

32ND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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FEATURES 30 EVENTS



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

Ministry preparations evolve for today

By Mary Stamp

Ordained ministry and preparation for it in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have changed since the Rev. Mark Nelson was in seminary and began serving churches.

Changes in the last 10 years have shifted emphasis from earning a standard master of divinity degree focused primarily on systematic theology and biblical studies to including competency in community organizing and creative leadership.

“We need leadership to help us evolve for the changing church in the changing world,” he said.

Pastors today need to be missional leaders as traditional congregations do more outreach and want pastors to support lay people as they do outreach.

“Today, we are rooted in presence and action, cultivating vision and skills to lead a community to participate in God’s mission,” said Mark, who is now coordinator for missional leadership in Region 1 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), which includes six synods in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska.

“As church life changes, congregations seek pastors with



Mark Nelson sees changes in ministry candidates to match changes in churches.

skills to help them do ministry in new ways,” he said.

Lutheran denominations grew with immigration from Scandinavian and German countries.

“The boats have stopped coming, so our churches are less about Scandinavian or German culture and more about how Martin Luther interpreted theology,” Mark said.

There are fewer positions for graduates with master of divinity degrees than 10 years ago, but the national ELCA does not educate more seminarians than there are churches. After seminary, candidates go into a national pool and are assigned based on their gifts and the needs of churches.

“The American model of one pastor one church is not necessarily the case today. We are adapting the model of ministry in Africa and Central America where one pastor supervises 10 to 12 lay evangelists,” Mark said.

In Region 1, there are nearly 60 master of divinity or TEEM candidates and many part-time students taking their time to earn degrees. TEEM is Theological Education for Emerging Ministries, developed for pastors serving in

Continued on page 4

Speakers for annual benefit events will tell impact of Fig Tree’s coverage of diversity

Speakers for The Fig Tree’s 2016 Benefit Lunch on March 11 and Benefit Breakfast on March 16 will tell how the newspaper, resource directory and online media play a role in the region in “Reflecting Diversity.”

The Fig Tree is celebrating its 32nd year of publication, covering stories of people who make a difference because of their faith and values. Its print and online media connect people to work together to serve individuals in need and to promote justice.

It is marking its 10th year of producing the 43-year-old an-

nuual Resource Directory: Guide to Congregations and Community Resources. The directory helps people network and find services they need.

The lunch buffet begins at 11:30 a.m. and the program at noon, Friday, March 11, in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

The breakfast buffet begins at 7 a.m. and the program at 7:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 16, also in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga. Previously the breakfast was a week earlier during Gonzaga University’s spring break, so the Gonzaga community has not been

able to participate as easily.

The lunch speakers will be Marilee Roloff, executive director of Volunteers of America of the Inland Northwest; Edie Rice-Sauer, executive director of Transitions; John Sirois, committee coordinator of Upper Columbia United Tribes, and Naima Quarles-Burnley, president of NAACP Spokane, each sharing about three minutes on how The Fig Tree’s focus on diversity has impact on their efforts.

Breakfast speakers include Terri Schibel, director of quality assurance and training of Spokane County Headstart, Early Headstart and ECEAP, which partners with The Fig Tree on the Resource Directory; Bishop Jim Waggoner, Jr. of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane; the Rev. Mike Bullard of Coeur d’Alene, who is chair of the Inland Northwest Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster, and the Rev. Alan Eschenbacher, pastor at All Saints Lutheran Church and coordinator of outreach ministries to feed homeless people, companion people

Continued on page 3

Diocese ‘repurposes’ Holy Trinity Church

The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane “repurposed” the chapel, fellowship hall and rectory of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in West Central Spokane in 2013 to be the West Central Episcopal Mission (WCEM).

The mission’s purpose is to repair the neighborhood’s class, cultural and relational ruptures by addressing stressors that feed urban poverty,” said the Rev. Kris Christensen, director.

“Isaiah calls us to be ‘repairers of the breach,’ so we seek to repair community ruptures, while emphasizing the importance of all community members’ participation in healing divisions,” she said.

The stressors include the lack of income, deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate transportation, substandard and scarce housing, substance abuse, unemployment, isolation, mental illness and trauma, Kris added.

The mission also addresses historical barriers to community in West Central Spokane through practical, relational, spiritual support for people struggling with hunger, poverty, hopelessness and homelessness.

The mission incorporates relational contexts for healing through chapel services and the new Arts Center.

The fellowship hall building is the site for the Breakfast Table, which serves about 60 people at 8:30 a.m., Saturdays, and the Dinner Table, which serves about 100 at 6 p.m., Wednesdays.

These meals “model the communion of Christ,” Kris said.

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Religion News Briefs

Around the World

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Faiths welcomed to participate in UN goal work

An international conference on religion and sustainable development, "Partners for Change: Religions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," held in February at Berlin, acknowledged that religion plays an integral role in all societies and is the most important source of values for many people.

The Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), said any development policy that takes an individual seriously must also take his or her world view seriously. The world views of most are shaped by their religions.

The event gave hope to those who need assurance that the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals will be pursued in partnership with faith-based organizations, which can often deliver services in areas where governments have no access.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly, has 17 goals and 169 targets to eliminate extreme poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change. Participants know religion makes a practical contribution toward meeting people's basic social needs. In many developing countries, education and health care are inconceivable without religion.

The gathering launched a new International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development, recognizing "the critical role of religion in human and sustainable development, in humanitarian response and in the search for peace in our conflict-torn world," said Olav.

Brazilian reflects on citizenship in democracy

The plurality of religions and viewpoints within Christianity demands heightened engagement in the political sphere by Christian communities, said Brazilian theologian Rudolf von Sinner at a recent visit to the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva.

He reflected from the context of a maturing democracy in Brazil. In the context of liberalization and democratization, he said that Brazilian Christians and other religious actors must alter their earlier paradigms, forged in response to and after the military dictatorship of 1964 to 1985, to nurture stable, radically inclusive, democratic institutions.

"Citizenship has become the key concept of democracy in Brazil since the 1990s," Rudolf explained. "It is far from something given through a document or laws. Rather, it is a field of constant struggle of all people in a given territory for their rights and for the wellbeing of the society in its entirety. Its effectiveness involves profound transformation of people, society and institutions."

Rudolf is a native Swiss who has lived in Brazil for 14 years and is professor for systematic theology, ecumenics and interreligious dialogue at the Lutheran School of Theology, São Leopoldo/Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

WCC hails meeting of Pope and Patriarch

The Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the WCC, praised the historic Feb. 12 meeting in Havana, Cuba, of Pope Francis, pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, and Patriarch Kirill, primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Russian Orthodox Church is the largest Orthodox church and the largest member church in the WCC, which for the last 50 years has cooperated with the Roman Catholic Church through their Joint Working Group.

Eastern and Western Christianity split over doctrine in the Great Schism of 1054 and formally separated in 1438. This was the first meeting of heads of the Roman Catholic Church and Russian Orthodox Church.

"The WCC has been working for Christian unity for many decades. The Council celebrates this meeting as a great step forward in healing the schism between Western and Eastern Christianity," he said, expressing hope that the meeting will inspire renewed commitment and action by churches, societies, governments and the international community to welcome the stranger in need, resolve conflicts, bring peace and to pursue justice—and human dignity and rights—for all.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Fig Tree eligible for Thrivent Choice gifts

The Fig Tree has been designated by Thrivent Financial as eligible to receive Thrivent Choice gifts to further support its work.

Eligible members of Thrivent Financial designate where they want their charitable outreach grant dollars to go.

The Fig Tree is now one of thousands of participating non-

profit organizations and congregations who can receive funds.

The Fig Tree encourages its friends and supporters to join others in using this channel to help increase support of this unique media venture.

The funding supplements other sources to make it possible for The Fig Tree to share stories of

people who make a difference because of their faith and values through feature stories. The funds also help connect people in the faith and nonprofit communities to network through the annual Resource Directory.

For information, call 800-847-4836, email mail@thrivent.com or contact www.thrivent.com.

Resource Directory gathering updates, ads

The Fig Tree is now seeking updates for listings in the annual Resource Directory: Guide to Congregations and Community Resources.

Staff is also sending letters to and calling advertisers, inviting them to help with underwriting the publication costs by renewing their ads or becoming new advertisers.

"We are still distributing copies of the 2015-16 Resource Direc-

tories, so invite people to order copies for their clients and staff," said Malcolm Haworth, directory editor.

Directory staff would like to have as many ad renewals in by the first ad deadline so it can publish earlier than it did in 2015.

Service providers, educators, clergy, advocates, retirement communities, hospitals, nonprofit leaders and people seeking services to improve their lives value

this directory for information about resources available.

The Fig Tree produces the resource directory in partnership with Community Colleges of Spokane Headstart, Early Headstart and ECEAP programs.

The plan is again to publish and distribute 11,500 copies.

Malcolm is working to enter data in the database and to update the copy in the layout.

For information, call 535-1813.

CROP Walk will be on the SCC campus

The 2016 CROP Hunger Walk will differ from previous years.

First, it will be held Sunday, May 15, rather than in April. As usual, it will begin at noon with entertainment and prizes for churches and individuals raising the most pledges.

The walkers will gather at the

Spokane Community College (SCC) Lair, 1810 N. Greene St.

Second, the walk, which will begin at 1:30 p.m., as usual, will be on the Spokane Community College campus, rather than following the Centennial Trail along the Spokane River.

Randy Goss and Madelyn Ba-

fus, two of the organizers, said they are making that change to avoid requirements and costs of having permits and portable restrooms. Walking on campus will also reduce the need to have volunteers for water stations.

For information, call 468-4099 or email goss301@gmail.com.

Church raises funds for camperships

Spokane Valley United Methodist Church's 25th annual auction to raise funds for community children and youth to attend summer camps will be held Saturday, March 12.

Doors open and the silent auction begins at 4:30 p.m. Dinner is from 5 to 6 p.m., followed by the live auction.

Last year the auction raised

more than \$8,000 in scholarships for children and youth in the community to experience camp, which they could not do without financial assistance.

The church invites businesses to donate items for the auction. Items are listed in booklets distributed to 225 families in and around Spokane Valley, said Nancy Larson of the auction committee.

Campers attend Twinlow, a camp and retreat ministry of the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Church on Spirit Lake five miles north of Rathdrum, Idaho.

Founded in 1928, it is one of the oldest camps in the Northwest, serving United Methodists and open to all.

For information, call 928-4899 or visit spokanvalleychurch.org.

Pat Munts helps start community gardens

Pat Munts of the Washington State University (WSU) Spokane County Extension and the Spokane Conservation District will lead a workshop on "Learn How to Start a Successful Community Garden" from 6 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 9, at the

WSU Spokane County Extension, 222 N. Havana.

Pat, who considers community gardens 90 percent community and 10 percent garden, has 10 years of experience building the community garden system in Spokane.

She can help community members and organizations put together the community structures to establish sustainable and long-lasting gardens.

The workshop will cover build-

ing the community that will build the garden, insurance, fund raising, locating a site, community resources for designing, installing and managing a garden.

Pat invites members of churches, neighborhoods, schools, retirement communities, low-income housing communities, college groups and social service agencies.

For information, call 477-2173 or email pmunts@spokanecounty.org.

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2016**

11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Transitions plans a Sock Hop March 10

The Transitional Living Center (TLC) will hold a Sock Hop from noon to 1 p.m., Thursday, March 10, at the center, 3128 N. Hemlock St.

Mothers served at TLC will host tables for a 1950s Sock Hop. Those attending, who are asked to bring new socks, bras and undergarments of all sizes for women and children, will hear updates from staff and program participants.

For information, call 328-6702, email rsvp@help4women.org or visit help4women.org.

Lecturer speaks on peace and on women

Sarah Bessey, an author, speaker and award-winning blogger, presents lectures and discussions on Monday and Tuesday, March 14 and 15 in Spokane.

She will speak on "Making Peace with an Evolving Faith," and on her new book, *Out of Sorts*, at 6:30 p.m., Monday, at New Community Church, 1003 E. Trent.

Her presentation at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday at the Hixon Union Building at Whitworth University will be on her first book, *Jesus Feminist: An Invitation To Revisit the Bible's View of Women*. That book is written with poetic rhythm, a prophetic voice and a biblical foundation. She will discuss being an Evangelical Christian and an ardent feminist. For information, call 777-3267 or email ldamico@whitworth.edu.

Retreat center announces three events

Immaculate Heart Retreat Center at 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd. announces three upcoming events.

Coffee and Contemplation from 9 to 11 a.m., Wednesday, March 16, features Craig Goodwin, pastor of Millwood Presbyterian Church and author of *Year of Plenty*, will speak on "Spiritual Practices for the Sick and Tired." In October 2013, he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and following a year of treatment is in remission. He will share about his experiences with cancer as a person of faith and lead a discussion on finding hope-filled pathways through the spiritual wilderness of serious illness.

Yakima Bishop Emeritus Carlos Sevilla, SJ, will lead Holy Week retreats for men and women.

The Women's Retreat is from 4:30 p.m., Monday March 21 to 1 p.m., Wednesday, March 23. The Men's Retreat is from 4:30 p.m., Thursday, March 24 to 1 p.m., Saturday, March 26.

Both retreats are on "Living Holy Week in Jesus."

The bishop, who grew up in San Francisco, entered the Society of Jesus in 1953 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1988. He earned a master's degree in philosophy at Gonzaga University and a master's in theology at Santa Clara, with further studies in Innsbruck and Paris. He was named the sixth Bishop of Yakima in 1966.

IHRC plans its Mother-Daughter Retreat led by Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Church, on "God's Lovely Daughter" April 8 to 10. It is for young women from 12 to 17 years old and their mothers, grandmothers, aunts or godmothers.

For information, call 448-1224 or visit ihrc.net.

Professor discusses art of teaching theology

In his inaugural lecture as the Bruner-Welch Professor of Theology at Whitworth University, Adam Neder will offer some reflections on the art of teaching Christian theology in a lecture, "On the Art of Teaching Christian Theology."

The lecture will be given at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 29, in Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth University.

Adam, whose master of divinity and doctoral degrees are from Princeton Theological Seminary, has been on Whitworth's faculty since 2004. His emphases in teaching are on Christian theology, particularly the theology of Karl Barth, a Swiss Reformed theologian who had impact on 20th century theology and influenced members of the Confessing Church under Nazi Germany. For information, call 777-3391.

Fig Tree seeks to build understanding, connections

Continued from page 1

who suffer mental illness and provide space for a community garden and community center on its property and in its building.

The 2016 video, "Reflecting Diversity," was prepared by Ceila del Rosaria, a recent graduate of Gonzaga University and member of Life Center, working with The Fig Tree editor, Mary Stamp.

It features Cameron Conner and Grant Gallaher of Conscious Connections; Sandra Williams of The Black Lens; Skyler Oberst, Ayesha Malik and Admir Rasic of the Interfaith Council; Elizabeth Goldstein of Gonzaga University; Dale Soden of Whitworth University; Mark Kadel of World Relief, and Freda Gandy of the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center.

Board members who are featured on the program include Mary Ann Farley, SNJM, chair; the Rev. Darrel Lundby, vice chair; Anastasia Wendlinder and the Rev. Happy Watkins.

"Like public broadcasting, The Fig Tree is available free but is supported by the sponsorships of readers and by the advertisers and underwriters," Mary said. "Our benefits are like public broadcasting pledge drives, opportunities to celebrate our model of journalism and invite support."

"As part of our effort to build understanding and collaboration in the community, we cover stories of people who are part of the region's diversity racially, ethnically, economically, religiously, spiritually, culturally and in global ties," she said.

"While other media may focus attention on what divides to create fear and build audiences, we cover what we have in common so we build respect. We celebrate the region's diversity and seek to build dialogue and promote human rights," she said.

"We tell stories of how faith and nonprofit communities work over the long term to restore lives, reach out in creative ways and

overcome divisions to bring reconciliation," said Mary. "People who live their faith and values provide a myriad of stories to share."

The Sisters of Providence Mother Joseph Province in Renton and Thrivent Financial each recently donated \$500 to help underwrite the events. The Fig Tree seeks other underwriters to help cover the costs, along with table hosts, who donate to cover the costs of meals for seven guests, so what guests donate goes to The Fig Tree media.

"Last year, we raised \$28,143. Our basic goal to meet expenses is for \$30,000 and to move into the future, we need to raise \$50,000 at these events," said Mary.

There are still tables available for people who would like to be hosts and invite guests.

For information or to reserve by March 7 for the lunch and March 10 for the breakfast, call 535-1813, email mary@thefigtree.org or visit www.thefigtree.org.

Nonprofit Network discusses digital donors

Steven Shattuck, vice president of marketing for Bloomerang, will speak on "The Art and Science of Retaining Digital Donors" from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 8, at the Philanthropy Center, 1020 W. Riverside Ave.

This session offered by the Spokane Nonprofit Network will help nonprofit leaders discover how to maximize and retain digital donors. It will examine attributes of online donors and

outline retention strategies, because online donors are least likely to renew their gifts unless they are engaged.

Steven serves in a marketing and communications role on several nonprofit committees and has spoken at Association of Fundraising Professionals.

The Spokane Nonprofit Network is convened by Washington Nonprofits and Spokane County United Way

to help nonprofit leaders and staff learn, connect and share resources.

For information, call 855-299-2922 or email info@washingttonnonprofits.org.

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Lutherans develop new approaches to preparing ministers for changing ministry

Continued from page 1
remote rural areas or serving in an urban ministry.

“Previously Lutheran pastors were trained in the European model, which is heavy on academics. Now we also want pastors who connect with people, as people who can share their faith and life experiences,” Mark said.

Lutheran congregations that have aged out or completed their mission may connect with others to gain a new mission, as All Saints Lutheran in Spokane has done. It serves a Tuesday dinner to homeless people, houses a community center, connects with housing programs at Salem Lutheran, and offers a food bank, community garden and mental health chaplaincy.

“Jesus talked often about the poor and oppressed. Connecting with folks in need is a regular part of who the church is as they do ministries in their communities and draw people from communities. Ministers work in a congregation to help it see what is happening outside the church walls,” Mark said.

“Luther understood that God’s grace is a gift that does not need to be earned. We are sinners and saints at the same time. God calls each baptized person into ministry as educators, parents and teachers,” he said.

“Our first call is to be children of God. That may or may not mean we are called into ordained ministry in a church,” he said.

Today, ministry may mean a United Church of Christ pastor with the needed gifts serves a Lutheran church, or a Lutheran pastor serves an Episcopal church. The bishops and judicatory heads talk about needs of the congregations.

“Working ecumenically is hopeful. It’s a fun time to be Christian. There are so many different ways to reach people. The younger generation is excited about faith,” said Mark.

For many years, candidates were older and in second careers, but today they are younger. There are as many women as men, and there are more multicultural candidates. In Region 1, the multicultural candidates are Korean, Japanese, Thai and Latino. Most are west of the Cascades where there are many Asian people and new church starts.

The Eastern Washington Idaho

(EWAID) Synod has trained candidates who are Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander and Taiwanese.

“Many young people are into faith as spirituality, not as religion,” said Mark.

“For churches, evangelism once meant, ‘We have a story to tell about Jesus that we think you need to hear.’ Today, we might ask, ‘How do you understand God’s spirit to be alive in your life?’ It’s a different way to encounter people who are not in congregations,” Mark said.

“Perhaps young people can be drawn into a community of faith as people who have something to teach and as people desiring to walk with others in community. They may or may not become part of the worshipping community,” he said.

While once people first asked what Christians believed before they joined a church, now many belong and walk with a community of faith to discover together what they believe.

“We understand that God places people in our path,” he said. “We show who we are and invite them to join us.”

Lutheran churches, like other mainline churches, have been losing members, but interest in the Gospel continues.

Another change for the ELCA is that it is more diverse racially, economically and in age, said Mark, impressed as young people come to church and connect with long-time, older members.

“In the ELCA, gay and lesbians also find a home, as is true of many denominations,” he said.

Mark, who lived in Spokane until he was nine, graduated from high school in Seattle. He earned a degree in psychology and religion in 1976 at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma and began seminary at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

His studies included a year with Dominicans at Aquinas Institute, also in Dubuque, clinical pastoral education (CPE) in New Jersey and an internship in Michigan before he earned a master of divinity degree in 1980 at Wartburg Seminary.

His first call was to a three-point parish—Lind, Sprague and Ritzville and his second call was at Cashmere. In 1991, he began as assistant to the bishop of the Eastern Washington Idaho Synod, serving until 2013, when he was

called to his current position.

His work with the synod involved candidacy, vocations, conflict management and the call process.

Now his focus is on candidacy in the region’s six synods, working with people interested in ordained ministry for word and sacrament, or for word and service; and people interested in diaconal ministry, associates in ministry or being deaconesses.

Mark said that the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), which accredits seminaries, has changed guidelines for master of divinity candidates to have more contextual preparation, placing them in congregations earlier and requiring internships and clinical pastoral education. The ELCA requires both a year-long internship and CPE for master of divinity candidates.

With the new requirements, the eight Lutheran seminaries

have revised their curricula. There are Lutheran seminaries at Berkeley, Calif., Chicago, Ill., St. Paul, Minn., Dubuque, Iowa, Gettysburg and Philadelphia, Pa., Columbia, S.C., and Columbus, Ohio. Most of them offer online classes.

Because there is no Lutheran seminary in the Northwest, candidates can go to any ATS accredited seminary, plus take

Lutheran formation and do an ELCA internship.

About seven attend Seattle University’s ecumenical School of Theology and Ministry.

“The culture of the Christian community is that we care for people,” Mark said. “We relate theology with the historical context and culture.”

For information, call 990-0478 or email nelsonrevmark@msn.com.

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2016 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference

Holy Names sister interconnects global goals for development and state issues

Sister Linda Haydock, executive director of the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (IPJC) in Seattle, believes that if “we can dream it, we can do it.”

She told participants at the 2016 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference that, “when we bring religion and politics together, we need to keep perspectives in balance.”

Sr. Linda connected the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and progress on the Millennium Development Goals on the global level with local and state issues.

“Those connections give hope and set the stage for personal and congregational responsibilities,” she said.

Martin Luther King Jr. said that religion that professes concern for souls, but is not concerned about slums and social issues that cripple them is “a dry as dust religion,” she said. “We here are not a dry as dust religion.”

“At a time of tall buildings and short tempers, wide freeways and narrow viewpoints, multiplied possessions and reduced values,” she calls people to “rise up to tell the story of what people are doing for the common good.”

After having participants sing, “We Shall Overcome,” she pointed out that few millennials know the song.

“We must remember this song and keep our goals for the common good to make our dreams and hopes reality,” she said. “Our legislative, racial, economic and ecological goals are our responsibility.”

Sister Linda said the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were “the most successful anti-poverty movement in history,” and provide basis to hope and celebrate.

She highlighted progress on the goals:

- The number of people suffering from hunger and living in extreme poverty was reduced by half.
- The number of children not in universal primary education was reduced from 100 million to 57 million.
- Seeking to promote gender equity and to empower women led to two-thirds the level of parity in primary school and 90 percent more women in government and parliaments.
- There were 6 million fewer deaths of children under five.
- Improvements in maternal health cut maternal mortality in half.
- Progress in combating HIV/AIDS reduced the incidence from 3.5 to 2.1 million and increased distribution of anti-retrovirals by 13 percent.
- Improved environmental sustainability was measured by increasing access to piped drinking water to 2 billion people.
- Increased global partnerships for development increased internet accessibility from six to 43 percent.

“This success came with our faith based groups, churches and NGOs prodding,” she said.

Aware that more is needed, this fall, representatives of 193 countries unanimously adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—with 10 to 12 targets under each—for 2015 to 2030,



Sr. Linda Haydock, SNJM, describes progress made and challenges participants to invite others to join them in action.

with a commitment to end poverty by 2030.

Pope Francis considers the new goals a sign of hope and a call for governments and individuals to be responsible,” she said.

Sister Linda said these goals with five emphases are “a quantum leap” and call everyone to be responsible—churches, mosques, temples, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), not just governments.

- First, the goals were developed through consultation, small working groups, local conversations and internet input.
- Second, they are broader and more specific, and are for all countries, not just developing ones.
- Third, there are more goals for global sustainability related to water, sanitation, climate change, ecosystems, consumption and production.
- Fourth, the SDGs address root causes and call for a sustainable economy, inequality reduction

and innovative infrastructures.

- Fifth, they promote peaceful, inclusive societies for sustainable development and justice.

“If we achieve even half of these goals, it would be astounding. Look them up online,” Sister Linda said.

“What does this have to do with our state? The MDGs and the SDGs are the macro level and the state is the micro level of responsibility for the common good,” she said.

“We have to start where we are,” she said. “Accomplishments of our faith communities and advocates in Olympia are remarkable.”

Sister Linda ran through a 10-issue litany of gratitude, giving thanks for the difference people of faith make:

- Washington ranks among the best in health care with mental health care, chemical dependency services, suicide prevention, Medicare and Medicaid services.
- Food and hunger needs are

being met with the Emergency Food Assistance Program and Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition program in place because we advocated.

- A death penalty moratorium and regulations on assisted suicide support life.
- Housing is possible through the Housing Trust Fund and projects of Lutheran Community Services and Catholic Charities.
- The state has a document filing fee that supports people in low-income housing.
- Children and families can thrive with learning, child and parental support.
- There are efforts for economic justice, farm worker justice, labor safety and just wages.
- Immigrants benefit from the Real Hope Act. The state did not adopt the Real ID Act, because citizens said no.
- Advocates continue to seek to reform the justice system through programs for juveniles in Anti-Violence Act therapeutic courts and re-entry programs.
- The state cares about the environment enough to pass oil transportation safety and advocate for a Toxic Free Kids Act.
- The state passes anti-trafficking laws because the faith community has advocated for them.

Then Sister Linda led a call and response on “Our Responsibility for the Common Good.”

To each statement, participants replied, “It is our dream and our responsibility.” The call was a question: Will you act:

- to prevent homelessness and provide housing?
- to give access to and integration of mental health, physical health and chemical dependency services?
- to provide a healthy environment?
- to ensure funding for hunger,

housing and poverty reduction?

- to reduce violence through re-entry programs, gun safety and anti-human trafficking laws?
- to animate faith communities to advocate for Washingtonians in poverty and children who are poor?

“It is our duty and our responsibility to transform both our world and our state,” Sister Linda asserted. “We must live the story of our dreams because we are not a dry as dust religion.”

She called participants to respond when faith-based advocates ask them “to sign up to transform our state from poverty to prosperity for all, from injustice to justice for all, from incarceration to inclusive communities, from hungry families to healthy communities.”

When participants return to their congregations and communities, some may say, they can’t do it, it can’t be done, it’s too late, they are too old or too young.

“I want you to remember that Abraham was too old, Moses stuttered, Gideon was afraid, Jeremiah was too young, Jonah ran, Naomi was a widow, Job went bankrupt, Martha worried, Paul was way too religious, Timothy had an ulcer and Lazarus was dead,” she said.

“We need to live the story we believe in. Transformation is possible,” she said.

She also called people to practice compassion in every encounter with those on the margins and in meetings with elected officials.

She called for sharing stories of “vulnerable people in neighborhoods,” and building communities of support and solidarity as we advocate for justice,” she said.

“This is our moment in history to tell the story, to live the story of justice for all,” Sister Linda said.

For information, call 206-223-1138 or email ipjc@ipjc.org.

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Educator reviews history of public schools and current issues affecting them

Jonas Cox, associate professor in Gonzaga University's School of Education, reminded participants at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference workshop about the roots of public education in one-room schoolhouses in rural communities.

In the early years, family farmers survived on 40 acres, so there were many rural people. Today wheat farmers need thousands of acres to make a living, so many people have left rural areas to find jobs elsewhere.

"With the demographic shift, schools changed," Jonas said. "During the Industrial Revolution, communities made schools like factories, as if children were raw materials coming to have knowledge attached as they moved on through the grades.

If students dropped out during the industrial era, there were jobs, but today everyone is expected to graduate before working.

In the production model, a



Jonas Cox gives overview of education.

teacher becomes like a factory worker, but the education system is not a production line, Jonas said.

"The standards/accountability movement arguably began in the Reagan era. Educational stan-

dards were very high because we believed that we simply had to raise standards, and students would hit them," he said.

"Then came President George W. Bush and the standards became grade level expectations. Bush

claimed that everyone should be at grade level," Jonas said. "Federal funding became tied to test performance with the No Child Left Behind legislation.

"In the last 10 years, if students did not perform to grade levels on tests, the schools lost funding," Jonas said. "Every category of student had to reach the standards, and teachers had to meet performance evaluations. Schools had to be accountable. That approach has not served students of color or poor students well."

As schools failed, they risked the loss of federal funds, and the pressure on school systems mounted so states asked for waivers of No Child Left Behind standards, Jonas said.

Now accountability is even tracked to teacher training at universities.

"Gonzaga wants to train students to teach in communities with people of color and poor people, but those settings are

hard," he said. "There's a scarcity of teachers in poor communities. Few stay at under-performing schools more than five years."

Jonas also attributes the accountability movement with driving a shortage of teachers, because of the focus on assessments.

He said new guidelines limit testing, but it's not enough. There is still a crisis to find qualified, quality teachers. Some schools have to hire emergency substitute teachers without credentials, or have principals cover classes.

Now there is demand for more elementary school teachers, because fewer are trained.

Children who are either beyond or below the standard often don't have the attention they need, said Jonas.

"We have taken the accountability movement too far and left behind students and teachers," he said.

For information, call 313-3505 or email coxj@gonzaga.edu.

Speakers offer overview of environmental and climate issues for state, world

Jessie Dye discusses toxics, oil transport and hotline

Jessie Dye of Earth Ministry and John Sirois of the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) led a workshop on environmental issues for the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference.

There are many environmental issues to address, she said: keeping the cap on carbon, preventing cuts from the clean water fund, keeping the air clean and increasing support for solar and wind power in the grid.

"Many issues are not legislative," she said. "Fossil fuel is expensive, dirty and dangerous. The tar sands are toxic. The Powder Basin coal is dirty. The Bakken oil is fracked so deep in the earth that natural gas is dissolved and explosive. To reach the market in Asia, it is transported through Spokane by train.

"Our legislators and administration know oil transport is a concern of Spokane, as well as Vancouver and Seattle," said Jessie, noting a turnout of more than 500 at a recent hearing. "It's a powerful message to those in the Bakken field not to allow trains through without regulations.

"The faith community has a powerful role to say no to sending



Jessie Dye leads workshop with John Sirois.

trains through highly populated areas," she said.

Jessie added that legislators "need your voices" and that Washington has a legislative hotline, 800-562-6000, citizens can use to call their legislators to influence their votes.

For information, call 206-632-2426 or email jessie@earthministry.org.

John Sirois raises issues for indigenous people at COP

John Sirois, committee coordinator with UCUT and a member

of the Colville Confederated Tribes, was recently among indigenous participants at the Conference of Parties (COP) climate change conference in Paris.

"It's time for us to come together," said John, aware his work for fish passage and water quality here have global implications.

"My ancestors lived on the Okanogan and Wenatchee Rivers. We ate salmon, bear, bitterroots and serviceberries," he said. "We were not people of science but we knew when the salmon ran. We were not nomadic, but we knew

where we were to be at a certain time. We practiced applied science, connecting our lives to the water, land, air and temperature."

At COP, he said indigenous people have been taking responsibility to monitor effects of climate change and form coalitions to provide a better world for generations to come.

"Humans live in balance in the world. If climate changes, the world changes. Root and berry seasons are earlier. The hottest years on record were 2013, 2014 and 2015," he said.

As part of that effort, UCUT and tribes advocate for indigenous voices to be heard as the Columbia River Treaty is renegotiated. Their voices were not included in that treaty or when Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph dams were built.

"Needing sustainable fish passage, we know there are now new technologies for fish to pass without high costs by using whoosh and salmon cannons. Juveniles going downstream are channeled into a pipe and piped down be-

yond the dam.

"Climate change will have a severe impact on tribes," he said, "but indigenous people were not at the table in Paris, even though we are at risk of losing our land, cultures and natural heritages."

"For Pacific people, two degrees of change means their islands will be flooded," John said.

The 187 representatives at COP signed a binding document to limit emissions. It calls for healthy forests, recognition of indigenous rights and traditional knowledge.

He urged conference participants to challenge legislators about warming oceans, changing snow packs and water supplies, the storm season, diseased salmon in warmer rivers and forest health.

"Indigenous species are moving north. We now have raccoons but we had no word for raccoons in our language," John said. "COP did not bring all we want, but it was a huge step in the right direction.

For information, call 209-2414 or email john@ucut-nsn.org.

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Laws affect ability of people released from jail to find jobs and escape debt

Layne Pavey of Smart Justice Spokane and Phil Tyler, vice president of the Spokane NAACP, pointed out in a workshop on criminal justice at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference that once people in prison serve their time, go through rehabilitation and rejoin society, they find it hard to move forward.

"We need white people who think they are unaffected by the high rate of incarceration of black people to know that they are affected, because the country spends \$80 billion on a corrections system that does not correct," she said. "We need to speak up."

Layne said most people who have been in prison can't find jobs because most job applications have a box that anyone who has ever been convicted of a crime has to check. When or why they were in prison does not matter.

In prison, Layne found God, went through counseling and found hope in herself. She decided to be a mental health worker.

"I had no idea of the barriers



Phil Tyler discusses bills on deadly use of force and body cameras.

I would face after serving time for a nonviolent drug offense," she said.

"White privilege and my father helped me find work," she said.

"The system of mass incarceration creates an impasse, because people can be excluded just for

having a criminal background," she said.

Layne became a mental health clinician with a contractor who did not have a box. She presented her qualifications before telling him.

Smart Justice Spokane advo-

cates for Fair Chance Hiring that calls employers to look at qualifications first, so they can consider applicants without the stigma of a criminal record.

Before the state legislature are bills to ban the box and establish "certificates of restoration of opportunity" that prohibit disqualifying qualified applicants for licenses to practice a profession or business solely based on a criminal history.

There is also legislation to limit legal financial obligations from court fees and restitution for victims, such as not starting charges of 12 percent interest when a person enters prison. After release, many are jailed again for failure to pay, costing taxpayers for extra time in jail.

Phil called on people to take responsibility by voting, registering others to vote and educating them.

He spoke on two issues:

- "HB 2907 provides guidance to law enforcement officers on the use of deadly force," he said. "Officers can use it only if they

reasonably believe there is an imminent threat of serious harm to themselves or other persons. It also ensures officers are better equipped to handle difficult interactions with the community and increases trust."

The current law holds a police officer accountable only if deadly force is used with malice or evil intent, which are hard to prove.

- HB 2362 on body cameras falls short of standards sought. HB 1908 is an alternative, proposing that a task force look at issues of police accountability beyond just body cameras.

"We think a task force is the right approach given the legislature's failure to enact real, robust regulations," he added since the conference. "It also ensures community stakeholders have a seat at the table."

Phil urged people to educate themselves and then to call, email or write their legislators.

For information, call 838-7400 for Layne or 954-8392 for Phil, or email lt.ptyler@gmail.com.

Interfaith leader tells of effort to have Spokane declare itself a 'compassionate city'

Skyler Oberst, president of the Interfaith Council and delegate to the recent Parliament of World Religions, recently introduced the Charter for Compassion for the Spokane City Council to adopt. On Feb. 8, the council adopted a resolution to become a Compassionate City.

When his friend Karen Armstrong won the TED prize in 2008, she was granted a wish, which was for world religious leaders and great thinkers to write a one-page document, a Charter for Compassion, that shared the value of every world religion and moral code.

The charter is available online.

It says compassion is at the heart of all religious, spiritual and ethical traditions, and that "compassion tells us to treat others as we want to be treated." It calls for honoring "the sanctity of every human being, treating everyone with justice, equity and respect." It calls for cultivating "empathy for all human suffering, even those regarded as enemies."

Skyler believes people in Spokane are hungry for change. So he asked people to engage with community leaders.

In addition to encouraging support for that effort, he challenged them to listen to other's voices and be vulnerable to find common ground, establish trust and act together in the midst of national and local polarization.

"The city needs to know we want compassion in civic dis-



Skyler Oberst promotes compassion and understanding.

course," said Skyler who found in city archives that "Spokane has been diverse for a long time."

The first Hindu-American sworn in as a citizen on the courthouse steps had to have the Supreme Court overturn the lower

courts ruling that only Caucasians could be American citizens.

He found that Buddhists and Sikhs farmed the Palouse for 100 years, building railroads.

The early Jewish settlers lived in a tents in the area that later be-

came downtown. After the great fire, Jewish financiers bankrolled rebuilding, he said.

"When a swastika is painted on the synagogue or "Death to Islam" on the mosque or a church is robbed, compassion can break down our divisions," he said.

"When talking to elected officials, we need to be creative,

collaborative and compassionate," Skyler said. "Compassion transcends. If one person's rights are violated, all are violated."

He also told of the Interfaith Council's Meet the Neighbors opportunities to learn about people of different faiths.

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Habitat-Spokane plans move, builds relationships among neighbors

Habitat for Humanity Spokane is moving from both its administrative offices at 732 N. Napa and the Habitat Store at 3808 N. Sullivan to 1805 E. Trent, four blocks from the offices.

From March 1 to 26, there is a closeout sale at the store. It will be closed and moved in April and May. There will be a grand opening in June.

The new location moves the Habitat Store back into the core of Spokane.

"It will increase the store's accessibility and visibility to increase donations and customers," said Michelle Girardot, who became CEO of Habitat-Spokane in July, when her predecessor Michone Preston became the outreach director for Habitat for Humanity of Washington State, which serves more than 30 state affiliates. There is a Habitat for Humanity affiliate in nearly every county in the state.

Most of the 41,000 square-foot building, which Habitat purchased in September for \$1.3 million, will be for the retail store. They are doing \$190,000 in improvements.

The funds came from individual donations and partnership with Habitat of Washington's loan fund pilot program.

Habitat-Spokane's first office was at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. It started in 1987 after national Habitat for Humanity founder Millard Fuller spoke at Whitworth University. Since completing its first home in 1988, Habitat has provided 268 homes in Spokane County, including both new construction and rehabs.

"We have funded 40 Habitat homes through proceeds of the Habitat Store since 2000," Michelle said.

The store provides new and used building materials such as tile, lumber, paint, patio furniture and garden supplies. Businesses, industries and individuals donate materials. The store does free pickups and drop offs.

"We pick up a load of building materials after a construction job, so it doesn't go to the landfill," she said. "People doing spring cleaning and having estate sales donate furniture"

After graduating from Holy Names University in Oakland in social justice and performance in 2009, Michelle returned to Spokane and began to work at an early childhood education center.

Parents of many of the children were Habitat families.

With the model of Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary core to her belief in and commitment to social justice, she had hoped to address poverty by working with the preschoolers.



Michelle Girardot guides Habitat-Spokane through changes.

"I thought that at the pre-school, I could protect the children from their unstable lives, but I realized that if the parents had stable places to live they would all be better off," said Michelle, a member of St. Aloysius parish.

After she started at Habitat in 2010, working through AmeriCorps as volunteer coordinator, she realized that along with education, there was need for a holistic solution to poverty that includes health care, steady employment and a stable home.

"Education is a huge component to challenging poverty, as are other stabilizers," said Michelle, who transitioned through several staff positions, and was chief development officer before becoming CEO.

More than the move is new with the local affiliate. It has a development at Deer Park, and is involved with Neighborhood Revitalization, the Northeast Spokane Project Restoration and Veterans Repair Initiatives.

• After a study on the increase in rural poverty and need for rural development, its 114-home Deer Park project started in 2007 with purchase of 20 acres. Ground was broken in 2011, and now 26 homes are done. Four more homes, which will be built during the 2016 Blitz Build in June, will complete the first phase.

A homeowners association will make decisions about the community. Neighbors within the community volunteer to help each other with their sweat equity.

Phase Two is under way, and sewers, electrical connections, roads and sidewalks are being put in.

Families in the program are able to select the exterior color, counter top color, gas or electric range and even a shed.

In Deer Park, a Vietnamese family moved in during June and faced language barriers to setting up utilities. A Habitat neighbor across the street was a Vietnam

veteran who knew a little Vietnamese. He talked with the utility company and Habitat.

"This is how people come together to be good neighbors," Michelle said. "Habitat helps people build homes and gives them tools to build the community."

The north-south freeway will ease commuting. Commuting costs will be offset as families pay no more than 30 percent of their monthly income towards their mortgage. The average monthly mortgage payment is \$450.

• Neighborhood Revitalization practices integrate empowerment components to engage families as neighbors.

"It's not about Habitat building a neighborhood, but about residents creating their own neighborhood and gaining tools to advocate for themselves," Michelle said.

Habitat's focus is on building neighborhoods or communities, such as those near Felts Field, at North Pratt, at Greenfield Estates or at Liberty View. A five-plex and two duplexes are near Boone and Madelia.

Neighborhood Revitalization also does rehabs and repairs in the core of Spokane, where six homes are being worked on.

"In the core of Spokane, Habitat is not building new construction because land is not available or affordable," Michelle said. "Building houses to our standards would increase property taxes."

• Habitat is an anchor organization in THEZONE Partnership Network through its Project Restoration Program, which is concerned about education, health and economic growth, as well as housing. The partnership will rehab or repair vacant homes in Northeast Spokane, making them safe, decent and affordable for low-to-moderate income families.

Habitat's Zone Project Restoration, which launched in January, will transform communities through Promise Zone funding.

• Habitat-Spokane's Veteran Repair Initiatives help veterans make their homes accessible by building ramps, widening doors, and doing minor to major repairs, such as roofing, rewiring and energy efficiency.

"Many congregations are involved in these projects, but we can always use more," she said.

Others who help are businesses, corporations and civic groups that use a build as an opportunity for employees to develop leadership and build teamwork.

Qualified applicants in the homeownership program commit to 500 hours of "sweat equity." They do 100 hours of work in the first six months and they qualify for land assignment. In addition to working on homes, they attend community fairs and workshops on budgeting, financial health and life skills. That period helps make sure families succeed.

"Habitat is not a quick fix program. It takes one-and-a-half to two years from entering into the partnership to home closing," said Michelle.

Habitat has nearly 40 families' working towards home ownership, with 10 to 14 homes under construction at a given time, with construction underway all year. It adds six families every quarter. Habitat builds for the size of a family. That could be from an individual to a family of nine or

more. About 30 percent are from the refugee community."

Michelle said there are 10,000 instances of volunteering each year—with many people repeating. Each day, there are seven to 50 volunteers, depending on the phase of construction, from pouring foundations to painting trim.

"It's amazing to see how many handprints are on each home. Many community volunteers help as families put in their 500 hours of sweat equity. By building their own homes, families know how they are built and can repair them," Michelle said.

Many groups book every year. Habitat builds all year, and needs more volunteers in the winter.

"Habitat is a ministry, an opportunity to build God's Kingdom on earth," said Michelle. "It rings for me to participate in a ministry that at its core is love. Habitat helps people put faith into action and is a great example for the community."

Michelle said her faith grows as she sees individuals and families grow once they are in their homes, and sees God at work through friendships with new neighbors.

"Successes take time," she said. "Often we are impatient and want resolution now. When we step back, we see God's plan at work."

For information, call 534-2552 or email michelle@habitat-spokane.org.

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We invite you to join us for reflection and contemplation.

West Central Episcopal Mission is a direct, 'hands-on' model of ministry

Continued from page 1

The former rectory, St. Lawrence House, is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to people in the West Central community for service referral, pastoral guidance, a home-like environment with heat and air conditioning, healthy snacks and social gatherings. In addition to being a safe place to come, it also provides a free laundry, library and showers.

The West Central Episcopal Mission is a specialized mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane.

In 2013, the diocese and the West Central community decided the Holy Trinity chapel and property should be dedicated to serve others through "a direct hands-on model in keeping with Jesus' message," said Kris, "rather than providing a more traditional model of worship."

The Diocese of Spokane provided 20 percent of the budget in 2015. This support will decrease over the next four years, making support from individuals, congregations and organizations more crucial, she said.

Kris came to Holy Trinity in 2007, three months after she began attending the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

After 20 years away from organized religion, she found the Episcopal Church was where she belonged.

When she walked into Holy Trinity Chapel, she knew it was where she was called to serve. She was ordained a deacon in 2011 and a priest in 2013.

"Many of our volunteers have been or are currently homeless. They find meaning in serving others," she said.

"We trust God enough that we do not try to fix people. We seek to be present and in relationship with people, loving them as children of God," Kris said.

"Seeing people as 'projects' or 'clients' sets up a power differential that is not in keeping with the ethos of many religions," she pointed out.

"Many in the community, including our homeless members, are seekers and resonate with Jesus as an itinerant preacher who had no place to lay his head," Kris explained.

"We try, like Jesus, to meet people where they are without judgment," she said.

Instead of going to seminary, she chose local formation through online classes, local courses and periods of intensive study. She already had earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1988 and a master's in creative writing in 1999 from Eastern Washington University.

As director and priest in charge at the mission, she uses skills gained from being in partnership with her husband, as a small business owner, from teaching college English and from working with the March of Dimes. Her work blends entrepreneurship, coaching and pastoral care.

"West Central Spokane is a unique environment," said Holly Garrabrant, West Central resident, member of Holy Trinity since 1981 and the West Central Christian Mission assistant director.

"The historic neighborhood, including the Nettleton Addition, includes a broad range of classes, races and cultures," she said.



Kris Christensen

"Many families, including my own, have neighborhood roots that go back three to five generations," she said. "In the 1920s, it was a working class neighborhood. After World War II, it began an economic decline from which it has not recovered."

"West Central's many generations embrace and treasure the neighborhood's diversity and cohesiveness across socio-economic boundaries so they have stayed and welcome new neighbors," said Holly, who has an interdisciplinary studies degree in art history and religious studies, psychology and fine art.

Volunteers include some low-income West Central residents, as well as people from outside the neighborhood.

Kris said there are at least 30 homeless camps in West Central Spokane because of the displacement of people as the City of Spokane seeks to beautify the downtown corridor.

The city's annual homeless count may have missed many of the people in these camps, "because few know their locations and fewer realize that the homeless population has not decreased as economic pressures throughout the U.S. have increased," she said.

The everyday challenges of West Central require specialized knowledge of the community, Kris said.

"The mission's goal is not to deny the struggles but to lift others into a place where they can discover their own light," Kris said.

"My goal is to keep people alive, so that I don't have to preside at funerals for members of our community from preventable deaths," she said.

"The first step is to provide people with a place for authentic family-by-choice connections that replace less healthy connections and offer them hope," she said.

The West Central Episcopal Mission partners with Project Hope, which teaches leadership development, agricultural skills and entrepreneurship to at-risk youth. Six months a year, youth use the mission property for outdoor activities, skills development and meal services.

Holly is amazed by changes in youth after one year with Project Hope.

"Children who were in trouble last year for vandalism or petty theft now volunteer at Dinner Table and assist elderly neighbors. Five are now on their schools' honor roll," she said.

The ecumenical partners support the West Central Episcopal Mission community and its work.

They include Salem and All Saints Lutheran; St. John's Cathedral, St. David's and St. Stephen's Episcopal, and St. Joseph's Catholic and West Central Life churches in Spokane; All Saints' Episcopal in Richland, Holy Trinity Episcopal in Grangeville and Grace Episcopal in Dayton. Their support is both through financial donations and through volunteer teams.

Other key partners and supporters are Bishop James Waggoner, Jr., his wife, Gloria, and Steve Dodds, director of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane Foundation.

Another key partnership is collaboration with All Saints Lutheran and the Spokane Community Mental Health Chaplaincy, which matches trained companions with individuals diagnosed with mental

illness. Richard Sola, who works with the Rev. Alan Eschenbacher

of All Saints, is chair of West Central Episcopal Ministry's Executive Advisory Committee.

"Through the Mental Health Chaplaincy, we offer relational support, because poverty and mental illness intersect. People need mercy, a sense of belonging and meaning," said Kris.

Along with considering traditional measures of success like employment or housing, West Central Episcopal Mission considers "a lateral exchange of equal and just relationships across socio-economic classes" an important measure of success.

That's critical to its goals of strengthening community and providing tangible hope, she explained.

The West Central Episcopal Mission will offer training for people interested in volunteering from 6 to 8 p.m., Mondays, March 14 to April 18.

For information, call 326-6471, email kriscc@spokanediocese.org or visit westcentralmission.org.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

The Spokane Conservation District (SCD) will conduct a write-in candidate election on Tuesday, March 8, 2016, to elect one Supervisor for a voluntary three-year term.

Polls will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the SCD office at 210 N. Havana St. Interested persons should contact Erica Johnson @ 535-7274 immediately for more information. All SCD programs and services are offered without discrimination.

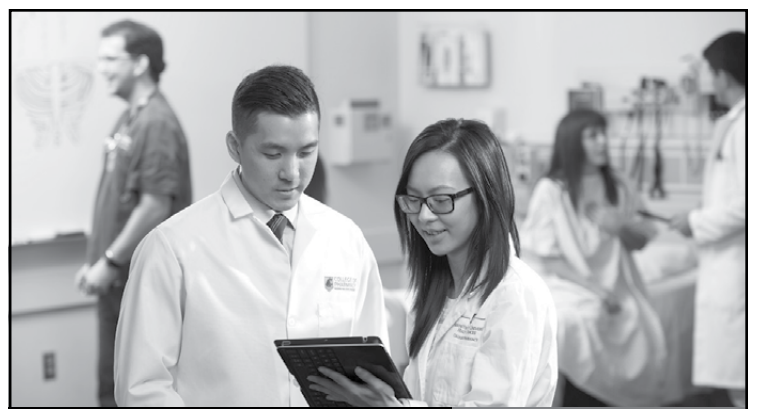
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'Eyes on the Prize' covers past witness for civil rights, a call for today

Watching the Public Broadcasting 14-hour documentary series, "Eyes on the Prize" and several other Black History Month specials has reminded me of much that happened during my formative years in the struggle for racial justice and human rights. It's also a reminder of how much more we still have to do.

The series follows the civil rights movement from 1954 to 1985: the Montgomery bus boycott in 1954, the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the efforts to desegregate schools, the rise of black power in hearts and streets.

The historical footage brings back memories of the suffering from discrimination and segregation, and of nonviolent lunch counter sit-ins, of the fire hoses and dogs turned on those who protested nonviolently for freedom and equality.

I remembered the mood of the nation turning. I remember consciences being awakened and informed, stirring us to act

and speak in our own settings.

The production and other programs also informed me of some things I had not known, because so much was happening.

One documentary reported on 17 students who sought to integrate their high school in Norfolk, Va. The resulting shutdown of all public schools there for several years had impact on the education of these students. Years later, they said it was worth it because students today are in integrated schools.

Another told of being in tears at the inauguration of Barack Obama, the first African-American President. As tears flowed down her cheeks, she was amazed to see tears on the cheeks of white people beside her. She had not realized how much white people cared and were also involved in working for racial equality, even putting their lives on the line to help bring it about.

The civil rights movement and prog-

ress involved individual acts of courage, states-rights vs. federal authority clashes, the power of mass demonstrations, the involvement of northerners and students, the involvement of clergy and other people of faith. It took many years and laws to desegregate schools, water fountains, buses, housing and all other aspects of life.

There's still work to do to desegregate minds. Despite the backlash of white supremacy, many stretched their hearts and minds to advocate and be in solidarity.

There is still need to challenge prejudice, bigotry and hatred. In the midst of the overt white supremacist rhetoric of some political candidates, it's clear the struggle continues.

Racism is behind much of today's political, economic and social polarity.

"Eyes on the Prize" is a tool congregations could use in adult education classes to educate people about the struggle for civil rights and the ongoing call to people

of faith to step out of their comfort zones and risk their lives.

- We need people to be informed about the past work for civil rights so people have the hope and courage they need to persist.

- We need to share in the ongoing efforts to overcome the new faces of segregation and inequality.

- We need to assure access to living-wage jobs and quality education for everyone.

- We need right now to end voter suppression and restore the Voting Rights Act.

- We need to promote criminal justice reforms to address use of force, racial imbalance in prisons and *much* more.

- We need to end poverty, assure decent, affordable housing and health care for all.

- We need to overcome the racial disparities of these and many more issues.

We must let our faith inspire us to continue to pursue racial equality and justice.

Mary Stamp - Editor

Prayers & Reflections

Sounding Board

Letters to the Editor

Area faith leaders offer prayers and theological reflections for advocacy

Excerpts from prayers and theological reflections offered at Eastern Washington Legislative Conference:

So you're in a Lutheran Church (St. Mark's) this morning and in this place the language of "vocation" has a particular meaning, a meaning I hope we make more of as we come up on 2017 and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Luther revitalized the language of vocation during the years of the Reformation, insisting that all the baptized had a vocation, a calling, not just those whose calling took them into the priesthood or a religious order.

The word vocation derives from the Latin *vocatio* and the Greek *kaleo*, a verb, "to call." The word *ecclesiology*, the study of the church and its structures, comes from *kaleo* and *klesis*. The church is, in its linguistic base, "the called out ones."

That's you and that's me.

So an invocation, that is, *in-vocatio* is an appeal for you, yes you, in particular, to be present here, now, in your calling. That is, first as a child of God, and second, as a child of God gifted and skilled in particular ways that will be unique in the Body of Christ, where all of the gifts, from the least to those which might be said to be more valuable, have deep and abiding worth. You matter here and in an invocation you are "called out" to bring your gift in concert with others.

In an invocation the Holy Spirit calls you, calls upon you in your particularity, to be here now, and to offer your gifts, so that the Body is whole.

First, let me acknowledge that we gather on the aboriginal land of our brothers and sisters of the Spokane Tribe and we give thanks for their stewardship of this great land.

So we say, and so we pray:

God, we give thanks to you for your presence now, in us, in each of us.

We ask that your Holy Spirit would arouse and gift with urgency the various charisms among us.

We ask for the ability to speak, to know when we are leader because of our gifts, and when we are followers because of another's gifts. We ask for the gift of listening, and not just listening, but listening with gratitude and expectation.

We are full of gratitude this day, that there is a place for each of us, and that your Body is made whole because of each of us, tuned and working together, not necessarily in agreement, but strangely and wonderfully made, to create your Body for the common good, for the good of all.

Now call us to the day.

Stiffen our spines.

Engorge our hearts with courage.

Give us graceful humility.

Call us to the work of peace-making, justice-making, and hope for the world in the realm of public-policy discernment.

Make us graceful companions for one another and please bless our work together, Amen.

**Bishop Martin Wells
Eastern Washington Idaho Synod
(with two congregations in Wyoming)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

In theological reflections on Pope Francis' pronouncement on "Hope, Grace and Mercy, and mentioning "Laudato Si" on the environment, Bishop William Skylstad said, "Jesus is the face of God's mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." He then cited scriptures about forgiveness and love, healing the broken and binding wounds.

"We live in a wounded world with much brokenness. The church is like a field hospital for broken people where mercy endures forever," he said. "Mercy reveals God's mystery.

"God looks into the eyes of our brothers and sisters, not with self-righteousness and judgment, but with mercy," said Bishop Skylstad, saying that the polarity in the political scene now is reflected sometimes even in the parishes.

"We need to break the cycle of polarity," he said.

Pope Francis has said he, like everyone else, is a sinner and is being redeemed.

"We are all working through our own brokenness and limitations," the bishop continued.

"Mercy is foundational. It makes love tangible and visible. The longest road is the 18 inches from the head to the heart. Mercy can be embedded in our attitudes and in our congregations," he said.

"Without mercy, life is sterile. Mercy gives us energy and hopefulness," Bishop Skylstad said. "It awakens us to new life."

He described mercy as a demanding, rich and challenging way of life.

"Laudato Si connects us, giving us a lens into how to look at the world, and connect to God, ourselves, our neighbors, the world and God's created reality," he said.

On the practical level, Christians are to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit prisoners and bury the dead.

"We need to instruct the ignorant and

continue to form ourselves," he said.

"While we need to admonish people for the sin of racism, we are to accompany people and walk with them, not demonize them," he added.

"It's a challenge to live mercy, but it can transform our lives in the world," he said.

**Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad
Catholic Diocese of Spokane**

Advocated presented priorities on the legislative agendas of the Washington State Catholic Conference (WSSC) and the Faith Action Network (FAN) of Washington.

WSSC priorities are the budget, Catholic schools, children and families, criminal justice, economic justice, environment, health care, housing, life issues, aging and people with disabilities.

FAN's agenda includes reducing wealth inequality; fully funding Health and Human Services, mental health programs and public education; dismantling the culture of violence; protecting housing and preventing homelessness, and a sustainable environment.

The budget was affected by the cost of wildfires, more children in school, higher caseloads in Medicaid and home care, the court requiring full funding of schools, detention of people suffering mental illness, and Initiative 1366 requiring a one percent decrease in the state's sales tax unless the legislature sends voters a constitutional amendment requiring a two-thirds vote to approve new taxes.

"The WSSC supports funding safety net programs decimated by legislation and the recession," Donna Christensen said, adding that Washington has the most regressive tax system of any state.

Both the WSSC and FAN seek to block cuts in housing, essential needs and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). They seek to maintain the Housing Trust Fund. In health care, there is need for more Medicare providers.

There is a Toxic Free Kids bill and a bill to abolish the death penalty.

Paul Benz said FAN is working to reform the state's deadly force statute.

Both urged participants to educate those in congregations on legislation and to contact legislators by phone, email or letter; to submit letters to the editor and to take part in legislative forums and civic events, speaking as people of faith.

After their presentation, Linda Haydock, SNJM, of the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center, said it takes 10 minutes twice a month to click on advocacy alert actions and write letters, even to meet with

legislators.

She suggested congregations hold election forums.

**Donna Christensen, WSSC
The Rev. Paul Benz, FAN**

Episcopal Bishop Jim Waggoner Jr., then called participants to hear the invocation, the call for mercy, the call for action, the ideas from workshops and the need to network.

"Listen, learn, share and act, equipped and encouraged," he said. "Be prepared to go into the world as participants, people of action."

Citing Hopi Elder Parker Palmer, the bishop invited people to create community, be good to each other and not look outside themselves for a leader: "We are the ones we have been waiting for."

He also quoted an Episcopal bumper sticker saying: "Love God, love neighbors and change the world."

Inland District United Methodist Superintendent Dale Cockrum closed with the thought that "God loves us as we are, but loves us too much to leave us that way."

"We do not need to change the world alone, but as we find support, create community in the city, state and world to reflect mercy and compassion."

Local organizers of the conference include The Fig Tree and Catholic Charities of Spokane. For information, call 535-1813 or 358-4273.

Letters to the editor

Keep up the good work. I enjoy your positive energy and inclusiveness.

Janis Minford - Spokane

Great contribution to ecumenicity and harmonious human relations.

Mary Margaret Pruitt - Seattle

The Bahai Community has always been appreciative of the Fig Tree and the hard work involved in the production of this very utilitarian informational tool. Please be assured of our continued support for your beneficial efforts on behalf of the Faith Communities of Spokane.

**David Gregory
Baha'i Community**

I loved this: "Faith calls us to rise up out of the swamps of life and be God's family.

Thanks for The Fig Tree, for your great work and for continuing to give me material for your devotions, workshops and for my more conservative friends.

Margie Fiedler - Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp - Kalispel

Women's Day event planned

At the 2016 International Women's Day, Loretta Ross will speak on women's issues, racism and human rights as part of Spokane's event from 4 to 8 p.m., Saturday, March 19, at The Riverside Place, 1100 W. Riverside Ave.

"International Women's Day is a global celebration of women and girls," said Tiffany Harms, event coordinator. "The day has fostered community and progress among women around the world for more than a hundred years."

Loretta is co-founder and national coordinator of the Sister-Song Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, a network of women of color in the reproductive justice movement.

The event includes an interactive art experience and a community resource fair.

For information, call 464-9874 or email tiffany.harms@ppgwni.org.

Winter Waters honors bishop

Winter Waters 2016 will present its Watershed Hero Award to Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad and members of the Columbia River Pastoral Letter team that set an ethics foundation for dialogue on Columbia River concerns.

The event is from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Friday, March 4, at the Patsy Clark Mansion, 2208 W. 2nd Ave.

The letter was published 15 years ago as a catalyst for discussion to resolve the complex issues of the Columbia River Watershed and "to effect a spiritual, social and ecological transformation of the watershed."

After eight years of review, the United States and Canada are renegotiating the Columbia River Treaty, said John Osborn of the Sierra Club Upper Columbia River Group, which sponsors the event with the Center for Environmental Law and Policy.

The pastoral letter is a unique international document signed by the Catholic bishops within the international watershed area. It is based on Catholic teaching of caring for God's creation.

It is a basis for the ongoing conference series "One River, Ethics Matter." Modeled after South Africa's "Truth and Reconciliation Process," the series focuses on impacts of dam-building on Columbia Basin tribes and First Nations, and the river.

Conferences were held at Gonzaga University in 2014, and the University of Portland in 2015. The next one is March 14 at Boise State University.

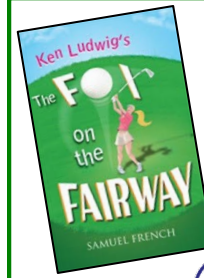
For information, call 939-1290 or email john@waterplanet.ws.

Calendar of Events

- Mar 4**
 - **Mariachi Divas Concert** with Mariachi Las Aguilas of Eastern Washington University and Mariachi Huenachi of Wenatchee High School, Lincoln Center, 1316 N. Lincoln, 7:30 p.m., 800-325-7327
 - **"Limitless!" Women's Conference**, Southside Christian Center, 2934 E. 27th Ave., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 535-2301 or southsidespokane.org
 - **Winter Waters**, Patsy Clark Mansion, 2208 W. 2nd, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., 939-1290, john@waterplanet.ws
- Mar 4, 5, 6 11, 12**
 - **"Enchanted April,"** Whitworth's spring theatre production, Cowles Auditorium, Whitworth University, 7:30, Sunday, 2:30 p.m., 777-3707, whitworth.edu/theatertickets
- Mar 8**
 - **Unity in the Community Committee Meeting**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., www.nwunity.org
 - **Smart Hiring Community Forum**, Council Chambers, 6 p.m., Imoore@pjals.org
- Mar 10**
 - **Transitional Living Sock Hop**, 3128 N. Hemlock, 1 p.m., 328-6702, rsvp@help4women.org
 - **Chase Youth Awards**, Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox, 1001 W. Sprague Ave., 6 p.m., 624-1200
- Mar 11**
 - **"Reflecting Diversity,"** Benefit Lunch for The Fig Tree, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 11:30 a.m. buffet begins, noon to 1 p.m. program, 535-1813, info@thefigtree.org, www.thefigtree.org
- Mar 12**
 - **St. Patrick's Day Parade**, downtown Spokane, noon, kim@friendlysonsofpatrick.com
- Mar 13**
 - **75th Annual Kosher Dinner**, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., 747-3304, spokanetbs.org
- Mar 14-15**
 - **Author Sara Bessey lectures:** New Community Church on Monday 6:30 p.m., or Hixon Union Building, Whitworth on Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., 777-3267, Idamico@whitworth.edu
- Mar 15**
 - **YWCA's Little Black Dress**, La Rive Spa, Northern Quest Casino, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
 - **PFLAG Spokane**, Bethany Presbyterian, 2607 S. Ray, 6:30 p.m., spokane.pflag.org
- Mar 16**
 - **"Reflecting Diversity,"** Benefit Breakfast for The Fig Tree, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 7 a.m. buffet begins, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. program, 535-1813, info@thefigtree.org.
 - **Coffee and Contemplation**, Craig Goodwin, "Spiritual Practices for the Sick and Tired, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd, 9 to 11 a.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net
 - **"Little Women: The Musical,"** benefit for Partnering for Progress, Spokane Civic Theater, 1020 N. Howard St., 6:15 p.m., 720-8494, partneringforprogress.org/civic-theatre-benefit.html
- Mar 17**
 - **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
 - **Reading with Amy Leach**, author of Things That Are, Hixon, Whitworth University, 7 p.m., 777-3253
- Mar 19**
 - **International Women's Day Symposium**, Loretta Ross, Riverside Place, 1100 W. Riverside Ave., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Mar 21**
 - **NAACP Membership Meeting**, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m., spokanenaacp@gmail.com
- Mar 21-23**
 - **Women's Holy Week Retreat** with Yakima Bishop Emeritus Carlos Sevilla, SJ, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Mar 22**
 - **Washington State University Women's Recognition and Symposium**, Nan Stoops of Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, M.G. Carey Senior Ballroom WSU in Pullman, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., 509-335-6845, women.wsu.edu
- Mar 23**
 - **Police Accountability Coalition**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Mar 24-26**
 - **Holy Week Men's Retreat** with Bishop Emeritus Sevilla, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Mar 28**
 - **The International Debate** with Irish Champions, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University, 7 p.m., 777-4739
- Mar 29**
 - **"On the Art of Teaching Christian Theology,"** Bruner-Welch professor of theology at Whitworth University, Adam Neder, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-3391
- Mar 30**
 - **Girl Scouts Community Leadership Luncheon**, Convention Center Centennial Ballroom, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., noon
- Mar 31**
 - **Diversity Monologues**, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 7 to 9 p.m.
- Apr 1-30**
 - **Spokane Gives Month**, volunteerspokane.org
- Apr 2**
 - **YWCA Spring Fling Brunch and Auction**, Anthony's Restaurant, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 789-9307
- Apr 6**
 - **Fig Tree Mailing and Delivery**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m., 535-1813
- Apr 7**
 - **Fig Tree Board**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1 p.m., 535-1813

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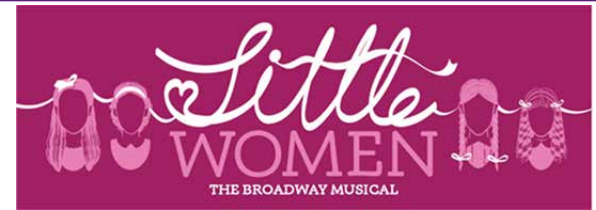
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75th annual Kosher Dinner is a way the Jewish community shares traditions

When they moved to Spokane in 1970, Julie and Jeff Morris became active in Temple Beth Shalom and began helping with its annual Kosher Dinner.

This year is the 75th Kosher Dinner and their 46th.

The dinner will be served from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday, March 13, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave.

Members of the Jewish community of all ages participate in the many phases of planning, promoting, preparing and serving the Kosher Dinner.

The first year, Jeff and Julie supervised youth in charge of the cloakroom. There was a 10-inch snowfall, so people had umbrellas, boots and coats.

"Once we worked on it, we were hooked," said Julie. "We see people we may not see all year. Doing a small job adds to the whole."

About 150 people from Temple Beth Shalom's 200 families—about 1,000 people—help set up, work in the kitchen, greet, entertain, serve, pour beverages, wrap silver, set tables, plate the food, refill relish trays, clear tables, wash dishes or sell homemade baked goods in the del bar.

Before the dinner, about 900 pounds of brisket, knishes and cake mix arrive from New York.

Julie likes that the Kosher Dinner teaches people about Judaism.



Jeff and Julie Morris share the joy of working at Kosher Dinners over the years

"It's a wonderful outreach to the community," she said. "It started as a fundraiser. That's part of it, but secondary now."

"We are proud to open our doors to the non-Jewish community," said Jeff, noting that some people have been coming for more than 30 years.

"In the early years it started small, but now serves more than 2,000 people," Julie said. "The kitchen crew starts 10 days before, cooking the brisket, slicing it and then reheating it."

The Morrises moved from Seattle to Spokane for Jeff to practice law. He had worked for the King County Prosecutors Office after graduating from the University

of Washington (UW) School of Law in 1967. He retired from his Spokane practice two years ago.

Julie, who graduated from the UW in 1965 in English literature and speech, taught high school in Seattle. When they moved to Spokane, she focused on raising their three sons and being involved in the community. For 35 years, she has been involved in Hadassah, which has two hospitals in Israel.

Before Jeff and Julie came, Temple Emanu-El of the Reform tradition and Congregation Keneseth Israel of the Conservative tradition merged in 1967. In 1969, they built the current Temple Beth Shalom (TBS) building.

Temple Emanu-El started the

Kosher Dinner in 1941, said Julie.

Keneseth Israel had started ordering kosher meat for their synagogue about 1920, and during the 1940s provided a kosher dinner to local Jewish servicemen. The synagogues had their own dinners for 26 years until they merged.

Congregation Emanu-El (CEE) came into existence in 1994. Now CEE, which previously met at the Unitarian Universalist Church, collaborates with and meets at TBS, where Rabbi Tamar Malino

presently serves both synagogues.

Over the years, TBS has reached out to bring the Jewish community together, so it is multi-generational, said Jeff.

In their homes, the Morrises and most TBS families do not keep strictly kosher. Several TBS families do, however, and Temple Beth Shalom maintains a strictly kosher kitchen.

"It's part of being affiliated with United Synagogue," said Jeff.

The Morrises enjoy the traditional meal of brisket, potato knishes, challah bread and apricot kuchen, because "it's about who and what we are," Julie said.

While Congregation Emanu-El and Temple Beth Shalom are separate congregations, they have joint adult education, Sunday school and Hebrew school, as well as some joint services, including parts of their High Holy Days services. CEE has its own religious service Friday evenings and one Saturday morning a month. TBS services are Friday evenings and Saturday mornings.

"We have been sharing a rabbi for two years, so collaboration makes sense," Julie said.

For information, call 747-3304.

Couple plan interfaith visit to Israel in May

Julie and Jeff Morris involve members of the Jewish and non-Jewish communities in their commitment to support the Hadassah Hospitals in Israel.

From May 18 to June 1 this year, Julie, who is on the national Hadassah Board, and Jeff will lead an interfaith visit to Israel. It will be Julie's 30th trip and Jeff's seventh.

For them, the highlight is for both the Jewish and non-Jewish travelers to observe how different religions respect each other.

On the tour, they will visit the hospital in Ein Karem, a suburb of Jerusalem, and one in East Jerusalem, which serves many of the Arab population. Hadassah also has a community college and youth villages.

"Hadassah also does humanitarian work, sending medical teams after earthquakes and other disasters, and providing outreach in Africa and other areas," she said.

Julie added that Hadassah is on the forefront in medical research.

Recently there were breakthroughs in stem cell research for ALS and in macular degeneration.

"I take pride in taking people to the Hadassah hospitals to see Arab Muslims, Jews and foreigners all treated in the same place," she said. "Doctors may be treating a terrorist who set off a bomb next to a victim of the bomb attack. There are no politics in that connection."

"Often Arab and Israeli parents of children with the same disease and in the same room become close friends," Julie said. "As they discuss their children's progress, they break down barriers."

Similarly, interfaith tour groups build relationships as they visit different religious sites. By traveling together, they find similarities in their faith and respect for sites important to each other's faiths.

"I always have hope when I go

and see that people just want to live and enjoy life," said Julie, frustrated that news focuses on violence and does not help people understand the problems. "We meet Palestinian and Israeli families. All want good lives. They don't want war any more."

"Few know that Israelis provide humanitarian aid to Gaza every day," she said. "The media show the violence of both sides, but do not show how people help each other."

Julie said Hadassah formed 102 years ago, well before the modern State of Israel, which came into existence in 1948.

"All who go hope for peace," she said.

For information, call 747-3304 or email julie@morrisandmorris.com.

2015-16
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