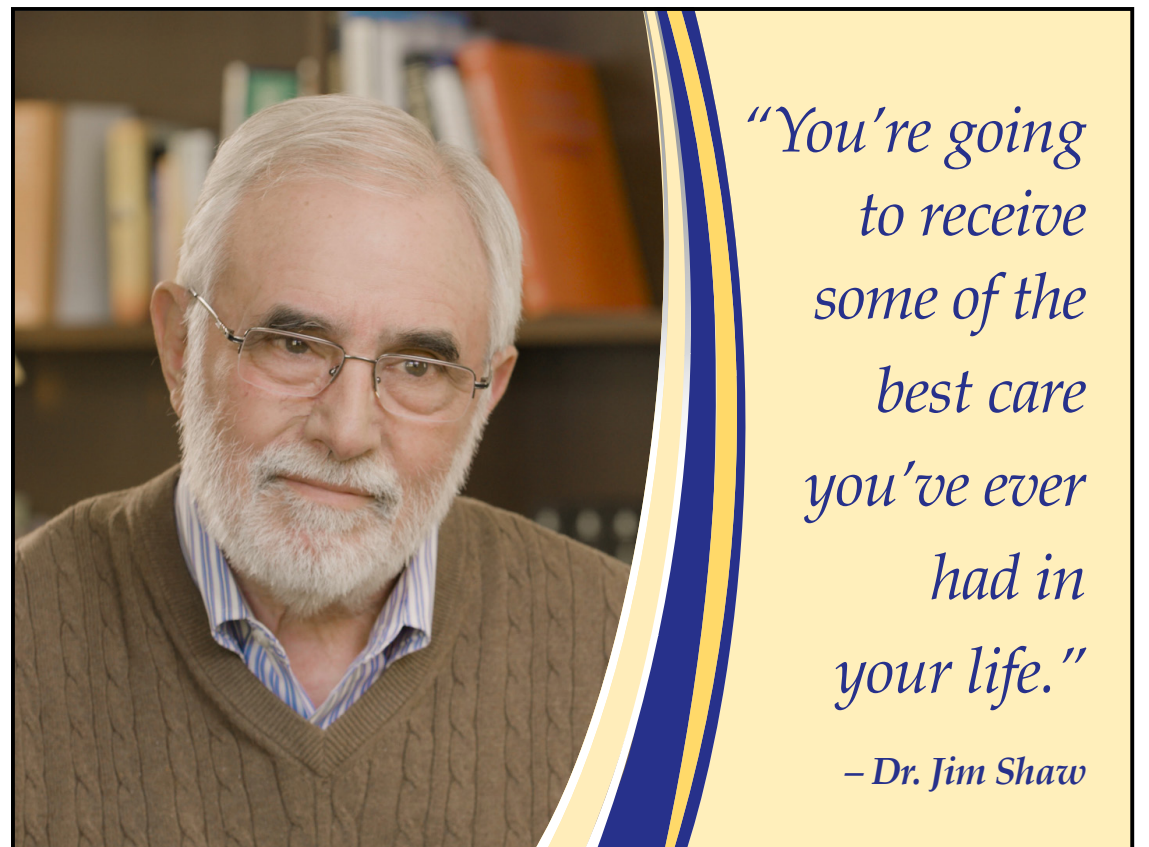
The cathedral's community philanthropy and outreach express their love and commitment to justice. Four times a year, it hosts Family Promise for a week. Former second floor Sunday school rooms house families. Meals are in the guild room, which has a view over the city and valley, the same space where the Daughters of the American Revolution meets each month. Those diverse groups eat and are in community, using the same space at different times.

Other outreach ministries include West Central Episcopal Mission's weekly Dinner Table, a Community Garden, Meals on Wheels, Crosswalk meals and the Tree of Sharing.

Church Service League volunteers have operated The Windfall thrift store since the 1960s, serving the South Perry and Grant School neighborhood.

The cathedral locally supports Crosswalk, Shalom Ministries, A Cup of Cool Water, Daybreak Youth Services and Martin Luther King Jr. Center. Internationally, it supports the Stephen Novak Foundation for ministries in Nepal.

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Couple continue to have impact on Guatemalan lives

Continued from page 1
 hours just to learn something new," Sandi said.

Sandi and Brian also connected women with microloans, so they could open their own small businesses, such as stores and farm enterprises. More than 100 women were loan recipients through combined efforts of Western North Carolina Presbyterian Women and a Guatemalan nonprofit that helped women learn business operating skills.

Brian, who has a background in community development, helped women become more fiscally literate.

"Many had never had to manage funds or develop a budget," he said. "It was hard for them to work with a budget in a culture where women did not have their own money or bank accounts. Saving money wasn't the challenge. They actually had a hard time spending money."

By the end of their time, women could manage budgets, understand cash flow and prepare spread sheets.

What evolved with the women's leadership program was both subtle and profound, Sandi said. It related to how they saw themselves and how leadership could be expressed in a country and culture where women, especially indigenous women, were undervalued, oppressed and discriminated against.

"Improving their sense of worth as women leaders was another hurdle," she shared. "The women would travel bi-monthly to meet, but would stay in the cheapest places, sleeping on floors in conditions that often made them sick. It was a process to help them understand they had the right to take care of themselves and deserved comfortable accommodations."

Building on strengths of relationships, Sandi and Brian formed a bridge between people of faith in the U.S. and Guatemala, bringing groups south each year to learn and volunteer. In this way, they leveraged their own strengths with those of others.

"We love partnering," said Sandi, noting that the collaborative spirit added value to their mission and expanded their programs.

Peter Baird, whose career is in creating social justice music, collaborated with Sandi and Brian to create a music workshop on the theme, "music that inspires and liberates." Twenty people participated, mostly youth, sharing their struggles with justice and learning how to connect faith with activism. It culminated in a



Sandi and Brian Thompson-Royer sell Guatemalan items at Jubilee.

community performance that 90 people attended.

Sandi's favorite piece from the concert was composed by a woman attendee, "La Paz Existe (Peace Exists)." It goes, "Peace exists when there is love. Hate moves away, when there is love. The barriers fall and there are no borders, when there is love."

Much of their work was skill- and knowledge-based, designed to increase the women's revenue and autonomy. The Mam Women's Sewing School Project taught 12 women sewing skills and product development. Using her connections, Sandi brought U.S. seamstresses to Guatemala to teach women how to create and sell products for U.S. markets.

The sewing group gave themselves the name, "Saq b'e," which in the indigenous Mam language means "path of light and hope." They created utilitarian products such as napkins, placemats, shopping bags, hot pads, baby bibs and aprons. During annual visits, Sandi brought the items to the U.S. to sell when she spoke at churches about their mission work.

In Guatemala, they also supported spiritual retreats for women leaders. Sandi enhanced her relationship with women in the context of their relationship with God and Jesus' teachings. Retreats were opportunities to rest and renew at the end of the year.

"We'd stay in a nice place, do Bible study, reflection, art and music," she said.

Brian worked with men. If women weren't respected and supported in their homes, how could they reach their potential in the larger community?

He used a program called "Men in the Mirror," based on Jesus' teachings and encouraging "Christ Centered Masculinity."

The workshops met resistance, but the work continues under the Rev. Mateo González, a native

Guatemalan, who hopes to build on the program so men better understand how their views of masculinity developed and reconsider duties assigned along gender lines.

Brian believes the education and reflection changes how household chores are divided and increases respect for women. Men and women can work together to create a spirit of partnership in their marriage, have healthier relationships and reduce domestic violence, he said.

In Spokane, Sandi and Brian continue partnering with the women. With her connections to the Mam sewing project, they started a small business, Resilient Threads, supporting several cooperatives of women who weave, sew and do bead work. Funds from that also help support projects in Guatemala.

"We communicate almost every day. We miss the community and feel sad that what we have here is not possible for most in Guatemala," Sandi said. "We will continue our work here, bringing fair-trade items to sell at local fair-trade events and through churches."

Along with continuing to support the Men in the Mirror program there, they want to work on immigration and welcoming refugees here.

"Because Guatemalan culture is indigenous, life is simple, measured in connections rather than things. Women keep their culture and traditions alive," Brian said. "Guatemalan women have kept their language, even though that means they experience challenges and discrimination."

"Their hospitality is genuine," said Sandi. "We were inspired in Guatemala to realize that what is important in life is family, a roof over your head and food. Rich re-

lationships are the greatest value."

For information, email sandit@hotmail.com.

Debbie DuPey, who owns Corazon Journeys, a social-justice travel enterprise, has traveled and volunteered many times with Sandi in Guatemala, to conduct domestic violence workshops.

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Opera, classical singer settles in Spokane, becomes church music director

Derrick Parker's love of music drew him out of a predominantly black middle school in Atlanta, Georgia, into a magnet performing arts high school, where half the students were black like him and half were white.

That shift included adding classical music to his childhood repertoire of pop and gospel music, singing and playing piano by ear in black Baptist and Church of God churches. One day, the school's white music director introduced the choir to Mozart.

Today, Derrick is music director at First Presbyterian Church in Spokane, responsible for music at an early contemporary service with a band and at the traditional service with organ and a 40-member choir.

His career as a classical opera and concert singer has often meant he is the only black person in the room, he said.

His horizons for that career were stretched by his high school's singers, dancers and technicians traveling during spring break for performances in Europe, Russia and the Caribbean Islands. They earned \$5,000 for performing at business conventions to raise money for the school and to supplement students' travel expenses.

"Traveling abroad was life changing, exposing me to different cultures and giving me the confidence to venture outside my comfort zone," he said. "I wish more Americans had such opportunities."

Derrick earned a bachelor's degree in voice in 1996 from Florida State University in Tallahassee and a master's in voice in 1998 at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., where he met his wife, Heather, a Whitworth University graduate who grew up in Spokane.

After a two-year internship with the Houston Grand Opera Studio, he and Heather moved to New York City. From there, they sang professionally for six years in operas and concerts, and from a home in the Poconos for three years. They traveled mostly around the United States and in Europe. He also sang in South Africa and the Canary Islands. Occasionally they were hired together. For an opera, he might



Derrick Parker builds musical program at First Presbyterian.

be gone several months, or for a concert, several days.

In 2009, they moved to Spokane to care for Heather's grandparents. After their first daughter was born, Heather phased out of performing, and now has a private voice studio and a photography business. Derrick continued to perform. He also taught voice lessons and a vocal class at Gonzaga University for a year.

After her grandparents died, Heather and Derrick stayed in Spokane to be with her mother.

Committed to living in Spokane, they began attending the 9 a.m. contemporary service at First Presbyterian Church, with their daughters, who are now 11 and six.

In 2012, Garth Hangartner, the music director, asked Derrick to help with playing piano and the Hammond organ, and singing for the contemporary service.

In 2015, Derrick became an elder.

In 2016, Garth moved to Alaska, and Derrick became interim musician for the contemporary service. Organist Bonnie Robinson was interim music director for the traditional service, and Ann Benson was interim choir director.

In January 2017, Ann asked Derrick to fill in for a rehearsal.

"I had fun running it. That planted a seed. I began thinking I could do the job of music director," he said, connecting to his experiences working "with amazing conductors and amazing choirs."

He interviewed and was hired.

Derrick said leading music for worship "prepares people's minds, hearts and souls to hear from God through music, the word or even a conversation with someone at church.

"Music clears our minds of stress and challenges from the week," he said. "Music unites us and penetrates deeply into the soul in ways words cannot do."

With a background in lively worship, Derrick invites the congregation to be comfortable with "a varied" worship style that includes lifting their hands, clapping and stretching into gospel music.

"Songs are carefully selected to support the message of the day. My hope is that the music lives within the people throughout the week as they experience the ups and downs of life," Derrick said.

For years, First Presbyterian has had a contemporary and a

traditional service. In the last decade, more members have been attending the contemporary one.

"We have stabilized the traditional service by improving the quality of the service and the choir, which has also grown in numbers. About 30 to 35 of the 40 members are there each week," Derrick said.

For the traditional service, music includes the choir, organ and handbells. A children's choir sings throughout the year.

For the contemporary service, there is a pool of 25 volunteers, so different groups of people play in different bands each week—pianists, guitarists, bass guitarists, cellists, drummers and singers.

"I love teaching, and I teach as I lead the choir and band," he said. "As the choir improves, we will draw younger people. In the summer, I also give voice lessons to choir members. Part of my role is to shepherd the choir and worship teams to be a community, a family."

While Derrick continues to sing around the country and world, he accepts fewer jobs. Last year, he sang with the Seattle Opera, and this fall he did two concerts with the Spokane Symphony.

"My family is important. I want my daughters to know me. It's worth the sacrifice of singing fewer engagements," he said.

Derrick said First Presbyterian is predominantly white, but there are some refugees, people of different cultures and a few African-Americans who attend services.

Living in Atlanta, which has

sections where blacks live and sections where whites live, people had stereotypes about people of other cultures and races.

"Our high school group broke through stereotypes," Derrick said. "A white family hosted students before shows. Everyone was together and worked together. We cared about each other genuinely.

"It gave me the courage to pursue a career path where I would see few African Americans and feel comfortable among white people," he said.

"I hope my presence here in our community as an African American in a leadership role at a predominantly white church helps break down the stereotypes that exist about people of color," Derrick said.

First Presbyterian presents a community sing-along performance of Handel's "Messiah" each year.

About 27 singers will join the regular choir for at least four of five rehearsals and the orchestra dress rehearsal. The day of the sing-along, about 350 others come early to practice the hard parts for an hour.

The rehearsal is at 1:30 p.m., and the sing-along begins at 3 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 14, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

"Messiah is one of the first major pieces I learned in high school. It's cool to circle back to it," he said. "Our church offers it as a gift to the community."

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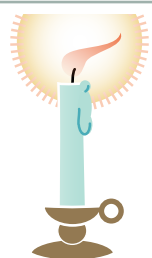
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Panel explores ways city adopting UN Sustainable Development Goals

In a recent panel on “Building a Sustainable Spokane,” four community leaders examined the city’s progress toward achieving the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—adopted in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

They are a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, and a call to action developed with input from people around the world, including Spokane.

The goals are no poverty, no hunger, good health, quality education, gender equality, clean water, clean energy, decent work, industry innovation, reducing inequalities, sustainable cities, responsible consumption, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace and justice, and partnerships for goals.

The panel was part of the Sept. 28 Earth and Spirit Gathering at Unity Spiritual Center sponsored by One Peace Many Paths.

Panelists Pat Jones of Eastern Washington University Community Indicators, Maggie Gates of The Lands Council, Karli McIntyre of 350 Spokane, and Breean Beggs of the Spokane City Council discussed the city’s progress toward the goals.

Pat hopes for better outcomes than he thinks are possible by 2030. Spokane Community Indicators gathers data on 205 variables to discern trends related to people, culture, recreation, education, health, housing, transportation, public safety, the economy, the environment and other priorities. That information helps improve local public and private decision making.

“Christ said ‘the poor will always be with us,’ so I don’t think there will be no poverty in 2030, but I believe there will be less. Spokane’s poverty rate is already down,” he said.

“My vision depends less on poverty being reduced and more on health being better,” Pat said of his work measuring city and county trend lines. “I hope we will be better off than 10 years ago.”

Working with the Lands Council since graduating from Gonzaga in May, Maggie said she is an idealist in face of the climate crisis.

“Either we strive toward the goals, or my vision is pie in the sky. Many political leaders promote the Green New Deal. They focus on climate, environment, race, gender and the economy with an equal lens,” she said.

Everyone needs to work together, said Maggie, pointing out that the Lands Council is doing its part by planting trees for forest restoration, and encouraging people to eat less meat, ride bikes



Breean Beggs, Maggie Gates, Karli McIntyre and Pat Jones discuss progress, hopes and possibilities.

and live more sustainably.

She calls for systemic change along with individuals making changes. Everyone needs more street trees, bike lanes and public transportation. She urges people to buy local food, plant community gardens and use more solar energy.

“It’s about political will,” said Maggie, who is also in the Sunrise Movement of young people who care about the planet and speak out against global warming.

“I’m an idealist,” she repeated. “I’m inspired by what is happening and the energy in Spokane. We are helping people dream and gain power.

“How will we know if we are making progress? The Sept. 20 Climate Strike was a sign of progress. I’ve been here four years, coming from Colorado to study at Gonzaga University. I feel momentum building,” she said.

Karli, a GU environmental studies graduate, said “we can only go as far as the goals we set.

“I liken climate crisis action to Martin Luther King Jr.’s work for civil rights. He knew he would not see the end of racism in his life, but gave a vision of what it would look like,” she said.

“We are on the forefront of climate action, with recognition of the intersectionality of issues. All the goals are related. As we talk about them, we engage people. Homeless people seeking a place to lay their heads, and hungry people worried about where they will find food may not focus on climate change,” she said.

“We will move action on climate change as people see its interconnection with economic issues. Before people will act on the climate, they need to have

housing, shelter, heat and food,” Karli said.

In his work with the city, Breean also emphasizes the intersectionality of the goals.

“We have racism so we have poverty. We need both environmental and community sustainability,” he said. “Spokane’s biggest challenge is being the state’s poorest urban center. Income equality is wide. If people are struggling, they do not act. If they are doing well, they wonder, ‘Why change?’ We need everyone to look at sustainability.

“We need to pay attention to data from Community Indicators as we set goals,” said Breean, who envisions and articulates specific goals, and seeks to reinforce people doing the right things, rather than scaring people to act.

“I recycle and grow vegetables. We need more bike lanes and bus routes. We offer business people incentives,” he said. “We need data to inspire. The biggest obstacle is a lack of faith that the goals can be achieved by 2030.”

On a recent visit with city leaders to Copenhagen, he saw that transportation was not a political issue. In the 1970s, residents decided they did not want to depend on Gulf oil. The political parties promoted sustainability, so only 40 percent of trips are with vehicles. Most are with bikes. Industries opened green jobs.

“We are a diverse city but people work together so it’s not us vs. them, but us.” Breean said.

Panelists then discussed developing effective community action with there being so many organizations in Spokane.

Pat said collaboration has improved over the last 20 years.

agement—ranchers, county commissioners, environmentalists and pro-wolf people.

“What comes out of meetings with all the stakeholders is inspiring,” she said.

Karli said the panel is an example of collaboration with nonprofits and city leaders sharing perspectives.

“Climate Strike organizers created an opportunity and diverse people showed up, from toddlers in strollers to elders using walkers,” she said.

Climate change will affect everyone regardless of their income, whether people are in Spokane or the Bahamas, she said, noting that environmental groups are working together.

“350 Spokane, the Lands Council, Roast House Coffee and North Face recently met to discuss collaborating on sharing resources to do more in Spokane, as well as on the Spokane and Colville Reservations and among Palouse farmers to act on the sustainable development goals,” Karli said.

Breean said that while some groups are more invested in being right than in collaborating, he saw collaboration when 30 organizations came together in the “I Love the Spokane River” campaign.

“We need to pursue the soft spot, that moves us from our hearts to find alliances,” he said.

For information, email mgates@landscouncil.org, bbeggs@spokanecity.org.

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Benedictine oblates help start new Ecumenical Catholic congregation

By Kaye Hult

A new congregation in the Catholic tradition has been meeting for about a year and a half at Lutheran Church of the Master in Coeur d'Alene. They worship at 5 p.m. first and third Saturdays.

Community of the Holy Spirit is part of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC), with roots in the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht that challenged Vatican I's papal infallibility and yet is consistent with apostolic Catholic theology of Vatican II.

Holy Spirit came into being through efforts of four women who are its pastoral team: Benedictine oblates Ev Burns, Terese Fandel, Parden and Phyllis Rossi.

They describe it as a Eucharistic community, meaning Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is central in liturgy. The Ecumenical Catholic Communion (ECC) is inclusive of everyone, so one doesn't have to be a member to receive Eucharist.

Full, active participation of the congregation is welcomed, encouraged and happens, they said. As part of belief in the priesthood of the people, the bread and wine are consecrated together by the congregation.

"In striving to follow Jesus' example and teachings, we believe everyone is beloved and welcome at the Table of the Lord," they said.

The team's background as Benedictine oblates influences the liturgy, said Terese. Worship has a contemplative bent, inviting those present to slow down to listen to the Holy Spirit speak to them.

"In silence and stillness, I can find my centering spot," said Ev. Holy Spirit has a core of 20 people who gather for worship. Many are former Roman Catholics.

While it is mostly older people, Terese said, the community is exploring ways to speak to younger adults and families who might be seeking a faith community.

Children receive communion whenever they are able to hold the bread. They use leavened—yeasted—bread, embracing the practice of the Eastern Orthodox tradition as an "ecumenical gesture, and because the bread appears as real food," said Father Jim Murphy, the community's sacramental minister. "We are called to be Christ for the world."

By that he means to be concerned for the environment, workers' rights and respecting the wisdom in other traditions.

The team is discussing expanding its ministry by deepening faith experiences, such as the use of Centering Prayer, movement



Bonnie Parden, Terese Fandel, Jim Murphy, Ev Burns and Phyllis Rossi are the church leadership team.

prayer—yoga, labyrinth—Lectio with art and poetry, and with the Enneagram, a model of the human psyche that can increase self-awareness and spiritual growth.

"The common thread is that these are communal practices of being open to the Spirit in community," he said.

"Outreach is an important part of Community of the Holy Spirit," Phyllis said. "We are looking for new ways to do this."

The congregation is helping Lutheran Church of the Master, which is at 4800 Ramsey Rd., in their weekly Daily Bread meal at 1:30 p.m., Sundays, for those in need in the Coeur d'Alene area.

Two members visited a Syrian refugee camp in Greece in 2018, she said. Others donated for the trip. Those contributions helped purchase clothes and a washing machine for the refugees.

"We were grateful that a couple from our parish was able to travel there to offer service," said Terese. "Our benefit has been knowing we were able to help people in need."

Since the late 1990s, the women met as Roman Catholics to study the Rule of St. Benedict and deepen their ability to live faithful lives.

Terese grew up with Benedictines in Minnesota. She is a physician and works with her physician husband in North Idaho.

In her 30s, she wanted a more formal relationship with the Benedictines, leading her to become an oblate, a person who follows the Rule of St. Benedict, but outside of a religious community.

For 20 years, Phyllis went to many retreats at the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho. The sisters' hospitality and welcoming inspired her.

Bonnie became an oblate more recently, inspired by people open to questions and exploring their

faith in community. The group felt like home to her.

Jim's background is as a Trappist monk. Trappists also follow the Rule of St. Benedict. He worked as a hospital chaplain since 1982 and recently retired from Kootenai Health.

It was a long process for him to leave the Roman Catholic church as he saw church practices grow away from Vatican II under Popes John Paul II and Benedict.

"The Roman Catholic Church sees the priest as 'alter-Christi,' a stand-in for Christ, when presiding," he said. "At the hospital, I watched nurses care for patients at 2 a.m., along with doctors and housekeepers. I saw them be Christ for other people every day."

He was concerned that the church treated women as second-class citizens and gay people suffered under the church's practices.

"My wife and I were like Goldilocks," he said. "We tried many churches. About five or six years ago, we found St. Clare's Ecumenical Catholic Church in Spokane through a newspaper article. When we attended, it clicked."

Going on a retreat in Oregon, Terese was met at the airport by a priest in the Ecumenical Catholic Communion. He told her of this new rendition of Catholicism that understands all people to be equally important in the eyes of God. It welcomes women and LGBTQ individuals into full participation, including being ordained as priests and bishops.

Terese was intrigued. She brought this information to her study group. They had heard of St. Clare's ECC in Spokane. When they attended mass there, they wondered how to bring such inclusive worship to Coeur d'Alene.

She and Jim, who has been ordained as a priest at St. Clare's, went to lunch. Jim agreed to lead

worship for a small group at Phyllis' house in January 2018. They met there regularly for worship.

"We asked St. Clare's if we could be a mission of their congregation," said Terese.

Jim agreed to be their priest.

After meeting for six months in Phyllis' home, they realized that to grow, they needed a larger space. Lutheran Church of the Master welcomed them.

"We're growing in many ways other than numbers," said Phyllis.

"We hope to meet the change in spirituality in the culture by offering alternatives," said Terese. "We needed a community that's open. We want to give a home to people who wouldn't feel welcomed in other churches."

"Through Spirit-guidance and wisdom, Holy Spirit is an emerging church," said Ev. "We needed courage to be Catholic in another way. The Holy Spirit was moving. We saw people hungry for that."

"Participation is active, inclusive and egalitarian," Bonnie said. "We strive to value ourselves and others as beloved, accepted and of infinite worth and potential."

"That makes me responsible for my faith," Ev said. "It's not up to someone else."

Opening Holy Spirit prompted Terese to re-evaluate her goals. She enrolled in the master's in theology and leadership program at Gonzaga. A few months later, she retired from pathology and is now discerning about seeking ordination in the Ecumenical Catholic Communion.

"We offer an alternative model of church," said Terese. "We want to live out Vatican II, to be an example of what the church could be. Holy Spirit gives us the opportunity to be the change we want to see in the world."

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Community groups again rise to speak out against bias, for understanding

We keep speaking out for respect. We need action to change the climate of prejudice in the community and country.

Three recent incidents stirred the NAACP Spokane to prepare a statement.

They call for resources to underwrite training on societal bias and cultural awareness, for implementing racial equity tool kits and outcome measures, and for establishing an Office of Civil Rights and restorative accountability for institutions.

The incidents were 1) a rock thrown through a window of the home of two employees of Jewel's Helping Hands, which is operating the city's new homeless shelter, 2) racist fliers distributed at Morning Star Baptist Church and 3) disruption during a local celebration of Dia de los Muertos.

The NAACP Spokane issued a statement challenging racial hatred, cultural bias and white supremacist extremism. It gathered signatures of more than 32 community leaders and organizations.

They challenge attitudes about the state of racism and prejudice in the region. Along with the "macro" large-scale aggressions, communities of color experience "micro" aggressions on a daily basis." That's in racial disparities throughout society—business, housing, schools, higher education, jury selection, sentencing, incarceration and reentry, living wages, health outcomes and life expectancy—that embody systemic, historic racism.

The statement points to dysfunctional undercurrents that have existed since the country's inception and are pervasive today.

It calls the community to address white superiority mindsets by providing prevention education and restorative consequences and to address underlying societal issues that continue to foster inequities.

Kurtis Robinson, president of the Spokane NAACP said dialogue is underway to develop specifics for action, particularly working to establish a Spokane Office for

Civil Rights. He said that would provide rapid response to incidents, gather facts in a reasonable time, and establish sustainable, measurable, restorative outcomes.

The NAACP Spokane is gathering people with expertise to overcome hate, fear, bias, threats and violence arising from cultural, racial, ethnic, religious and economic diversity. Our diversity should be a cause for celebration, not division.

On Nov. 21, First Presbyterian's Biblical Justice Forum had Pastor Walter Kendricks of Morning Star, Kristine Hoover of Gonzaga's Hate Studies and former representative John Smith discuss, "Responding to White Supremacy," exploring how faith communities can stand with affected communities, and overcome hate and bias.

Faith communities have a role in teaching love, educating groups, modeling inclusion, organizing rallies, making statements and advocating justice.

The Fig Tree is committed to report on

the varied avenues for change—personal relationships, educational events, programmatic response, protest opportunities and legal/systemic challenges.

We add to the mix a call for media literacy and responsible media coverage. What does that look like?

- Media literacy means media consumers need to be informed of propaganda tactics, how definitions of "news" and presenting "both sides" may produce reports that promote hate, divisions and bias. Definitions may include sensationalism that exacerbates divisions, because conflict "sells."

- Media responsibility involves media as part of the process of restorative solutions, such as covering multiple perspectives, not "either/or," and covering the impact of everyday, unspoken bias, and celebrating how diversity enriches the community.

We'll join in the process with our coverage and our ongoing challenges.

Mary Stamp - editor

At border, pastor encounters a teen named Jesus and others who are 'Jesus'

Eric Peterson, pastor of Colbert Presbyterian Church, reflected on Jesus' call to love neighbors and welcome strangers, saying that he "met Jesus" when he crossed the border into Mexico in October as part of a team of 12 pastors from Spokane.

He wasn't anything like I expected. He had brown skin, sad eyes and a lanky build. He spoke softly in a language I didn't understand. He pronounced his name "Yesus," which is different than I've been saying.

God created humanity in God's own image, and ever since we've been trying to return the favor. It's true for me. I've always imposed images onto Jesus that I'm accustomed to and comfortable with.

My thoughtless default is to imagine God as a strong, white male, who is well-spoken, confident in his spiritual authority, with an uncanny ability to persuade others. He's tall, charismatic, gentle, good looking, a charmer with the ability to win others over.

I met the living Jesus, incarnated as a Hispanic teen who, with his mother and younger brother, was waiting for his number to be called in his pursuit of asylum.

He and his family fled their rural village in Central Mexico, which was overrun by gang violence.

Neither the other pastors nor I dared ask where his father was. We presumed he was dead, a victim of violence. Our world is home to so much violence. It defies values of the coming, peaceable kingdom of God.

Jesus and his fatherless family had joined a caravan of thousands who risked their lives making the dangerous journey to a legal port of entry into the U.S. Migrating women use birth control because there is an 80 percent chance they will be raped as they travel.

If the journey isn't harsh enough, people seeking refuge in our country are deterred with a long wait and the threat of detention. From the moment they knock on the door of our border, they are made to feel unwanted, even criminal. The message might be displayed with a neon sign: "No Vacancy."

A friend recently told me that, on entering New York Harbor on his return from a European cruise, a voice on the public address system quoted the poem inscribed on

the Statue of Liberty. Emma Lazarus wrote of Lady Liberty as the "Mother of Exiles,"

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

My friend said these words sounded wrong, given the severe limitations the administration has placed on the number of people permitted to settle in the U.S. The dissonance between the 1883 poem and our 2019 policy was jolting.

The words stand for how things should be. Poetry does this, as do the scriptures. They describe a kingdom that is coming, but is met by resistance and hostility.

The question for Christians is, "do I accept the reality of what is, or do I serve the divine vision of what is to be?"

Jesus did the latter, claiming a prophetic mission from Isaiah, saying, God sent him "to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18).

My brief visit to the wall revealed a Jesus who rejects the seats of power, privilege and prestige to huddle with hurting people of this world. This savior locates himself in out-of-the-way places with the most overlooked people.

If we want to be close to Jesus, we have to go where he goes, to be in the company of "the least of my brothers and sisters," people who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked or in prison (Mt. 25:35-36).

It was transformative for this North American man of privilege to meet a disheveled Jesus in the company of his brothers and sisters. Although the border wall was being visited by the hosts of heaven, there wasn't a welcome mat. It's a sobering reminder that people—though separated by thousands of miles—are no less our neighbors, brothers and sisters.

Hospitality to such neighbors is perhaps the clearest exhibit of the coming peaceable kingdom of God. Although I live on this side of the wall, I'd like to be found on that side of history.

Eric Peterson - Colbert Presbyterian

Letters to the Editor

Sounding Board

Commentary

It's humbling and exciting when things start happening. Opportunities present themselves or helpers come along and believe in one of our visions. Deb Abrahamson of the SHAWL Society recently provided a tour for a researcher from Japan who is visiting the region to study the impacts of nuclear weapons production to our community. The Japanese were hit by nuclear bombs, the material used to build those bombs came from the Spokane Reservation. We have ties that nobody likes to talk about. We share illnesses. We've lost elders too early.

Then an email came in, from a group of doctors who offer to help with the needs we've outlined related to radiation exposure and cancer.

Deb seeks to bring cancer resources to our community and hold Indian Health Services accountable to our people. Now they need to help or get out of the way—no more chances as our people continue to be misdiagnosed and refused care. We are starting to reach out to the Puyallup Tribe's Salish Cancer Center, where Deb received the best treatment. They offer overall holistic healing. We had an educational session on diet and the benefits of spiritual healing.

The Spokane People deserve better care. Newmont and Western Nuclear, international mining giants, permitted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, came, stripped the resources and poisoned the land. They sold the uranium, and bombs were made. Now we call them to clean up their mess. Our future is at stake.

Twa-le Abrahamson Swan
The SHAWL Society

I am consistently impressed with your coverage of local and regional peace and social justice events, as well as information on social service and community agencies.

No one in the area does it better than all of you!

Susie Leonard Weller - Spokane

Blessings: Thank you for your most wonderful ministry. I am blessed by you. God Bless You!

Ray Rosch - Lewiston

The stories of the Vigil for the Healing of the Earth on Oct. 6 at the Old Mission at Cataldo, and about Cass Davis and Deb Abrahamson are so appreciated.

Cass, who shared his story of chronic lead poisoned health, represented the Silver Valley Community Resource Center, a 30-year old nonprofit organization whose grassroots efforts were first to inform the faith and justice leaders regarding the failure of government agencies to inform citizens of lead exposures and contamination at the Bunker Hill Superfund site.

A short distance from where the vigil was held, one of the largest toxic waste dumps in the Upper Basin of the Superfund Site stands. It is the Old Mission toxic repository, which is in violation of laws pertaining to permanent waste technology. The 20-acre site is the focus of ongoing downstream lead and mine waste pollution. More than 3,000 affected citizens and environmental justice groups throughout the U.S. oppose that toxic waste dump.

Childhood lead poisoning is a preventable illness. It is a result of living in the nation's largest lead site. The Silver Valley Community Resource Center has a "blueprint" and community support for a Community Lead Health Clinic/Center to address it. Along with Judge Edward Lodge holding the Hecla mining company liable for damages in a 2003 lawsuit, he awarded \$264,000,000 to the Coeur d'Alene tribe, the State of Idaho and Shoshone County Commissioners. No money, however, was awarded for people who, like Cass, have been harmed through no fault of their own.

The SVCRC Children Run Better Unleaded Project promotes health intervention, testing for lead, educating people and advocating for laws to protect lead-poisoned children. For information, call 208-784-8891, email svcommunityresourcecenter@air-pipe.com, or visit silvervalleyaction.org.

Barbara Miller
Silver Valley Resource Center

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Conference of Bishops this fall looked different than it did one year ago. More women. More people of color. Younger bishops. It's causing some discomfort. It's forcing us to examine realities that we've never had to confront—or even be aware of—before.

It is still good. It is still holy. It is still hard. It is still such a joy to be together, knowing that we do this work together, knowing that we will make mistakes, but that we will learn

from them and from one another.

I gave up a lot when I became bishop. I gave up time with my family. I gave up a congregation I loved. I gave up anonymity. In some ways, I gave up some of my autonomy.

I got a lot in return. Chief among those is a sisterhood of women, who work alongside our brother bishops to effect lasting and important change in our denomination. It is hard, slow work. There are a LOT of critics, but it's hard to find people more dedicated to the future of the congregations under our care.

As bishops, we know change is coming, but as female bishops, I think we perceive it more as labor and birth, rather than death. It will be hard. There will be cries, pain, tearing and tears, but at the end, a day full of grace! Something new and infinitely precious.

So these women will do what women have done for millennia when birthing something new. We will lean on one another. We will laugh and cry. We will hold hands. We will sing songs and pray prayers and tell stories about the women who have traveled this road ahead of us, and left signposts along the way. We will break bread together. We will invoke the name of the Holy One. Just as the women of God have always done.

Kristen Kuempel - Bishop
Northwest Intermountain Synod
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

Calendar of Events

- To Dec 19** • **Tree of Sharing**, pick up tags with gift requests at Riverpark Square, NorthTown and Spokane Valley Malls
- To Dec 25** • **Salvation Army Gift Trees**, gift tags at JC Penny, NorthTown and Spokane Valley Malls
- Dec 1** • **"Messiah,"** St. John's Music Series, Kantorei Chancel Choir and Collegium Orchestra, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 3 to 6 p.m., 838-4277, spokanekantorei@gmail.com
- Dec 2** • **"Diverse Voices Writing Group,"** Spark Central, 1214 S. Summit Pkwy, 5:30 p.m., 279-0299, sparkwestcentral.org
- Dec 3** • **Habitat for Humanity** Holiday Home Celebration Ceremony for Four New Homeowners on Giving Tuesday, Hope Meadows, 406 J St., Deer Park, 9:30 a.m., 534-2552, habitat-spokane.org
- Dec 4** • **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
• **"Around the Table,"** World Relief Spokane Dinner with Helena Mayor Wilmot Collins, Davenport Grand, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 5:30 p.m., 484-9829
• **Christmas Lights Fest**, Mirabeau Park Hotel Courtyard, 1100 N. Sullivan, 5 to 7 p.m., charity@thefamilyguide.org
- Dec 5** • **Caffe Affogato benefiting PJALS**, 19 W. Main, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., 838-7870
- Dec 5, 19** • **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., pjals.org
- Dec 5-8** • **The Nutcracker**, State Street Ballet, Martin Woldson Theatre at the Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, Thursday to Saturday, 7:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m., spokanesymphony.org
- Dec 6, 7** • **Advent Musical Celebration**, Grammy nominee Marty Rotella, "Music, Story, Gospel," Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr, Friday and Saturday performance/dinner 6 p.m., Saturday matinee 1 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net
• **Children's Christmas Joy Drive**, Mission Community Outreach Center, 1906 E. Mission Ave., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., 535-1084, www.4mission.org
- Dec 7** • **Advent Day of Reflection**, "And We Wait," Sr. Patricia Novak, OSF, The Ministry Institute, 405 E. Sinto, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., 313-5765
• **Winterfest: Caroling Competition** and Scandinavian Christmas, NorthTown Mall, 2 to 4 p.m., charity@thefamilyguide.org
- Dec 7-16** • **Holiday Nights at Gaiser** Conservatory, Manito Park, 4 W. 21st, noon to 7:30 p.m., 625-6692, thefriendsofmanito.org
- Dec 8** • **Dharma Day, Sravasti Abbey**, Newport, 9 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., sravastiabbey.org
• **Avé Concert**, Holy Names Music Academy, Convent of the Holy Names Chapel, 1960 Holy Names Court, 2 p.m.
• **Holiday on Pipes**, Christmas concert and sing-along with historic Wurlitzer pipe organ, First Church of the Nazarene, 9004 N. Country Homes, 6 to 8 p.m., sfnfos.org
• **German American Christmas Service**, Eberhart Schmidt and the Concordia Choir, St. Mark's Lutheran, 314 E. 24th Ave., 3 p.m., 928-2595
- Dec 9** • **Gingerbread Build Off**, Christ Kitchen Fundraiser, The Davenport Grand, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., christkitchen.org/events 325-4343
• **Advent Silent Day of Prayer**, with Bishop Thomas Daly, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Dec 10** • **Fiddler Extraordinaire** Mark O'Conner, "An Appalachian Christmas, Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 7:30 p.m., 624-1200
• **Human Rights Day Celebration** and Donor Social, 71st Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Human Rights Education Institute, 414 W. Fort Grounds Dr., Coeur d'Alene, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., hrei.org
- Dec 11** • **Hispanic Business/Professional** Association Membership Meeting, Fiesta Mexicana, 1227 S. Grand, 6 to 8 p.m., hbaspokane@gmail.com
• **Spokane Regional Law and Justice** Council, Spokane Regional Health District, 1101 W. College, noon to 1:30 p.m.
- Dec 11-20** • **Christmas Bureau**, Spokane County Fair and Expo Center, 404 N. Havana, AG Building, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., 354-4270, bkrause@ccspokane.org
- Dec 12** • **Eastern Washington Legislative** Conference Planning Committee, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1:30 p.m., 535-4112, info@thefigtree.org
- Dec 12, 26** • **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Dec 13** • **Jingle Books Donation Deadline**, collection boxes around Coeur d'Alene, 208-964-4823, heartofcda@gmail.com
- Dec 13, 14** • **Christmas by Candlelight, Chorale Coeur d'Alene**, Trinity Lutheran, 812 N. 5th St., Coeur d'Alene, 7 p.m. Friday, 2 p.m. Saturday, choralecda.com
- Dec 14** • **Family Christmastime Music and Inspiration**, Turtle Island Quartet "Winter's Eve," Martin Woldson Theater at Gonzaga, 211 E DeSmet, 2 p.m., 313-2787, gonzaga.edu/mwpc
• **First Annual Spokane Family Christmas** Powwow, Gathering at the Falls, Spokane Public Library, 906 W Main. 5 to 9 p.m., 362-2178, jerrycrowshoe@yahoo.com
• **Handel's "Messiah,"** First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, 1:30 p.m. rehearsal, 3 p.m. Sing-along, 747-1058
• **Winterfest: Feliz Navidad, Why the** Philippines and Mexico celebrate from September through Jan. 6, NorthTown Mall, 2 to 4 p.m., charity@thefamilyguide.org
- Dec 14, 15** • **Singing Nuns**, "Only a Baby Came," Mt. St. Michael, 8500 N. St. Michaels Rd., 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, 7 p.m., Saturday, 467-0986, singingnuns.com
• **Whitworth University Christmas Festival** Concert, Martin Woldson Theater The Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 8 p.m., Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday, 624-1200, foxtheaterspokane.org
- Dec 16** • **NAACP Membership Meeting**, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m., spkncpbr@gmail.com
- Dec 19** • **Baha'i Public Fireside Discussion**, Spokane Valley Library, 12004 E. Main, 4:30 p.m., 599-2411
• **Family Christmastime Music and Inspiration**, The Night Before Christmas Carol," Myrtle Woldson Theater at Gonzaga, 211 E DeSmet, 7:30 p.m., 313-2787, gonzaga.edu/mspac
- Dec 21** • **Winterfest: SantaCon** and K-Pop, NorthTown Mall, 2 to 4 p.m., charity@thefamilyguide.org
- Dec 21, 22** • **Holiday Pops with Vanessa Williams**, Spokane Symphony with James Lowe, Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, 8 p.m.
- Dec 29** • **Winterfest: Celebration of New Year** Traditions and Winterfest: Kwanzaa Festival, NorthTown Mall, 2 to 5 p.m., 928-9664, charity@thefamilyguide.org
- Dec 31** • **Spokane Symphony Special:** Beethoven's Ninth on New Year's Eve, Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, 7:30 p.m., 624-1200, spokanesymphony.org
- Dec 31** • **The Fig Tree mailing and delivery**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E 24th Ave., 9 a.m., 535-1813, mary@thefigtree.org
- Jan 2** • **The Fig Tree Benefit/Development** and Board meetings, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon benefit/development, 1 to 3 p.m. board, 535-1813, mary@thefigtree.org
- Jan 25** • **Eastern Washington Legislative** Conference, 535-4112
- Mar 6, 9** • **Fig Tree Benefit Lunch and Breakfast**, Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University

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208-962-2000, www.Spirit-Center.org

Faith Action Network recognizes justice, advocacy efforts in region

At the Faith Action Network's Nov. 10 Annual Dinners—one in Renton and one in Spokane—the organization recognized leaders who help bear witness to interfaith advocacy in the region.

The presentations and speaker at the Renton dinner for more than 450 were live streamed to Spokane for about 70 gathered at the Glover House. In Spokane, the Rev. Jim CastroLang, a member of FAN's statewide board presented two awards:

- The Interfaith Leadership Award was given to the Rev. Gen Heywood and Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC).
- The Justice Leadership Award recognized the Yakima Immigrant Response Network, which supports immigrant communities in the Yakima Valley.

Gen, who is pastor of Veradale United Church of Christ (UCC), coordinates interfaith efforts to end racism, poverty, the war economy and ecological devastation.

FLLC gathers people for Truthful Tuesday vigils, often outside Spokane Valley City Council meetings, to challenge Christian dominionism and white supremacy. It has held two Vigils for the Healing of the Earth to build awareness of environmental concerns related to the Midnight Mine, the Bunker Hill Mine and the proposed Newport Smelter.

FLLC writes letters to the editor, op-eds, letters to elected officials and public statements; creates interfaith dialogue; participates in panels, and has joined with Jewish and Muslim neighbors to grieve after shootings.

It formed in 2019 to support the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

Its participants include Atheists, Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sufis, Unitarians, Unity and Wiccans. It connects with 350 Spokane, One Peace Many Paths, Silver Valley Community Resource Center, SHAWL Society, Spokane Riverkeeper, Tenants Union and Responsible Growth NE Washington.

"We seek justice, practice compassion and bear witness to a beloved community," Gen said.

For information, email genheywood@att.net.

Since 2017, the Yakima Immigrant Response Network (YIRN) has organized volunteers to support immigrant communities in the Yakima Valley in response to anti-immigrant rhetoric that stirs fear and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) flights that transport asylum seekers from the border through Yakima to the ICE Processing Center in Tacoma and sends detainees to the Mexican border for deportation.



Gen Heywood, Mick Nelson Janke and Danielle Surkatty

YIRN mobilizes community members to be present at a public viewing area at the Airport Maintenance Shop at 3106 W. Washington as weekly flights arrive at the Yakima Airport.

Detainees who arrive on the Swift Air flights from El Paso, Phoenix, Denver and Las Vegas, or World Atlantic Airlines flights from San Antonio, are bused to the private, for-profit prison in Tacoma called the Northwest ICE Processing Center (formerly the Northwest Detention Center) run by the GEO Group.

FAN recognized YIRN for mobilizing response to the flights. Danielle Surkatty and Mick Nelson Janke accepted the award.

YIRN supports immigrant communities through Know Your

Rights presentations, rapid response, family safety packets and workshops, employer rights and outreach, promoting the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network Hotline, Raid Verification Observer Training, accompaniment, advocacy, and networking.

Between May 7 and Nov. 15, YIRN organized vigils for 39 ICE air flights at the Yakima airport as more than 2,875 immigrants have climbed the airplane steps in ankle shackles and wrists handcuffed to a chain around their waists.

YIRN tracks flights, raises awareness, generates solidarity and advocates change, said Jim presenting the award. "They let immigrants know they are not alone."

Detainees are about 80 percent men, 20 percent women and most-

ly Hispanic, but also Africans, Asians and Middle-Easterners.

Danielle said corporations profit and tax dollars pay for the deportations and detention.

ICE began chartering flights through Yakima after fixed base operators at Boeing Field in Seattle stopped servicing the flights, following an order by King County's Dow Constantine. ICE transports fewer people through Yakima than they did through Boeing Field. Airports in Bellingham, Everett and Portland refused to allow the flights.

For information, visit yaki-maresponsenetwork.org.

In Renton, FAN recognized Tony Lee, a champion for advocacy with the Archdiocese of Seattle, Washington Association of Churches (FAN's predecessor) and FAN, with a Legacy Award.

The Rev. Harriett Walden received the Justice Leadership Award for decades of leadership for police accountability, co-founding Mothers for Police Accountability in 1990 and leadership on the Seattle Community Police Commission.

Seattle First Baptist Church received the Advocating Faith Lead-

ers and Faith Community Award for 150 years of public witness for inclusion and spiritually-formed justice, standing with immigrants during the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, walking with Japanese in internment in 1942, supporting LGBTQ communities, standing with the Duwamish Tribe, advocating for civil rights, interfaith connection and peace.

The keynote speaker was the Rev. Priscilla Paris-Austin of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Seattle, "a reconciling in Christ, open and affirming, aspiring to be anti-racist and identifying as a sanctuary church."

Her diverse ethnic, political, theological and economic family heritage motivates her work for racial equity through education, action and advocacy. Her mother's philosophy is there are no strangers, "just family we have not met," she said. "My family taught me to participate in democracy as a right and responsibility.

By Nov. 15, donors in Renton, Spokane and online raised \$65,000, beyond a \$50,000 matching grant.

For information, call 206-625-9790 or visit fanwa.org.

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