

39TH YEAR OF
PUBLICATION

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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest
online at www.thefigtree.org • check The Fig Tree Facebook page daily for news and links

State promotes environmental justice

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

A member of the team staffing the Washington State Environmental Justice Council since November 2021, Rowena Pineda helps implement the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act.

Goals of the act include incorporating concern about environmental injustice into the decision-making processes of state agencies, improving government accountability to communities and creating consistent and accessible paths for meaningful community involvement in government decisions.

The HEAL Act created the Environmental Justice Council (EJC), an advisory board whose members are appointed by the Governor. The EJC is a conduit between communities and state government.

Its 16 members include representatives of tribes, communities, youth, business, labor, environmental justice practitioners and an at-large member.

“The HEAL Act recognizes the disproportionate impact of environmental injustices on communities of color,” said Rowena.

The environmental justice movement was sparked in 1982 in



Rowena Pineda serves on state Environmental Justice Council.

North Carolina when the NAACP and a predominantly African-American community staged a major protest against the state’s plan to site a hazardous waste landfill that would accept PCB-contaminated soil in their community.

The siting occurred, but the protest started a national movement that challenges locating waste sites and polluting industries near communities of color.

Rowena’s work as program manager for the Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) since 2020 and as co-chair of the Asian Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC) of Spokane brings together issues of health and justice for communities of color.

In 2019, Rowena was appointed to the state Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) which connects health and environmental justice.

The task force’s 2020 report “served as the blueprint for the HEAL Act,” she said.

It defines “environmental justice” as “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to

Continued on page 4

For presbytery, interracial healing is about long-time bonds with Nimiipuu

By Mary Stamp

Interracial relationships, apologies, reconciliation and reparations may seem abstract, but for the Inland Northwest Presbytery those words are about people that the members of presbytery churches know because they meet each other at quarterly meetings, on the leadership team, in committee work and throughout presbytery life.

“The Nimiipuu are our siblings, integral to the presbytery,” said Sheryl Kinder-Pyle, executive presbyter for 13 years.

The presbytery’s relationship

to the Nimiipuu, or Nez Perce—the name given by French Canadian traders—goes back to early years of the presbytery.

The ties are evident in the rapid response around the presbytery to the Nimiipuu Church Buildings Capital Campaign to repair and restore four Nimiipuu church buildings.

The campaign, which runs through 2023, began with \$50,000 from ministry reserves toward the goal of \$200,000.

Before the fall summit, the 100-member Pullman Presbyterian Church kicked off the giv-

ing by their session committing \$5,000. A congregation member matched it with \$5,000 more. Another member offered to match the \$10,000 for a total of \$20,000.

“Their gift was announced to invite the presbytery to give,” said Sheryl. “A total of \$200,000 is needed for repairs. We already have nearly \$100,000.”

Recently Lidgerwood Presbyterian Church gave \$13,000.

The leadership team said the most crucial repairs would cost \$50,000. Those include fixing the Spalding Church’s foundation that rotted in a flood, the sagging roof of First Indian in Kamiah and water damage to walls of North Fork Presbyterian.

The campaign includes educational materials and a video.

These churches are the oldest active churches in the presbytery and the state of Idaho. The repairs are needed to ensure they will be around for future generations.

“All are small churches with limited resources and aging members,” Sheryl said, noting that membership and attendance

Continued on page 5

The Fig Tree announces four speakers for benefit

Nicole Bishop of SNAP, Oscar Harris of Spokane Public Schools, Lynn Kimball of ALTCEW and Johnny Edmundson of Growing Neighbors will describe how they use The Fig Tree’s Resource Directory to connect clients, teachers, students and volunteers with resources to change their lives.

“Sharing Resources: Transforming Lives” is the theme of the Spring Benefits for The Fig Tree from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Friday, March 3, at Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University and from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m., Wednesday, March 15, on Zoom.

Hosts will gather friends and colleagues at tables on Friday and in Zoom groups on Wednesday to hear the story of 50 years of publishing the Resource Directory. The hosts have primary responsibility for inviting guests to share in the two events.

Hamilton Studio is preparing a video describing the history and people who use the directories.

Malcolm Haworth, directory editor, will speak for the event and the video. Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp will tell of working on the directory before The Fig Tree became independent and adding it after the Spokane Council of Ecumenical Ministries and successor Interfaith Council closed.

“We are honored to carry on this vital work which has helped many people stabilize their lives and find ways to give back,” said Fig Tree editor, Mary Stamp.

The Spring Benefits provide funding for The Fig Tree newspaper, the annual Resource Directory: Guide to Congregations and Community Resources, its website, social media, interfaith dialogues, legislative conference and other education events.

For information, call 535-4112, email event@thefigtree.org or visit thefigtree.org for information on how to register.

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WCC denounces bomb in Congo church

World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Jerry Pillay denounced a Jan. 15 bomb attack that killed 17 and wounded 39 members of a parish of the 8th Community of Pentecostal Churches of Congo.

"The ability to worship freely and without fear is a fundamental human right to religious freedom," said Jerry. "This right was violated in Kasindi in North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo when a group linked to the so-called 'Islamic State' detonated a bomb at a church service."

"We pray for the bereaved families, the community and the wounded. We denounce this attack," he said, calling authorities to ensure that all people in the nation are protected from such attacks so all may live and worship in peace and security.

Armenian artisans bridged religions with tiles

In 1919, three Armenian artisan families—the Balian, Karakeshian and Ohanessian families—were brought to Jerusalem by Sir Ronald Henry Amherst Storrs, Jerusalem's military governor, to renovate the 16th century tiles at the Dome of the Rock in Al-Aqsa Mosque. The families came from the Kutahya, Turkey. Today, Nishan Balian, named for his grandfather, is the third generation to craft ceramic tiles in Jerusalem. He sees his work as part of his family's tradition of building bridges between religions.

"I am proud that Armenian Christians renovated the tiles," said Nishan, who has created ceramic tiles in churches, synagogues and mosques in Jerusalem, France and other locations. "Decades ago, people lived together in harmony across religions. My family's story is an example showing that religions can live together and produce beautiful art that transcends the divide between people and between religions."

Geometric decorations and tiles in mosques hold a special place for Muslim communities, because paintings of human beings are not allowed. As early as the ninth century, tiles decorated mosques, holy shrines, palaces, graves and religious colleges.

Balian is concerned about recent divisions and expressions of hatred that counter his family's tradition of religious respect.

"Today I see a political divide in Jerusalem. I do not characterize the tension as religious conflict," he said, sad that Jerusalem has lost its former pluralistic character.

WCC website, social media broaden reach

The WCC now reaches a broader international audience. From a website visited more than two million times in 2022, to more than 92,000 followers on social media, the face and stories of the WCC are traveling the globe with reports and blogs of its work for justice and peace.

The 11th Assembly, with pre- and post-Assembly coverage, brought a marked increase in communications and its audiences. Its website saw a 7 percent increase in 2022 compared to 2021—with most visits in September during the Assembly, when 257,000 visitors clicked in, twice the monthly average for the rest of 2022. Each month, the WCC website offers 60 to 70 news stories, increasing to 130 during and after the assembly.

For the assembly, online and onsite press rooms, open nearly around the clock, worked with more than 360 journalists. On Thursdays, weekly news summaries are prepared in four languages for member churches, partners, media and subscribers.

In 2022, the WCC invested in a new management and analytics tool that gives more accurate information on its social media—Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. With publishing more than 2,000 posts reaching 2 million people they drew 5,808 new fans and appeared on different timelines 3.5 million times with 143,000 engagements.

Its YouTube channel gained almost 1,000 new followers, primarily with assembly content with 126,000 views. YouTube continues to show assembly videos and new videos.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

VOA receives funding for Hope House

Volunteers of America Eastern Washington (VOA) reports that it has received enough funding from the Washington State Department of Commerce to keep Hope House Women's Shelter open until June 30.

Other funds from the City of Spokane's competitive Request For Proposal process will enable it to operate to December 31.

These funds support the shel-

ter's operations, plus housing and mental health care for women.

"VOA is grateful to the city's administration and the City Council for ensuring the women of our community have a safe sheltering option," said Fawn Schott, VOA president and CEO.

"We look forward to future conversations on the long-term plan for sustainable funding for city shelter operations," she said.

VOA has run the shelter since 2000. In 2020, VOA used federal and private dollars to build Hope House 2.0, expanding from 32 to 100 shelter beds. The new facility opened in spring of 2021. In 2022, Hope House provided emergency shelter and housing to more than 600 women.

For information, call 710-8944 or email rbarden@voaspokane.org.

PJALS offers third cycle of BOLD Academy

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) is offering its third cycle of BOLD—Building Organizing Leadership Development—Academy, beginning at 6 p.m., Monday, March 6, on Zoom.

PJALS is presenting BOLD in partnership with Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR), the Hispanic Business/Professional Association (HBPA), APIC Spokane, Spectrum Center Spokane and others to fight rac-

ism and economic injustice, said Jac Archer, PJALS organizer.

BOLD has five weekly sessions to learn how racism and economic injustice intertwine to oppress people and fracture community, while consolidating power in the hands of the reactionary rich, Jac said.

Then participants hit the streets to canvass Spokane using skills in race-class analysis to invite people to join in action.

BOLD Academy will be held

Mondays, March 6, 13, 20, 27 and April 3. Canvassing dates will be announced at the beginning of the workshop series for dates in April and May.

"This year, we'll be applying our BOLD analysis to fight against a new jail and for smart justice solutions that keep our community safe through care-driven, proven strategies that invest in the people of Spokane," Jac said.

For information, visit pjals.org.

Regional Prayer Summit will be Feb. 20-22

Pastors, marketplace, civic, government and prayer leaders will join in the 2023 Regional Prayer Summit on Monday to Wednesday, Feb. 20 to 22, at Ross Point Baptist Camp in Post Falls.

Organizers describe it as an opportunity "to downshift from the busyness of life, making time and space to encounter God in deep-

ening intimacy" through worship, prayer, fellowship and "collaborating for united mission."

Prayer summits for Spokane-area pastors were held annually from 1991 to 2005.

Jerry Foster of RAIN, an apostolic network of churches and pastors, Ron Hauenstein of Hauenstein and Associates, Chris Rodgers of CRU and Dan

Grether of Free Indeed Ministries International decided to "re-ignite" the Prayer Summit as a multi-day retreat.

Advance registration is required. For information, email chris.rodgers@cru.org or visit spokaneprayersummit.org.

Yom HaShoah contests set

The 2023 Community Observance of the Holocaust will be in-person at Temple Beth Shalom on Thursday, April 20, on "The Dangers of Indifference: The U.S. and the Holocaust."

Information on the 8th Annual Jessica Stein Memorial Art Contest and the 17th Annual Eva Lassman Memorial Writing Contest were sent to middle and high school English, history and art teachers for them to invite student submissions.

Art winners will be decided before April 20 and winners will be displayed at the Downtown Central Library in May.

Because teachers cover the

Holocaust in the second semester, essays will be judged in early June. Winners will not read their pieces for Yom HaShoah.

Instead, there will be a keynote speaker, Ray Sun, associate professor of history at Washington State University.

The contest prompt includes a 1999 quote from Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel: "Indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor—never his victim."

The deadline for the art contest is Friday, March 17, and the essay deadline is Sunday, April 30.

For information, email neveragain-spokane@comcast.net.

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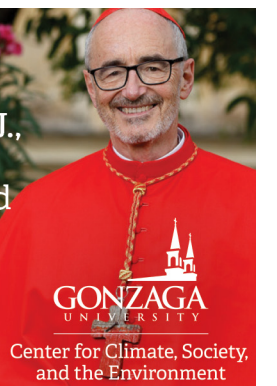
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March 9, 7 p.m.

Cardinal Michael Czerny, S.J., will travel from Rome to speak on climate change and being a better caretaker of our common home.

For FREE tickets visit gonzaga.edu/Cardinal



GONZAGA UNIVERSITY
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Poor People's Campaign joins FAN for advocacy

The Washington Poor People's Campaign (PPC) will partner with the Faith Action Network (FAN) for their Interfaith Advocacy Day on Thursday, Feb. 9 in Olympia. By gathering together, they will address lawmakers to urge them to pass moral policies that address poverty.

FAN, a PPC mobilizing partner, said the day includes morning workshops with information on issues and training on how to advocate and opportunities to meet with legislators.

For information, visit fanwa.org.

New ESD 101 hosts youth conference

New ESD 101 is hosting a Regional Youth Conference from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 25, at the Talbott Center, 4202 S. Regal in Spokane. Youth who register will receive a beanie bag and be entered for prizes. For information, email kfuchs@esd101.net or register at tinyurl.com/4y2h5dn8.

Mardi Bras Parties collect items for women

With more than 600 homeless women living in Spokane, VOA Hope House and Transitions Women's Hearth are coordinating congregations, community groups and individuals to host virtual and in person MardiBras Parties to collect bras, underwear and personal hygiene items.

Donations can be delivered at the Drive-Thru Drop-Off from 2 to 4 p.m., Friday, March 3, at Hope House, 318 S. Adams St., or donors may shop for Amazon wish list items.

For information, email bmcrac@voaspokane.org or dwolfe@help4women.org, or visit voaspokane.org or help4women.org.

Banquet raises funds for WHEN Network

The Annual Purple Ribbon Banquet, "Empowered to Soar" with a live auction will benefit Women's Healing and Empowerment Network and Cleone's Closet Food Pantry. It will be held from 6 to 8 p.m., Sunday, March 19, at CenterPlace Regional Event Center, 2426 N. Discovery Pl, in Spokane Valley.

The keynote speaker is Rep. Cathy McMorris-Rogers, with Medical Lake Mayor Terri Cooper, Robert Leyva, Maria Leyva and Dimana Sofia.

For registration by March 3, visit whenetwork.com.

YWCA has honored 250 women over 41 years

The YWCA Spokane will host the 2023 Women of Achievement Party, "Celebrating Every Woman," from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursday, March 9, at the Davenport Grand Hotel, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd. There will be a women's history month timeline gallery and a video presentation "Celebrating 120 Years - YWCA Spokane" by Hamilton Studio.

Honorees are Maisa Abudayha in arts and culture, Heike Lake in business and industry, Virla Spencer for the Carl Maxey Racial and Social Justice Award, Amy Knapton Vega in community engagement, Mary Pat Treuhart in education, Betsy Wilkerson in government and public service, Shamerica Nakamura as the Young Woman of Achievement and Sandy Williams for a posthumous Lifetime Achievement Award.

In its 41 years of honoring women in the community for their achievements and commitment to the community, YWCA Spokane has recognized more than 250 women in the region.

For information, visit ywcaspokane.org/how-to-help/events/women-of-achievement.

Feed Spokane raises funds through Dine Out

For National Nutrition Month in March, Feed Spokane is recruiting restaurants and local businesses to participate in Dine Out to raise \$75,000 for rescuing, transporting and distributing food for a coalition of meal providers to share with needy families, seniors and neighbors.

Food rescue improves nutrition, builds a healthier community and eliminates waste and greenhouse gasses as food rots in landfills, said Tami Kennedy, founding board member and past president of Feed Spokane.

In 2022, rescued food made 20,000 meals a week possible.

On March 1, a digital Google calendar listing participating businesses will be posted at www.feedspokane.org.

Fr. Spitzer talks on why God allows evil

The Gonzaga University Faith and Reason Institute presents a public talk by former Gonzaga University President Fr. Robert Spitzer, SJ, on "Why Would an All-Loving God Allow Evil and Suffering?" at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 8, at Cataldo Hall.

The Jesuit priest, teacher, author and lecturer on topics ranging from ethics, philosophy and the relationship between modern physics and Christian faith has degrees from the Gregorian University and the Weston School

in Cambridge, Mass., and a doctorate in philosophy from the Catholic University of America.

After teaching at Georgetown University and Seattle University, he was president of Gonzaga University from 1998 to 2009, when he founded the Gonzaga Faith and Reason Institute.

He is now president of the Magis Center and the Spitzer Center.

Fr. Robert has made many television appearances and currently appears weekly on

EWTN. His books include *The Soul's Upward Yearning: Clues to Our Transcendent Nature from Experience and Reason* and *The Light Shines on in The Darkness: Transforming Suffering through Faith*.

As his talk explores "the theological problem of evil and suffering in a fresh, engaging way," David Calhoun of the institute said he will make philosophical and theological ideas clear.

For information, email calhoun@gonzaga.edu.

Cardinal's visit recognizes Climate Center role

Cardinal Michael Czerny, who leads Catholic efforts to be a caretaker of the planet and its creatures, will speak on "Caring for Our Common Home" at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 9 at Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center at Gonzaga University.

In 2015, Pope Francis wrote an encyclical teaching people of the need to undergo an "ecological conversion." The letter, *Laudato Si'*—On Care for Our Common Home—inspired the 2021 *Laudato Si'* Action Platform to hear and respond to "the cries of the poor and the cries of the Earth."

In 2021, Gonzaga was the first U.S. university to commit to the platform to advance ecological education and adopt sustainability practices on campus.

Czerny, as Prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Human Development, leads efforts to assure humanity's ability to live in dignity, given how climate-related disasters—wildfires, hurricanes, floods, deadly heat—disproportionately affect the world's poorest.

His visit says Gonzaga and its

Center for Climate, Society and the Environment "are emerging leaders, helping communities here and globally understand respond to the climate crisis," said Brian Henning, director of the center that offers a lecture series, faculty microgrants, K-12 Climate Literacy Project and extreme heat/climate resilience programs.

Since being ordained a Jesuit priest in 1973, Cardinal Czerny, a 1968 Gonzaga graduate, has worked on human rights in El Salvador, on AIDS in sub-Saharan African, and with migrants and refugees around the world.

"The church's focus on the climate crisis and his work underscore that climate change is not only an issue of concern for

scientists and environmentalists but also a priority for the global community," Brian said. "Gonzaga seeks to develop students eager to be a force for positive change in the world."

For information and free tickets, visit gonzaga.edu/cardinal.

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Groups offer presentations

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors will hold classes on its Medicare-Related Cost Saving Program at 1 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 21 at the Argonne Library, 4322 N. Argonne and noon, Monday, Feb. 27, on Zoom.

The presentation by Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington and SHIBA will help those enrolling or on Medicare learn about cost savings programs. They will discuss wellness and preventative benefits and durable medical equipment.

To register, scl.d.evanced.info/signup/calendar.

SAVE the dates • HOST a group

2023 Benefit Events



Lunch - Friday, March 3, 2023

Arrive: 11:30 a.m. • Program 12-1
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Breakfast-Time - Wednesday, March 15

Program: 7:45-8:45 a.m. - **Zoom**
Featuring recent stories of people whose lives have been transformed by the directory.

There is no charge to attend the event.

Guests are asked to donate to The Fig Tree

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Justice organizer uses skills in state role

Continued from page 1
the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, rules and policies.”

Rowena explained that environmental justice includes addressing the disproportionate environmental health impacts of laws, rules and policies on vulnerable populations, and advocating for equitable distribution of resources and benefits to eliminate harm.

Common environmental justice issues in the Pacific Northwest include pollution and air quality from vehicle emissions, industry emissions, wildfire smoke and lead poisoning, she said.

In Central and Eastern Washington, environmental justice issues, such as Spokane River pollution and the impact of Columbia River dams on salmon runs, disproportionately affect the health and livelihoods of area tribes, Rowena said.

Heat from rising temperatures and climate change particularly affect people of color, poor people and migrant workers, she added.

“The cumulative health impacts lead to chronic diseases as houseless and vulnerable people experience extreme weather, wildfire smoke and food insecurity,” she pointed out.

“Furthermore, we need to continue to talk about racism, white supremacy and colonialism, which continue as root causes at city, county, state, national and global levels, because people continue to feel their effects,” she said.

As environmental justice advisor, Rowena works with the state agencies implementing the HEAL Act, which are Agriculture, Health, Transportation, Ecology, Commerce, Natural Resources, Puget Sound Partnership and the Attorney General’s office.

The HEAL Act requires agencies to adopt community engagement plans, incorporate environmental justice in their strategic plans, conduct environmental justice assessments on significant agency actions and ensure that environmental justice is embedded in agency budget and funding decisions.

Rowena, who came to the

Pacific Northwest in 2005, was previously involved in social and environmental justice work in the Philippines, the San Francisco Bay area and the Pacific Northwest.

Born in the Philippines and growing up Catholic, her introduction to community organizing began in 1989 during the summer before her senior year of college.

Rowena interned with two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on housing and economic development in a rural area of the Philippines. The internship was through the Overseas Development Network (ODN). One of the two NGOs she was placed with had ties to the Catholic Church.

“The Catholic church and clergy played an important role in overthrowing the dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, and started and ran NGOs. That influenced me, even though I don’t currently practice Catholicism,” she said.

Rowena received her bachelor’s degree in Latin American history in 1990 from Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass., and her master’s degree in education in 1993 from Holy Names University in Oakland.

Upon graduation from Brandeis, Rowena worked as a community organizer with the Center for Third World Organizing in Oakland. Her first organizing campaign addressed lead poisoning among children of color.

“Car exhaust settled on the soil of homes next to the freeway. In addition, the housing stock was old, and many had lead-based paint, which contributed to elevated blood-lead levels in children,” she said.

The campaign challenged Alameda County’s health department to require blood lead screenings in pediatric visits to detect elevated blood lead levels and provide necessary treatment. However, many children still returned to homes with lead-based paint.

Exploring what else could be done to reduce lead levels, the campaign pressured the county to create a fund that provided loans to homeowners to bring down

use of lead-based paint in homes.

She also organized with Parent Voices in San Francisco and the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (now People’s Action) in Seattle.

From 2007 to 2010, Rowena was executive director of the Idaho Community Action Network (ICAN), working with communities to increase access to health care and to address food insecurity.

Rowena seeks to connect with people and groups in the Spokane area to share the ways state government is working for environmental justice.

“The state needs to hear from communities in Central and Eastern Washington about their needs and environmental justice issues,” she added.

EJC online meetings are public and offer opportunities for the public to comment in writing or by testimony.

For information, email rowena.pineda@ejc.wa.gov or visit <https://waportal.org/partners/home/environmental-justice-council>.

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Reconciling, concrete actions follow presbytery apologies to Nimiipuu

Continued from page 1
do not represent the number of people who consider themselves part of the churches. Many generations are involved. For them, Christian faith is important and is tied with family.”

Sheryl shared some background. The presbytery embarked on a Nez Perce Church Buildings Capital Campaign as a follow-up to their apology to Nimiipuu members.

In 2016, the Presbyterian Church (USA) began reconciliation work on a national level by issuing an apology on behalf of the denomination to all native people in the U.S. They met in Barrow, Alaska, so Alaskan native people received it.

“That sparked efforts in the Inland Northwest Presbytery, where four of six Nimiipuu churches are active,” said Sheryl. “They heard about it and asked what our presbytery would do.”

“The presbytery’s response has grown out of our ongoing mutual relationship, respect and involvement,” she said.

In 2017, the presbytery’s stated clerk and moderator read an apology at the Talmaks annual camp meeting of the Nimiipuu in Talmaks near Craigmont, Idaho. The two-week multi-generational gathering of the six churches, held annually since 1897, includes worship every evening and baptisms, sometimes of 20 infants.

Later in 2017, Sheryl read an apology to the whole tribe at the Nimiipuu General Council in Kamiah. Then she read a similar apology at the Spalding Church.

Each time, the response of Nimiipuu elders was: “Great words. Now what?”

“Looking at our history, our apology acknowledges our participation in the colonization of people and apologizes for actions of our early missionary, Henry Spalding, who sent clothing, artifacts and horse gear to Dudley Allen, a supporter in Ohio,” said Sheryl.

In 1893, Dudley’s son donated the Spalding-Allen Collection to Oberlin College, which loaned it to the Ohio Historical Society. In 1996, curators of the Nez Perce National Historical Park began negotiations for the collection to be returned, but the historical society decided to keep the artifacts. After the tribe continued to press for their return, the society agreed to send them if they could raise \$608,000 in six months. They



Sheryl Kinder-Pyle has often met with people on Zoom.

did and bought back the artifacts.

Twenty-five years later, the tribe decided to rename the collection. In June 2021, Sheryl participated in a “Renaming Ceremony” at Lapwai. The returned collection was renamed “Wetxuuwfiitin,” meaning “the captives return home.”

At the ceremony, she repeated the apology. A representative of the Ohio Historical Society was at the ceremony. On returning to Ohio, he shared his experience with the society, which decided to return the payment in full.

Sheryl described the history of Nimiipuu churches in Idaho.

First Indian Presbyterian Church of Kamiah, which was chartered in 1871, is the oldest active Christian church in the state of Idaho and the presbytery’s oldest church.

First Presbyterian in Spalding was chartered in 1873; Second Indian Church of Kamiah, in 1890, and North Fork Presbyterian at Ahsahka, in 1895.

Members of those churches are predominantly Nimiipuu.

Mary Jane Miles, who lives in Lapwai, is pastor of the Nimiipuu churches, leading worship at 9:30 to 10:30, and 10:45 to 12:15. She is ordained and holds a doctoral degree.

“The Nimiipuu have a deep faith in the Creator,” Sheryl said.

“In 2018 at Talmaks, we formed the Listening and Reconciliation Team and did an interactive Blanket Exercise, an education program on the Doctrine of Discovery,” she said, “but it was hurtful. Because it reviews the traumatic history, many left in tears.

“We later did the exercise for non-native people at a 2019 quarterly summit. There were tears with them, too,” she said of

the presbytery’s learning process.

Listening and reconciliation continued until 2020, when COVID impeded the ability to meet.

The national Presbyterian Church hired a building inspector to visit the PCUSA’s 95 native churches and report on needs. He worked for the Racial Equity and Women’s Intercultural Ministries to inventory all Native American Presbyterian church properties and their physical needs.

They recommended helping economically disadvantaged churches fund critical repairs and improvements.

“In April 2022, our first in-person summit since 2019, we showed a KSPS video on the return of the collection,” said Sheryl, noting that the summit drew nearly 80 pastors and elders from 40 churches from Canada to Kamiah, Montana to Wilbur.

In November 2022, the pres-

bytery met on Zoom. Nimiipuu elders led worship with participants saying the Lord’s Prayer and doing a singalong in the Nimiipuu language with songs, like “Blessed Assurance,” that many know in English. Mary Jane preached on the theme “Ongoing Racial Reconciliation with Our Nez Perce Siblings.”

In a workshop, author Randy Woodley, a Cherokee who holds a doctoral degree from Asbury Theological Seminary and teaches at Portland Seminary, shared observations as a former missionary among Native Americans. A missiologist and “decolonial theologian” with 30 years of seeing “the best and the worst” of American mission work, he called for hearing from those hurt by the mission and gave a critique on Spalding’s ministry.

At the summit, presbytery leaders launched the campaign to repair the Nimiipuu buildings.

In addition to the campaign, Sheryl explained the churches and communities are also discerning between what is Nimiipuu culture and what is western culture.

“We confused the Christian gospel and culture,” she said. “Some thought people had to let go of their native culture to be Christian. It confused many about what was essential in faith. It’s an ongoing process.”

Sheryl said Nimiipuu members help her and the presbytery understand what it means to be Nimiipuu and what it means to be Presbyterian.

“Is what I bring culturally bound or essential to faith?” is an crucial question, she pointed out.

“We helped destroy the language,” Sheryl said. “Nez Perce were sent to boarding schools in Carlisle, Pa. Even though Presbyterians did not run schools, our churches supported colonialism.”

Recently the Nimiipuu received a grant to revive their language. They offer classes at Talmaks gatherings. For worship, they sing and pray in Nimiipuu but preach in English.

Sheryl, who lived in Fort Wayne, Ind., through high school and had limited encounters with Native Americans, values what she is learning. Her first call after Princeton Seminary was from 1988 to 1991 at First Presbyterian in Spokane. She and her husband, Scott, returned East to be near family when their children were young but wanted to return.

“With Nimiipuu active in the Presbytery, we foster relationships as brothers and sisters. They are part of us,” she said.

“When quarterly meetings were on Zoom, we opened with land acknowledgements, naming nearby tribes,” Sheryl said. “To acknowledge that the land is not ours puts us in a position of humility. We continue to give land acknowledgements because it sets us in right relationships with our neighbors.”

For information, call 924-4148 or email sheryl@presbyinw.org.

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Folk Fest seeks performers to apply

Beginning Feb. 1, organizers for the 28th Annual Spokane Fall Folk Festival are accepting applications for performers.

The two-day, free multicultural festival on Nov. 11 and 12, 2023, at the Spokane Community College Lair will have 100 individuals or groups on six stages.

Performers interested in sharing their talents in diverse genres of music, dance and stories from around the globe may apply by July 1 at spokanefolkfestival.org/performer-application.html.

For information, call 828-3683, email info@spokanefolkfestival.org or visit spokanefolkfestival.org.

Renovated libraries have new offerings

Spokane Public Library partners with community organizations to offer events like family-friendly activities, films, lectures and workshops on topics ranging from art to health and wellness at their new locations.

Building remodeling and new locations have created new spaces like The Hive® artist-in-residence program and an updated Inland Northwest Special Collections Room at the Central Library.

The Inland Northwest Special Collections room at Central Library houses items unique to the Pacific Northwest.

Central Library also has a video, podcast and recording studios with specialists who as-

sist patrons. The spaces need to be booked online.

There are a variety of event spaces at Central Library that can be reserved, including two rooms that can be combined and a hall on the third floor, seating 200 people.

In addition, New Leaf Café and a computer lab are on the first floor.

Spokane Public Library Librarian Rebecca Mace estimates that 850 patrons visit Central Library daily.

The library hired social work staff with interns from Eastern Washington University to help connect library patrons with community services.

South Hill and Indian Trail

locations will likely open sometime in the spring, Rebecca said. Shadle Park, Liberty Park and Hillyard branches were previously remodeled to add space and services.

For information, visit spokane-library.org

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Interfaith and Catholic advocates present overview of 2023 bills

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

At the 2023 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference on Jan. 21, legislative advocates from three faith-based organizations shared insights on bills that address issues of concern to faith communities during the Washington State Legislature, which is a long session this year running from Jan. 9 to April 23.

Many bills being proposed in the legislature have support from the organizations.

Each representative spoke on legislation they support or oppose, bills that are also priorities of the other groups.

Kristin Ang from Faith Action Network (FAN) of Washington, also a Commissioner for the Port of Tacoma, briefed participants on issues in four areas: 1) promoting economic justice, 2) protecting and expanding the social safety net, reforming the criminal justice system, increasing gun responsibility and protecting public safety, 3) supporting immigrants and refugee rights, and 4) protecting healthcare access.

The bill, Working Families Tax Credit (HB 1075/SB 5249), makes more people eligible by lowering the age of beneficiaries to 18 and ensures that those eligible receive benefits.

Statewide Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI)—HB 1045—would establish a pilot program in Washington building on a program in Pierce County to put cash in the pockets of people experiencing economic insecurity.

Kristin sees Washington Future Fund Baby Bonds (SB 5125) as a game changer for poverty alleviation and long-term economic development for communities. It would create funds every child born under Medicaid could use as adults for home ownership, education or starting a small business.

Wealth Tax on Billionaires (HB 1743/SB 5486) would ensure the wealthiest in the state would pay their fair share, Kristin said. The tax would be levied on holdings \$250 million and up.

Repeal Statewide Advisory Votes (HB 1158/SB 5082) would end nonbinding advisory votes



Donna Christensen, Jessica Zimmerle and Kristin Ang

and add fiscal information to voters' pamphlets.

To protect and expand the social safety net, FAN supports Free School Meals for All Students (HB 1238/SB 5339) to provide meals to every student as part of the right to education.

To reform the criminal justice system, increase gun responsibility and protect public safety, FAN supports the following bills.

- Solitary Confinement Reform (HB1087/SB 5135) would make confinement practices in state prisons and immigration detention centers more humane.

- Real Labor, Real Wages Act (HB 1024) would require workers incarcerated in state prisons be paid minimum wage. Prisoners could save the funds to assist in their transition from prison, one of the most difficult things for those leaving prison.

- Repealing the Death Penalty and other Unconstitutional State Statutes (HB 1090/SB 5087) would correct defects and omissions in the Revised Code of Washington.

- Establishing Firearms-Related Safety Measures to Increase Public Safety (HB1240/SB 5265) would prohibit the sale, manufacture, transport and import but not possession of assault weapons.

- Firearm Industry Responsibility and Gun Violence Victims' Access to Justice Act (HB 1130/SB 5078) would require the firearms industry to establish, implement and enforce reasonable controls.

- Require a Permit to Purchase Firearms (HB1143/SB 5211)

would mandate a comprehensive background check, safety training and a waiting period to purchase a firearm.

- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & People (MMIWP) Cold Case Unit (HB 1177/ SB 5137) would create a cold case investigation unit with the attorney general's office.

- Civil Remedy for Victims and Families of Police Misconduct (HB 1025) would allow victims and their families to sue for violations of state laws, without the federal shield of qualified immunity.

FAN also supports three proposals on rights of immigrants and refugees.

- Unemployment Benefits for Undocumented Workers (HB 1095/SB 5109) would create a permanent separate unemployment system for undocumented workers.

- Additional State Funding for Refugees and Refugee Serving Organizations would include legal services for those in need.

- Healthcare Equity for Immigrants Campaign (HEIC) would create a fund for a health coverage program by 2024 for people who are ineligible for federal assistance.

The second speaker, Sister Jessica Zimmerle of Earth Minis-

try/Washington Interfaith Power and Light (WAIPL) shared about several bills focusing on environmental justice and creation care.

- Earth Ministry/WAIPL advocates expanding the 1990 Growth Management Act (GMA) that requires cities and counties to develop comprehensive plans.

- Planning for a Climate Friendly Future (HB 1181/SB 5203) would require counties and cities to address resilience and the climate crisis in land use plans and by reducing the miles vehicle travel by including transit and bike/pedestrian planning.

- An additional environmental justice update to the GMA (bill # pending) would require that both environmental justice and climate change be addressed in local comprehensive planning with specific goals, progress reports

and measures to reduce impacts and disparities. It includes more equitable public participation requirements and funds.

- WA Recycling and Packaging Act (SB 5154/HB 1131) would require consumer product producers to fund statewide residential recycling services for packaging and paper products. It would place graduated fees on packaging manufacturers based on products' ability to be reused, composted or recycled. Fees would fund infrastructure improvements, provide uniform access for residents and create a clear list of what can be recycled.

- Toxic-Free Cosmetics Act (HB 1047) would ban hazardous chemicals—such as PFAS, phthalates, formaldehyde and lead—in cosmetics by 2025, fill

Continued on page 8

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After two years, Martin Luther King Day rally, march are in person

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

In opening the 2023 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Rally and March, Freda Gandy, executive director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, noted that it had been two years since the community last gathered for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

"I'm so glad that we are back in person to honor the life and legacy of Dr. King. Thank you for coming out in the name of justice, unity and peace," she said, noting the importance of "passing it down to young people who are *the now*. We need them to take their rightful place now."

After playing a video of Happy Watkins, pastor emeritus at New Hope Baptist Church, giving King's "I Have a Dream" speech in 2021, Freda said the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center Board is establishing a scholarship named for Happy Watkins, starting with a goal of raising \$5,000 on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

James Watkins, pastor of New Hope and Happy's son, spoke as people donated.

"This is my 37th year coming to the march. I was a freshman at Rogers High School the first time. We didn't have this many people. We were outside the whole time. It was a blessing to see Spokane come out to celebrate King's dream," he said.

James said Happy's contribution for 50 years in Spokane is more than reciting King's dream, which he is noted for doing: "He believed in the dream. He



Jerrall Haynes and James Watkins challenge marchers.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Photos by Gen Heywood

believed in Spokane. He wanted unity. He wanted equality and he worked every day for it," James said, adding that his father is struggling with his health. "We solicit your prayers for him, but rejoice that this scholarship will embody the work he's done.

"He's given his all. He's given everything he had like the person that he believed in, gave everything," James said. "So, Spokane, I stand in his stead to say, he loves you, I love you, and we just want to support the work that he's done and the work of the MLK Center. Thank you for this opportunity to bless my father."

Dontae LeMere, a student at North Central High School, shared a land acknowledgement, "We acknowledge that we are on the unceded lands of the Spokane tribe. The Spokane people share this place with other tribes through relations, resources, history, trade and ceremony. We thank the caretakers of this land who lived and continue to live

here since time immemorial. This land holds the knowledge, culture and spirit of the people."

He asked the gathering to consider the impact of historical trauma from genocide and forced relocation, and to acknowledge the strength and resilience of the indigenous people.

Dontae is grateful for work with the Spokane people "towards completing our goals, knowing this gathering expresses one heart, one mind, one spirit."

Betsy Wilkerson, a member of the Spokane City Council, read Mayor Nadine Woodward's Proclamation, noting that King believed "true peace requires not only the absence of war, but also the presence of justice, and that violence brings only temporary victories by creating many more social problems than it solves."

She recognized that King awakened hearts of Americans by calling for equality and integrity among citizens, promoting a sense of justice that moves

beyond racism and encouraging a realization that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

The proclamation urged citizens to live by King's principles and philosophy that all must work together to improve humankind by serving the community.

Vernon Glass, a Rogers High School student and officer for their Black Student Union, asked those gathered to see their common unity. He quoted César Chávez, who wrote on the 10th anniversary of MLK's assassination, "Freedom is best experi-

enced through participation and self-determination."

In the 1963 March on Washington, he said, more than 250,000 people marched for jobs, equality and freedom in the largest civil rights rally in U.S. history.

"Those marchers would never see each other again, but shared similarities," he said. "They understood that to experience true freedom, they must act to end segregation, to end white and colored drinking fountains, to end the segregation of busses, schools, hospitals, parks and

Continued on page 9

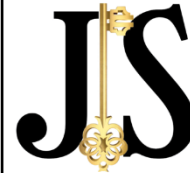
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Advocates tell how bills offer solutions on issues

Continued from page 7

gaps in information on hazards of chemicals in cosmetics and provide incentives for businesses to make safer cosmetics.

The third advocate, Donna Christensen, a contract lobbyist for Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC), discussed bills on housing, citing a report that Washington is 50th of 50 states in providing housing.

She said the Governor's proposed budget allows the state to issue bonds outside its debt limit to frontload \$4 billion of housing construction over the next six years. A referendum, if approved, would add about 5,300 housing units from 2023 to 2025 and 19,000 the next six years. The referendum would need approval from legislators and voters.

Donna then presented several bills that the WSCC supports.

- Protecting tenants from excessive rent and related fees (HB 1124) would require landlords to provide at least six months' notice for rent increases, allow tenants the right to terminate a tenancy without penalty and limit late fees.

- Protecting tenants by prohib-

iting predatory residential rent practices (HB 1388) would apply the Consumer Protection Act to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act and the Manufactured/Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Act.

- Concerning residential rent increases under the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act and the Manufactured/Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Act (HB 1389) would stabilize residential rent increases by tying rental rates to the rate of inflation or 3 percent, whichever is greater, up to a maximum of 7 percent with certain exemptions.

- SB 5197 addresses landlord-tenant relations by providing technical changes to eviction notice forms and modifying certain eviction processes.

- HB 1074 addresses processes

for landlords' claims for damage to residential premises. It would require a landlord to substantiate the cost of damages withheld from a deposit and establish a one-year statute of limitations for a landlord to take action against a tenant to recover sums over the damage deposit.

The WSCC opposes SB 5224, because it believes that the bill would not effectively establish performance requirements of homelessness service providers.

For information, visit fanwa.org/advocacy/legislative-agenda, earthministry.org/advocacy or wacatholics.org/stay-informed/wsc-2023-legislative-priorities.

Testimony can be given before Feb 17 at leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Participating.aspx.

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Students speaking and singing represent new generation involved

Continued from page 8
even telephones, to end everything separating people.

"We must embrace inclusion and create equal access regardless of the color of our skin," said Vernon, recognizing that those nonviolent marchers, "paved the path for many nonviolent marches and protests."

He shared King's words: "We must learn to live together as brothers, or we will perish together as fools."

He called marchers to take "a step forward to stay united and strong, because we can't spell the word 'community' without the word 'unity.'"

JaNese Howard, a Shadle Park High School student, sang the national anthem and sang "Stand Up" from Cynthia Erivo in the film "Harriet."

"I been walkin' with my face turned to the sun. Weight on my shoulders, a bullet in my gun. Oh, I got eyes in the back of my head just in case I have to run. I do what I can when I can while I can for my people..."

"I'm gonna stand up. Take my people with me...going to a brand new home. Far across the river. Can you hear freedom calling? Calling me to answer. Gonna keep on keepin' on..."

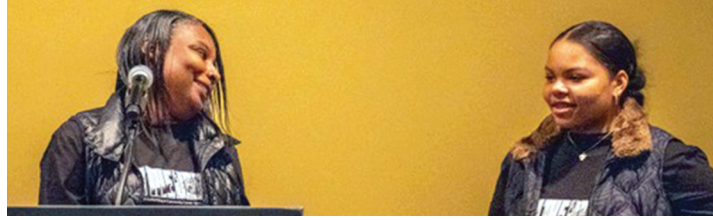
"Gonna start movin' towards that separating line...I got a made-up mind...I'll fight with the strength that I got until I die... I go to prepare a place for you."

Jerrall Haynes, former Spokane Public Schools Board president asserted that joining together as a community and marching down the street once a year is not nearly enough.

"Singing and rejoicing together once or twice a year isn't close to being enough. Every day, every week and every month that pass without us doing work to move us closer to achieving King's dream of the beloved community is disrespectful to his memory and legacy at best," he said.

Jerrall challenged participants to commit, to see each other again, join in community again and "fight the good fight every single day for the rest of our lives until we achieve that beautiful dream of beloved community."

Stephy Nobles-Beans, associate chaplain for diversity,



Freda Gandy introduces JaNese Howard to sing.

equity and inclusion ministries at Whitworth, began, "As we commemorate the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., we need to know he was a reverend before he was a doctor, a man of God, who preached the Gospel. He loved the Lord. He was a man in community."

"It has been 59 years since his assassination, yet we have not fully achieved the dream. It's still unfolding in you and in me," she said.

She quoted from "I Have a Dream" that "we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope."

"I'm not hopeless, I have hope. A man can live without food for a few days. A man can live without water for a few days, but no one on the face of the earth can live without hope. I am hopeful, Spokane, that we as a community will come together in the midst of despair, injustice, and inequality," Stephy said, reflecting how King "woke up every morning and stepped into the fire."

She inspired marchers by singing, "I ain't gonna let nobody turn me around, turn me around, turn me around. I ain't gonna let nobody turn me around. I'm heading up the King's highway."

"We can't afford to turn around," Stephy asserted, reflecting on her legacy as a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, that her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren *are the now*.

She challenged those at the rally to "be the change," because King was "a game changer, a dreamer, who contributed to the civil rights movement. He advocated for peace and organized marches. His style of communication was influential. He walked the dream. He talked the dream. He maintained a vision for a more diverse America."

"What are you doing, Spokane?" she asked, saying her

call to the crowd is: "Persistence is a cornerstone of impact. Be persistent, be tenacious, be determined, be steadfast, be relentless and be the change engine you want to see in this community."

Stephy invited the crowd to work for what they have been called to do: "What are the gifts and talents you've been given? What are you doing? Action speaks louder than words."

As an agent of change, she shared that she is "stepping into places where I can make a difference. I am taking action to help where my gifts and talents can be used."



Vernon Glass sees unity.

She urged attendees to "be agents of change, the influencers of change, the mouthpiece and the heartbeat of change, the hands and feet, the heartbeat of this community for change. Dr. King said, 'If you can't fly, run, but if you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl,' but by any




Stephy Nobles-Beans sings.

means necessary, Spokane, keep it moving."

She ended by singing, "Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on. When the day seems so long, and you feel you can't go on. Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on."

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Vote for the Resource Directory as 'best of' to celebrate its 50th year

Usually we are not into popularity contests. We are a niche newspaper with The Fig Tree, an alternative voice. Despite that, other media have picked up covering stories of people who make a difference because of their faith and values.

With it being the 50th anniversary of the Resource Directory and hearing so many say, "It's gold"—in terms of connecting people to the resources they need to stabilize and transform their lives—we decided to enter it in The Inlander's "Best Of," annual contest for **best "nonprofit organization" under "Arts & Culture."**

Usually we don't enter such contests because there's not a category that fits. There's not a "best resource directory category," but "nonprofit organization" is close enough.

So we ask you to **VOTE FOR us at <https://bestof.inlander.com/arts-and-culture>**, to give us recognition during this 50th anniversary of the much used, comprehensive Resource Directory.

You need to sign in. The online ballot ends at midnight Tuesday, Feb. 14.

Under nonprofit, we suggest you write in **The Fig Tree Resource Directory** to give recognition of that project on its 50th anniversary.

Whether we "win" that recognition, we know that the treasure chest of resources we publish offers gold nuggets of ideas, contacts and hope to guide people to "win" housing, health, job, family and food security and more!

The directory has grown from publishing 4,500 copies in 2007 to 18,000 in 2022 with plans to print 20,000 in 2023. We have only a few hundred copies left this year and requests keep coming. With The Fig Tree newspaper, we have grown from printing 6,000 to 10,000 copies.

For both ventures, we ask supporters to **VOTE FOR us by becoming sponsors and partners.** We reached our target for sponsors in 2022. With more renewals and new sponsors each year, we can expand. We are modeled on public broadcasting, but lack the intense period in the media itself with a "captive audience" to make our appeals. Our Spring Benefits and Fall

Festival of Sharing are two times for us.

As we approach our 2023 Spring Benefits with the in person and online Lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Friday, March 3, and the Breakfast-Time online gatherings from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m., we look forward to celebrating with our readers and supporters, and with new folks the hosts invite to hear our story. The benefits are **times to VOTE FOR The Fig Tree and Resource Directory with your support.**

We are celebrating the Resource Directory anniversary with the theme of "Sharing Resources: Transforming Lives."

Our board voted in February 2007 to take responsibility to take over publishing from the Interfaith Council after it became a volunteer organization with no staff to do the intensive work of annual updates. The first edition published that year by The Fig Tree was volume 35.

For two years, Malcolm Haworth worked through AmeriCorps to do it. He has been directory editor ever since.

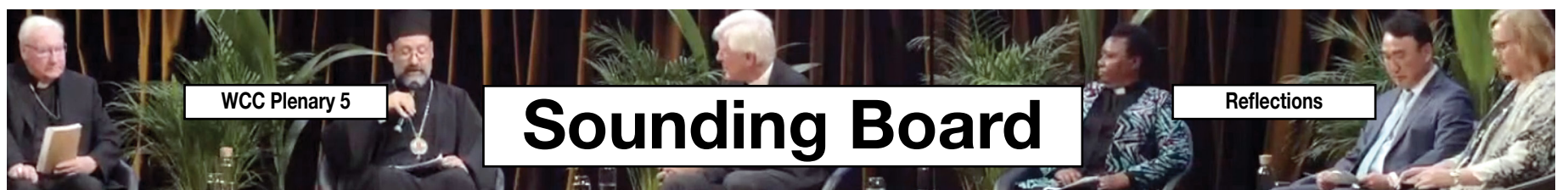
His work has also opened avenues of ecumenical and interfaith networking for

the future to connect people in congregations, faith groups and nonprofits through more direct communication channels that will allow them to pool ideas and generate new or more effective collaborative efforts and ministries to address the issues their faith calls them to do.

The Spring Benefits are both opportunities to celebrate this facet of The Fig Tree's mission, to hear the story of how the Resource Directory developed, to learn about how it intersects with Malcolm's story, and to **VOTE FOR us with your gifts** to support the directory and the overall mission and ministry of The Fig Tree.

There is time to sign up to host a table for the lunch or a group for the breakfast-time—and time to sign up to attend to be part of underwriting our unique communication ventures that connect people who make a difference and have resources with those who want to help them make a difference. Just call 535-4112, email event@thefigtree.org or visit thefigtree.org.

Mary Stamp - Editor



Ecumenical leaders reflect on steps to unity and common witness

In the final plenary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) 11th Assembly on Sept. 5 in Karlsruhe, Germany, the head of the World Student Christian Federation, a Vatican ecumenist, an Orthodox metropolitan and the head of the Council for World Mission addressed the plenary theme, "Christian Unity and the Churches' Common Witness."

The comments of the Kenyan Anglican, Canadian Mennonite, Australian Pentecostal and Mexican Methodist will be shared in the March issue.

Each connected it to the assembly's theme, "Christ's Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity," how that affects daily issues and what Christ's love means for Christian unity and common witness in the world.

The day's scripture was on the sons of Zebedee asking Jesus who would sit at his right and left hands, and hearing that "whoever wishes to be great must be a servant." Jesus uses the term "diakonia," calling disciples to be servants to one another and the world.

Marcelo Leites, general secretary of the World Student Christian Federation, said the federation was formed in 1895 by youth leaders, encouraged by Protestant, Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican churches to engage in ecumenical dialogue.

"Today, we affirm our support of mission work and leadership in search of Christian unity and witness for all humanity. God's reign means justice for everyone. We celebrate the legacy and the WCC's ecumenical path as we envision ecumenism in the 21st century," he said.

Marcelo called for addressing the climate crisis, challenging discrimination, working for gender justice, supporting the marginalized, promoting peace and acting against unjust economic systems.

"Our responsibility is to provide hope—not an empty hope, but a hope full of promise. The world's struggles are the churches' struggles," Marcelo said. "We can only do our mission if we do it with youth, people on the margins, the

women's movement, indigenous people, forced laborers, and those historically undermined."

He challenged WCC delegates to involve more youth in leadership.

Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm,



delegate of the Evangelical Church of Germany, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria and the WCC's new moderator, invited speakers to see the "source of our unity and mission in Christ's love."

He uplifted the impact of two documents, "Towards a Common Understanding and Vision" and "The Call to Transforming Discipleship," and invited strengthening WCC relationships internally and with Catholics and Pentecostals.

Metropolitan Job of Pisidia, the



permanent representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the WCC, said the Common Understanding and Vision document was "an extraordinary ecumenical achievement, calling for Christian unity between and among churches from different ethnic, social and political perspectives that "cause divisions within churches."

"It was a document of convergence: what divided Christians could say together on the meaning, nature and mission of the church," he said. "This is an important step towards Christian unity given the divisions between and within the churches."

Metropolitan Job said the Commission of Mission and Evangelism in 2018 at Arusha, Tanzania, called disciples to emphasize that "we are called as Christians, to care for all creation and to assure justice and peace in the world.

"Before we look to the future, we must open our eyes in the present, when one Christian country, Russia, attacks another Christian country, Ukraine. Christians are killing Christians," he said. "Is this the witness we offer for Christ who gave his life so the world would believe?"

"We need to reconcile within and between our churches, with all humanity, especially with those excluded and marginalized and with the entirety of God's creation," he said. "The WCC must be a prophetic voice."

The Most Rev. Brian Farrell, secretary of the Vatican's Dicastery for promoting Christian Unity, said the Roman Catholic Church has worked with the WCC since Vatican II.



"Cooperation has grown into partnerships manifest in countless ways and places around the world as Roman Catholic communities and WCC churches cooperate," he said.

Since Busan, he has seen progress on the "Common Understanding and Vision," which "sets parameters toward the next challenge after decades of discovering what we have in common," he said. "We face questions of difference. What differences are ones we still need to overcome because they stand in the way of full communion?"

From involvement with the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism, he said "Transforming Discipleship" will deepen ecumenism.

"Over the years, we received a divine grace that goes beyond our plans, politics, social and humanistic activity," Bishop Brian said. "Only Christ's grace will bring us to reconciliation and unity, especially as Faith and Order works on moral and ethical issues that divide churches."

He called for churches to move beyond the isolation of therapeutic Christianity to a Christianity of working more and more together.

"Catholics and the WCC need to open our hearts and minds to listen to our young people and give them roles," he said.

Jooseop Keum, general secretary of

the Council for World Mission and a pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Korea, said that, between the assemblies in Busan and Karlsruhe, the WCC convened 1,200 delegates in Arusha for the fourth Commission of Mission and Evangelism on the theme, "In the Spirit, We Are Called to Transforming Discipleship."

There was unanimous approval of the Arusha Call to Discipleship that seeks radical change, not slight improvements in mission and unity.

"It calls us to confront false gods in the economy and the assumption of economic utility that creates more inequality and injustice," he said. "No one dares confront the false god of mammon in her temple of the market."

"To be authentic disciples is to interfere with the global hegemony of the economies in power," he said. "Transforming discipleship calls for celebrating life with all people in their contexts, engaging in this world."

"Mission happens when the church meets the world. If the church does not meet the world, mission will never happen," he said.

"The world is deeply wounded. Survival of the fittest is the rule. For some, wealth is the way to protect lives and gain power," he added. "There is yearning for transformed discipleship that brings reconciliation."

"The goal of unity in mission is to understand that God's way to defeat hatred and fear is by witnessing together to God's love in ways that confront systems and empires that deny life and divide us," Jooseop said.

"Transforming discipleship helps us rediscover our faith at the margins where we meet to be the hope of the world as agents of change. Together we have the power of God's love," he said. "The church is a movement of God's people sharing God's love in the world."

For information, visit oikoumene.org/assembly/assembly-live#thematic-plenaries.

Calendar of Events

Submit March events by Feb 10 (Area code is 509 unless listed)

- To Feb 5** • **Spokane Jewish Cultural Film Festival**, Gonzaga University Jepson Center, 502 W. Boone, sajfs.org
- Feb 1** • **Genealogy Help: Drop In!**, Central Library, Eastern Washington Genealogical Society 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., events.spokanelibrary.org/events
- Feb 1-Mar 3** • **Mardi Gras**, Benefit for Hope House, 318 S. Adams, 2 to 4 p.m. drop off on March 3 at Hope House, 328-6702
- Feb 2** • **Spokane Homeless Coalition Meeting**, Central Library nx?yx?yet? Hall, 9:30 a.m., events.spokanelibrary.org/events
- **Parent and Caregiver Night**, medication safety, storage and disposal, West Spokane Wellness Partnership, West Central Community Center, 1603 N. Belt, 6 p.m., smcnew@esd101.net
- Feb 3** • **Food from the Diaspora**, Africana Studies food event with foods from Jamaica, Ethiopia, Ghana and North America, Monroe Hall 205, EWU Cheney, 3 p.m.
- **"The Ella Baker Story"**, Film and Dinner, Gladish Community and Cultural Center, 115 NW State St., Pullman, 8:30 p.m. gladishcommunity.org/tickets
- Feb 3-4** • **Silent 24 Hour Retreat for Men and Women**, "The Power of Prayer Trust and Power: Conversations with God, Sr. Mary Eucharista, SMMC, ihrc.net
- Feb 3-9** • **Spokane International Film Festival**, in person and virtual, spokanefilmfestival.org
- Feb 4** • **Chewelah Winterfest 2023**, E Main, Chewelah, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Rosa Park's Birthday Drive-Thru**, benefit for Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, Veradale United Church of Christ, 611 N. Progress, 10 to 11 a.m., FLLconscience@gmail.com
- **Living in Harmony**, Hospice of North Idaho, Coeur d'Alene Resort, 5 p.m., hospicewinetaste.org
- Feb 4, 5** • **Spokane Symphony Masterworks 6: X**, The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, Sat. 7:30 p.m., Sun., 3 p.m., 624-1200
- Feb 6-8** • **Virtual 2023 Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day**, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, Washington Housing Alliance Action Fund, Resident Action Project, wliha.org/hhad
- Feb 7** • **Hunger Action Day**, Temple Beth Hatfiloh, Olympia, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., foodlifeline.org/hunger-action-day-is-feb-11
- **Communication, Christianity & Climate Change**, Emma Frances Bloomfield, communication studies University of Nevada, Gonzaga Climate Center, zoom, 5 p.m., climatecenter@gonzaga.edu
- **Black History Month Screening: This Is My Black**, 508 S. Main, Moscow, 7 p.m., (208) 882-4127
- Feb 8** • **Skate for a Cause: Habitat for Humanity- Spokane**, Numerica Skate Ribbon, Riverfront Park, 4 to 8 p.m., jreeves@spokanecity.org
- **"Why Would an All-Loving God Allow Evil and Suffering?"**, Former Gonzaga University President, Fr. Robert Spitzer, SJ, Gonzaga Faith and Reason Institute, Cataldo Hall, 7 p.m., calhoun@gonzaga.edu
- **Identity Politics and Anti-Racism**: What's Christian About It? Jonathan Tran, Whitworth University Weyerhaeuser Hall, 7 to 8 p.m.,
- Feb 9** • **Interfaith Advocacy Day**, Faith Action Network, United Churches of Olympia, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., fanwa.org
- Feb 9, 10** • **"An Introspective Look at Friendship and What It Means to Be an Artist"**, Gonzaga Theater Department, Magnuson Theater I, 502 E. Boone, 7:30 p.m., 313-2787, theatre@gonzaga.edu.
- Feb 9, 23** • **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, Zoom, 5:30 p.m., slichy@pjals.org
- Feb 10** • **Soil Stewards Annual Meeting**, Deer Park Fire Hall, 315 E Crawford, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 684-7579
- **Annual Sweethearts Ball**, Habitat North Idaho, Best Western Plus/CDA Inn, 506 W. Appleway, 5 p.m., social hour, 6 p.m. buffet, 208-762-4663, charityauction.bid/sweetheartsball2023
- **Wild and Scenic Film Festival**, 508 S. Main, Moscow, 7 p.m., (208) 882-4127
- Feb 11** • **Sons of Norway Craft & Culture Fair**, Trinity Lutheran, 812 N 5th, CdA, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., (208) 262-8020
- **Celebrate EveryBODY**, "The Four Journeys," Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 E. Desmet, 7:30 to 9 p.m., 313-4776
- Feb 14** • **Eastern Washington Legislative Conference Planning**, 1 p.m., zoom, 535-4112 for link
- **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, zoom, 5:30 p.m., jarcher@pjals.org
- Feb 15** • **Executive Director Coffee Hour**, Nonprofit Assn of Washington, 9 a.m., online, nonprofitwa.org
- **Safe, Brave, and Courageous Conversations** about BLM, Gonzaga University Hemmingson, 4:30 p.m., gonzaga.edu/news-events/events/2023/2/15/safe-brave-and-courageous-conversations

- Feb 15,16** • **Spokane Symphony Chamber Soiree 2**, Barrister Winery, 1213 W. Railroad, 7:30 p.m., 465-3591
- **Inland NW Special Collections Writing Workshop**, Central Library, 11 a.m., events.spokanelibrary.org/events
- Feb 16** • **WAISSN Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Day**, Olympia, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., actionnetwork.org/events/waisns-immigrant-and-refugee-advocacy-day-dia-de-la-cabildeo-de-inmigrantes-y-refugiados-de-waisn
- Feb 17** • **Nonprofit Office Hour: Strategic Planning**, Nonprofit Assn of Washington, noon, online, nonprofitwa.org
- Feb 18, 19** • **Spokane Public Radio Record Sale**, CenterPlace Regional Event Center, 2426 N. Discovery, Spokane Valley, Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sun., 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. spokanepublicradio.org/2023-record-sale
- Feb 18** • **Viva Vino & Brew**, HBPA Fundraiser, hbpasokane.org
- **Our Planet: Live in Concert**, First Interstate Center for the Arts, 334 W. Spokane Falls, 7 p.m., 279-7000
- Feb 19** • **Spokane String Quartet**, Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W Sprague, 2 p.m., 227-7638
- Feb 20** • **Children's Alliance, Have a Heart for Kids Day**, online, 9 a.m., us06web.zoom.us/join/join/join/register/tZYpf-CsrzsoH9lxc17L-d56FFMrqPb1Tt8m
- **NAACP General Membership Meeting**, Community Building, 35 W. Main, or virtual, 7 p.m., spokanenaacp@gmail.com
- Feb 20, 21** • **Operation Advocacy**, Disability Action Center meet with Idaho legislators, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., lincidaho.org/events/operation-advocacy-2
- Feb 20-22** • **2023 Regional Prayer Summit**, Ross Point Baptist Camp, Post Falls, spokanepayersummit.org
- Feb 21, 27** • **Medicare Related Cost Saving Program**, Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington, and SHIBA, Feb. 21, Argonne Library, Feb. 27, zoom, scld.org/connect
- Feb 22** • **The Fig Tree Mailing and Distribution**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Court, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., kaye@thefigtree.org
- **Africana Studies, EWU, Silent Auction**, Monroe Room 205, 7:30 a.m.
- **Ash Wednesday Silent Day of Prayer**, An Examen for Lent, St. Ignatius' daily prayer, C. Hightower, SJ, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., ihrc.net
- **Lighthouse Opportunities Breakfast**, Spokane Club, 1002 W Riverside, 8 to 9 a.m., Engage@LHBlind.org
- **Retirement Basics**, Hillyard Library, First Interstate Bank, 6 to 7 p.m., events.spokanelibrary.org/events
- Feb 23** • **The Fig Tree Benefit and Board Meetings**, 12 to 3 p.m., zoom, mary@thefigtree.org
- **New Member Call**, Nonprofit Assn of Washington, noon, online, nonprofitwa.org
- **Campfire Stories: Tales from Our Public Lands**, The Lands Council, Wonder Building, 835 N.Post, 6 to 9 p.m., landscouncil.org/events/campfire-stories-ales-from-our-public-lands
- Feb 24** • **Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist**, Paul Kingsnorth, Gonzaga Climate Center, zoom, 12 p.m., climatecenter@gonzaga.edu
- **Taste of Life, Hospice of Spokane**, fundraising event, Historic Davenport Hotel, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., 456-0438, or jpoirier@hospiceofspokane.org
- **Healing Harmonies**, benefit concert for Cancer Care Northwest Foundation, The Fox Theater, 1001 W Sprague, 7:30 p.m., 624-1200
- To Feb 25** • **Thrift Store Art Show**, Liberty Building, 203 N Washington, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Feb 25** • **Regional Youth Conference, New ESD 101**, Talbott Center, 4202 S. Regal, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., kfuchs@esd101.net, tinyurl.com/4y2h5dn8
- **Northwest BachFest: Oliver Messiaen, Quartet for the End of Time**, Barrister Winery, 1213 W Railroad, 7 p.m., nwbachfest.com
- Feb 26** • **Northwest BachFest: Johannes Brahms Selections**, Barrister Winery, 1213 W Railroad, 3 p.m., nwbachfest.com
- Feb 28** • **Black History Month Screening: Clusterluck**, The Kenworthy, 508 S. Main, Moscow, 7 p.m.
- Mar 3** • **"Sharing Resources, Transforming Lives," 50th Anniversary of the Resource Directory**, The Fig Tree Spring Lunch Benefit, 11:45 to 1, Gonzaga's Cataldo Hall, RSVP 535-4112, event@thefigtree.org
- Mar 3 to 4** • **24 Hour Sacred Art Retreat**, The Temptation of Christ, Hanna Charlton, ihrc.net
- Tues-Sats to Mar 11** • **Hostile Terrain 94**, Exhibit of Undocumented Migration Project at U.S. Mexico border, WSU Museum of Art, 1535 NE Wilson, Pullman, T-F 1 to 4 p.m., Sat 10 to 4, 335-1910
- Suns** • **Burritos for the People**, Spokane Community Against Racism, Compassionate Addiction Treatment, 168 S. Division, 9 to 10 a.m., scarspokane.org

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CAP programs help people stabilize and set goals to transform their lives

By Kaye Hult

Everybody has a different story when they come into Community Action Partnership (CAP) seeking to improve their situation, said Kim Spencer, community services manager for the Coeur d'Alene branch at 4144 Industrial Loop.

Kim seeks to understand their stories. Some need food. Some want to weatherize their home. Some have transportation issues. Some struggle to pay utility bills.

Others have stability for their basic needs but seek someone to walk with them while they create goals to improve their lives.

"I empathize with their struggles," she shared. "Everybody has something unique and wonderful to contribute to the world. When people can't pay rent, fear homelessness or lose their transportation, they cannot focus on their future story.

"Life is a lesson, with good times and bad times. It usually balances out," Kim said. "I want people to have a better life. I want people challenged in a healthy way. I want people to thrive."

Kim has been with CAP just about from the beginning 25 years ago. CAP opened its doors in October 1997, and Kim began that November.

"Many think it's Coeur d'Alene's Food Bank, but it's much more than that," she said.

It is part of the national Community Action Partnership established when President Lyndon Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964 and declared the War on Poverty.

CAP's mission is to be "a catalyst for building relationships that inspire and equip people to end poverty in our community."

Its vision is for the community to work together to end poverty, to be a community where "all people are equipped to achieve their potential; have sufficient resources, relationships and meaning in their lives to thrive, and are valued and able to meet their own needs by utilizing their talents, potential and passions."

With nine staff and about 50 volunteers, CAP carries out the mission and vision in three ways.

- First, they stabilize clients with shelter, warmth and food.



Kim Spencer listens.

- Second, they encourage them to achieve their goals. Where do they want to go next? "They decide the goals, and we walk alongside them," Kim said.

- Third, staff seek to engage them in the community.

"Often when people come, they can't think about their future," Kim said.

CAP offers two programs to help people reach their goals: stabilizing programs and transformational programs.

The stabilizing programs include energy assistance, weatherization and the food bank.

The energy assistance and weatherization are federally financed and have income guidelines, but the food bank is open to all in Kootenai County. No documentation is required.

The Coeur d'Alene branch is a hub for CAP services in five North Idaho counties—Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Shoshone and Benewah—and six North Central Idaho counties—Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, Nez Perce and Asotin.

Those hoping to weatherize their homes learn affordable ways to improve energy efficiency. They apply to the weatherization team in Lewiston.

CAP energy assistance comes from several sources.

The federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has income guidelines regardless of whether someone heats with wood, oil, propane, electricity or natural gas. They do not need to be behind on their heating bill. They qualify based on income. However, in one program, Crisis, people can receive service only after their final notice bill.

Both Avista Utilities Idaho and Kootenai Electric Cooperative (KEC) have programs for customers to donate to help others with utility bills. Avista's Project Share assists with heat or electricity. KEC's Operation Round-Up helps members with electricity bills. Those needing assistance with their heating and electricity are often on fixed incomes, in seasonal work or in the hospitality industry.

The recent housing crisis is hard for many, she said.

"When we offer to help, some say to save it for someone who needs it more," said Kim.

"When I was a young stay-at-home mother with two little boys, my husband was a seasonal worker," she said. "Winters were hard because there was less work. Our bill was overdue, and I called for help, but refused it, because I thought others could use it more.

"I appreciate people who do accept help," she said. "I wish we had accepted it."

Transformational programs help people who are stabilized but still living in poverty work on goals to move forward.

"We walk with them, but they

use their strengths, talents and potential to do this," Kim said.

As family coaches, CAP staff brainstorm strategies to help families reach their goals.

"CAP's work is about building relationships," she said. "Through networking, we understand what other area agencies do and what resources they have. If we don't have the resources clients need, we put them in touch with agencies that do."

During COVID, CAP's doors were closed for two years, only reopening last April, so they learned to work differently. They emailed people. The food bank made appointments. People drove up and had food delivered to their car, she said.

Kim was born in Boise, went to school in Sandpoint and has lived mostly in Idaho. In college, she began studying journalism, then tried marine biology but dropped out to raise her family.

"I've been schooled in this agency," said Kim, who started at CAP soon after she returned to Idaho after separating from her husband in Oregon.

When she interviewed with her predecessor, she said his

words tied into her empathy and wanting to walk alongside people who are struggling.

Kim had several roles before she became community services manager five years ago. In that role, she gives her staff tools, training and support. Community service staff have several months of family coaching training to help families focus beyond a crisis and think of goals to shine their light in the community.

"People have beauty to share," she said. "They just need the bandwidth of support to help them focus on their goals and find avenues to share their gifts."

For information, call 208-664-8757 or visit cap4action.org.



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- **Energy Assistance Grants** are available for income-qualified residential customers. Contact your local community action agency to see if you qualify for bill assistance. To get information on your local agency visit: myavista.com/assistance or call us at 1-800-227-9187.
- **Comfort Level Billing** divides yearly energy costs into 12 equal and predictable monthly payments.
- **Preferred Due Date** helps align your bill's due date with payday.
- **Payment Arrangements** can be made on an individual basis for those in need.

For more ways we can help, please call 1-800-227-9187.



SPOKANE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT



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Your message will endure when engraved on a paver in the outdoor plaza at the new Spokane Valley Library.

Show your love with a different kind of stone this Valentine's Day, and create a lasting memory.

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