

34TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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FEATURES 40+ EVENTS



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

# Travel abroad opens students' eyes

By Mary Stamp

For many years, Lori Jacobsen's East Valley High School European history and western civilization students have written essays and created art on the Holocaust for the annual Yom Hashoah commemoration at Temple Beth Shalom.

She has also invited Holocaust survivors to speak in her classes and taken students on nearly 20 summer trips to visit places where history happened in Europe—history from following Michelangelo's footsteps to following the footsteps of people to concentration camps.

When students visit concentration camps on trips, Lori sees that their grief is real. Their disbelief at seeing the inhumanity that took place is also real.

"I hope students see it as their responsibility to make sure such inhumanity does not happen again, to work with their families and friends, so people do not hate, fear and make the enemy images, as people did before the Holocaust.

As students debrief from trips, they often say visiting a concentration camp and hearing from survivors were the most meaningful moments.

The Yom Hashoah essay and art contests are also a way to make



Lori Jacobsen's display of photos from 2016 travels inspires others

history real and challenge students to think about the Holocaust in light of today.

Because Lori's name was on so many entries in the essay and art contests, she was invited two years ago to serve on the planning committee to share her perspectives as a teacher in framing themes and evaluating submissions.

The 2018 prompt is on hate speech.

"My students are not artists, but many chose to create art about it. Many show a wall. They connect to the idea of hate speech. It's part of the world they live in," Lori said.

"Hate speech has consequences. The role models in today's contentious environment are not good," she said. "People feel free to express themselves and make ugly comments more than I ever heard even five years ago.

It doesn't matter what side we are on," she said. "We need to be thoughtful and stop hate speech. It's worth students taking time to reflect on it and create something.

Lori has promoted the contest with other EVHS teachers.

The 2017 first- and second-place winners were from EVHS, and they had winners in 2016, too.

*Continued on page 4*

## Faith leaders encourage listening to help overcome divisions, hate

A panel of bishops and church leaders related the 2018 Eastern Washington Legislative theme, "Framing Faithful Discourse for the Common Good," to bridge the anxiety prevalent in today's political, religious and economic climate.

Elise DeGooyer, co-director of the Faith Action Network, moderated their discussion on how to inspire and mobilize people to live faithfully and influence public policy, even as the government leaders seem paralyzed by divisions and hate.

The Rev. Gregg Sealey, super-

intendent of the Inland District of the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Church, said society is in a time of cultural reactivity.

"As leaders of faith communities, we should cultivate a different way of being in the world but not of it, so we are less reactive" he said. "We have an opportunity to break the herd mentality and lead the culture a new way.

"If we focus on the Divine, we do not blame or need quick fixes. How do we step away from the culture and engage our faith so we will be different in the world?" Gregg asked.

Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane said, "We need to take first things first and look at our own part.

"It's easy to blame others, but the Scriptures say that where our heart is, there is where our treasure is," he said, telling of the Hispanic bishop of the San Bernardino Diocese describing himself as a "recovering racist."

"Looking at where my heart is demands humility, listening, relationship with the Lord and one another in the human family," Bill said. "Racism in the heart is unhealthy physically and spiritually, and works against the common good. We need to challenge what we see in each other's hearts.

"For many, the first lenses to look at life are politics, economics and profit," he said. "Where is the Lord? I need to look at all life through the lens of faith. I need to see people of every culture and creed as brothers and sisters. We need to respond to everyone who is hungry, thirsty or naked."

The Right Rev. Gretchen Re-  
*Continued on page 6*

## Diocese and Synod are now sharing office space

As of March 1, the Eastern Washington Idaho (EWAID) Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) moved into shared space with the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane at 245 E. 13th Ave. The Synod office has been at All Saints Lutheran Church at 314 S. Spruce since the ELCA's inception in 1988.

"I give thanks for the partnership our Synod has had with the people of All Saints. I am proud that their dedication to reaching out to the community of Browne's Addition necessitated our move," said Bishop Kristen Kuempel. "I look forward to a closer working relationship with our closest ecumenical partners, the Episcopalian Church, Bishop Gretchen Rehberg and her team.

"This is a challenging time to be the church. We can no longer afford to isolate ourselves behind denominational labels. I hope by cooperating at the synodical and diocesan level, we will set an example for congregations to follow," said Kristen.

Gretchen, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, said the Synod and Diocese will both have offices at Paulson House.

"As we share space, I am excited about the possibility for closer conversation and working with our full-communion partner by bringing the bishops and administrative staff into the same building," she said. "We also have opportunity now for worship together.

"What is important is the move to a deeper relationship that can lead us into directions and ministries we don't yet see," she said.

The synod includes 88 congregations with nearly 29,000 members within a span of 769 miles from the Cascades to Jackson, Wyo. There are eight office staff with three of them full-time.

The diocese includes 36 congregations, two specialized missions and two bishops chapels from the Cascades to the Montana border, from Canada to the Oregon border and Salmon River in Idaho on the south.

For information, call 838-9871 (ELCA) or 624-3191 (Episcopal).

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### Around the World

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#### Mission and evangelism conference is in Tanzania

Bishop Fredrick Shoo, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), is author of a "Welcome" in the Handbook for the upcoming World Council of Churches Conference on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). He is featured in an interview that comments on issues in the conference that will require deliberations to lead toward a transforming discipleship. The upcoming CWME is March 8 to 13 in Arusha, Tanzania.

#### Q: What do you most wish conference participants will ponder during their stay in Arusha?

**Bishop Shoo:** We will welcome all of the participants to worship, reflect, deliberate and celebrate God's mission at this crucial moment in the world, when humanity still continues to violate God's creation, justice and peace. As the world enters the fourth industrial revolution, we need to ponder these two questions: Where is the place of spirituality? How will our missional pilgrimage address this era?

#### Q: Can you speak a bit about the conference objectives?

**Bishop Shoo:** There are four basic aspects of this conference: its missional, ecumenical, African and youthful character. In its deliberations, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism strongly expressed the need for the conference to reflect missiologically—in an African and ecumenical context—on the signs of the times in our world today. This is a world in which God is active and present, bringing completion to God's creation.

Looking at the content of the conference, I see crucial issues that will need our bold deliberations. I hope that we shall be vigilant in addressing global issues that threaten life in the world today.

#### Q: What does a transforming discipleship call us to do?

**Bishop Shoo:** A transforming discipleship calls us to leave our comfort zones and be ready to carry the cross. Fear and selfish interests can be serious obstacles to a transforming discipleship. Jesus, the master of the cross and resurrection, teaches us what it means to be transforming disciples, as he says: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it" (Mark 8:34-35).

#### Q: In what ways will the conference reflect the African context?

**Bishop Shoo:** Our Local Host Committee and the Conference Preparatory Committee of the All Africa Conference of Churches have worked together to ensure the conference embraces the African context. A joint process by the Conference Planning Committee and ELCT staff was crucial in preparing ground for the practical realization of this conference.

Tanzania is a country with great and beautiful flora and fauna. There is much to see, hear, taste, touch and learn.

*The Eastern Washington Idaho Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is partners with the neighboring Ulanga Kilombero Synod in Tanzania, and visitors have gone through Arusha.*

## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

### Fig Tree Benefits are March 9 and 14

The Fig Tree continues to recruit hosts, while hosts for 50 tables continue inviting guests to the Benefit Lunch, at 11:15 a.m., Friday, March 9, and Benefit Breakfast, at 7:15 a.m., Wednesday, March 14, in Gonzaga University's Cataldo Hall.

Speakers will address how The Fig Tree newspaper and Resource Directory reflect the 2018 theme, "Including Everyone: We Need Each Other."

Addressing the theme at the Benefit Lunch will be Sima Thorpe, executive director of The Arc of Spokane; Hershel Zellman, retired physician who helps plan Temple Beth Shalom's annual Yom Hashoah; Christina Kamkosi, program coordinator of Empire Health Foundation, which helped underwrite the Resource Directory in 2017, and James Casper, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of North Idaho.

Speakers at the breakfast are Mark Kinney of Thrivent, a Fig Tree writer, advertiser and sponsor; Kristine Hoover, director of Gonzaga University's Institute of Hate Studies; LaRae Wiley, principal at Spokane's Salish School, and Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane.

For information, call 535-1813 or 535-4112, or email mary@thefigtree.org.

### Holden announces spring 'Art in the Cascades'

"Arts in the Cascades" returns to Holden Village, the Lutheran renewal center in the North Cascades, from Friday to Monday, March 23 to 26, exploring the relationship of art, the environment and the spiritual life.

Participants will consider what it means to be in the wilderness, engage with the natural world, channel their spiritual and creative energies, and express themselves through the medium of watercolor.

Kristen Gilje, a renowned artist and former artist-in-residence at Holden, will lead the immer-

sion retreat with Holden spiritual director Heather Swanson and village naturalist Travis Houle.

There will be hiking and studio time for up to 20 artists with some drawing and watercolor painting experience.

"We will use art to deepen our observation and our interior emotional responses to invite the sacred into our painting time. Whether describing mountains and fog, snow, close-ups of wildflowers, or tree bark and rocks, we will use the unique properties of watercolor to explore the essence of what we observe and remem-

ber," Kristen said. "We will use simple drawing and watercolor techniques to pull it all together on paper."

Holden Village executive directors and artists Peg Carlson-Hoffman and Chuck Hoffman believe "the arts can help give visual language to the unseen and form new ideas, new ways of being together and new ways to inhabit the future."

"The arts harbor prophetic voices of our time," they said.

For information, email chuck.director@holdenvillage.org or visit holdenvillage.org/arts/arts/.

### Groups hold 'Loaves and Fishes' to educate

Earth Ministry and Save Our Wild Salmon are co-sponsoring Loaves and Fishes from noon to 2 p.m., Sunday, March 4, at Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway in Spokane.

The salmon-and-bread lunch offers a taste of Eastern Washington bounty while participants hear from farmers, commercial fishermen, Northwest tribal members and faith leaders about challenges facing the region's wild fish, Native people and food producers.

The speakers—Salem pastor Liv Larson Andrews, wheat farmer Bryan Jones, commercial fisherman Ron Richards and

Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment director Elliot Moffat—say the burden of recovering endangered salmon falls on everyone, but directly affects those at either end of the Northwest's food production: farmers and fishermen.

"As people of faith, we are to respect the Earth and love our neighbors. We believe the interests of fishing communities, local farmers, native tribes and wild salmon can be served simultaneously. A dialogue on salmon and dams, barges and irrigation, and treaty rights and recreation is a step toward a more equitable, neighborly region," said Leda

Zakarison, a Justice Leadership Program intern with the United Church of Christ at Earth Ministry.

"During Lent, we reach out across our communities to find connection in our shared journey," said Leda, who grew up in Pullman. "The gathering will bring together people with varied viewpoints and celebrate the life-giving waterways and farmlands that we steward together."

Conversation will focus on the health of the Columbia, Snake and Spokane River watersheds and communities that depend on them.

For information, email leda@earthministry.org.

### Unitarians hold dance-concert

When the Unitarian Universalist Church Board decided to be active in the Sanctuary movement, they realized there was a need for funds to help immigrant families with legal assistance.

They raised \$1,500 one Sunday morning in an offering, said Doug Huigen, who is helping organize the effort.

The church then appealed to the

Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund, and received a grant to underwrite a concert-dance event of Latin music and make direct grants available to immigrant families through nonprofit organizations.

The dance-concert will be held at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 14, at the Southside Community Center, 3151 E. 27th Ave.

Musicians are from The Milonga salsa and Mariachi Arriba Jalisco band that plays music for the St. Joseph's Catholic Church's Spanish Mass.

For information, call 951-8023.

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## Chorale Coeur d'Alene performs concerts

Chorale Coeur d'Alene, originally the "Northwest Sacred Music Chorale," was founded in 2001 by Coeur d'Alene church musician and pianist Cynthia Marlette to bring the great sacred choral music of the ages to audiences in the Inland Northwest.

Over the years the now 75-member chorale has held to that commitment.

Now in its 17th season, the chorale has performed choral masterpieces such as Mendelssohn's Elijah, Brahms' German Requiem and Bach's Magnificat, as well as spirituals, hymns and songs of praise.

Stan McDaniel, a church musician for 50 years who has led St. John's Cathedral's bell choir since 2014, became artistic director and conductor of Chorale Coeur d'Alene, which is not affiliated

with any church, in 2015. He oversaw changing its name and broadening its repertoire.

"REQUIEM!" this year's Chorale Coeur d'Alene spring concert will feature Gabriel Fauré's late 19th century "Requiem in D Minor" and Dan Forrest's 2014 "Requiem for the Living."

A 22-piece orchestra will accompany the chorale and soloists for the concert at 7 p.m., Friday, March 23, and at 3 p.m., Saturday, March 24, at Trinity Lutheran Church, 812 N. 5th St. in Coeur d'Alene. The third performance will be at 3 p.m., Sunday, April 8, in Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox, 1001 W. Sprague in Spokane.

Stan said the Fauré and Forrest presentations differ from traditional Requiems by Mozart and Verdi. The "Dies irae" ("Day of wrath") text is replaced with

scriptural or liturgical texts stressing humanity's frailty and God's unending grace. The promise of redemption and eternal life inspire colorful imagery in sound from both composers.

"Fauré moves from the emotional 'Liberate me'—'Save me, Lord, from the prospect of eternal death'—to one of the most memorable visions of paradise in music, 'In paradisum,'" said Stan, who has led St. John Cathedral's Chorale and bell program since 2014.

Forrest cites imagery from the Hubble telescope as the inspiration for his setting of the "Sanctus," he said.

The chorale rehearses Tuesday evenings at Peace Lutheran Church at 8134 N. Meyer Rd. in Post Falls. For information, call 208-446-2333 or visit [ccda.com](http://ccda.com) or [foxtheaterspokane.com](http://foxtheaterspokane.com).

## Organizations gather items for homeless women

From Super Bowl parties to doctor's offices, board rooms to congregations, people across the Inland Empire have been coming together to support women experiencing homelessness.

More than 40 "Mardi Bras Parties" occurred across the city to collect items that increase the dignity of women experiencing homelessness. The items included new bras and underwear, tampons and pads, bus passes and cash donations, said Mary Reinbold, development director of Transitions.

Hope House, a program of Volunteers of America, and Women's Hearth, a program of Transitions, are the recipients of the donations.

"It's incredible to see how the community came together to support and surround women experiencing homelessness," said Fawn Schott, president and CEO of Volunteers of America.

Cheney United Methodist, Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ and St. Clare Ecumenical Catholic churches were among the partici-

pating faith communities.

Hope House has 36 shelter beds. Women receive food, a hot shower, clean and dry clothing, hygiene items, a warm bed, case management and resources.

The Hearth creates a safe space for women who have experienced trauma and homelessness, offering welcome, respect and community. It offers access to showers, phones, hygiene items and a weekly food bank.

For information, call 328-6702 or visit [mardibras.org](http://mardibras.org).

## Yakima congregations learn of anti-Muslim 'industry'

Twelve congregations and faith groups are sponsoring "Faith Over Fear: Standing with Our Muslim Neighbors in Yakima" at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, March 22, at Central Lutheran Church, 1604 W. Yakima Ave. in Yakima.

Aneelah Afzali, founder and director of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound's American Muslim Empowerment Network and Lutheran pastor Terry Kylo of Neighbors in Faith tell of "the anti-Muslim industry." Each year, anti-Muslim groups spend more than \$30 million to make people fear Islam and their Muslim neighbors, threatening the nation and civil liberties, Terry said.

"We don't have to live a divided, fearful future. We can build a future based on our shared values and vision for America," he said.

Aneelah, a Muslim, interfaith advocate and community leader, was named Seattle's 2017 Most Influential "Bridge Builder" by Seattle Met Magazine.

Terry, who is authorized by the Episcopal and Lutheran churches in Western Washington to do this

work, received the Faith Action Network Interfaith Leadership Award in 2016.

Sponsors include the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod of the ELCA, Faith Action Network, Yakima Association of Faith Communities, St. Paul's Cathedral, Church and Society Committee of Central Lutheran Church, Islamic

Center of Yakima, Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima, Unity Spiritual Life Center of Yakima, Between the Ridges and Englewood Christian Church.

The "Faith Over Fear Road Show" began in Western Washington and now seeks venues in Central and Eastern Washington.

For information, email [terry@neighborsinfaith.org](mailto:terry@neighborsinfaith.org).

### ENGAGING FATHERHOOD Conference and Resource Fair

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**More information: Facebook Page of Dads Committee of Spokane 455-4966 • [calden@ccspokane.org](mailto:calden@ccspokane.org)**

For International Women's Day March 8

## Congolese pastor is speaker

Pastor Marie Mwangi, a Methodist minister from the Congo who immigrated to Spokane in 2016 from a refugee camp in Uganda, will speak at an International Women's Day Celebration beginning at 6 p.m., Thursday, March 8, at Fowler United Methodist Church, 3928 N. Howard St.

Marie, her husband Mayani Mugomwela and their six children ages six to 20, came to Spokane in August 2016. Their son, Patrick, came to the U.S. earlier. While in the refugee camp, she was ordained as a Methodist minister. Her family was able to leave the refugee camp early and move to Spokane because their daughter Christol had severe heart problems.

She will preach in Swahili with an English interpreter.

After the service, there will be a potluck and a freewill offering that will go to World Relief, which helped resettle Marie's family in Spokane. Her family has been coming to Fowler UMC since November 2016, along with three Central African families who were attending Central United Methodist Church before it closed.

She preaches and teaches for the African community at Sunday evening worship and a prayer service Saturday evenings. Some of that group worship with Fowler and some at Covenant UMC.

For information, call 325-3242 or 434-6285 and email [chaplainsue@hotmail.com](mailto:chaplainsue@hotmail.com).

## Spokane Gives offers options

For the fifth year, Spokane Gives, a month-long community initiative in April, shines the spotlight on the need for giving year-round by matching volunteer passion to needs, said Brian Coddingham of the City of Spokane.

There are volunteer opportunities during April for many interests. People can become involved by visiting [VolunteerSpokane.org](http://VolunteerSpokane.org), which provides information about volunteer options. Last April, 17,863 volunteers gave 104,687 hours of service, an average of nearly six hours per volunteer.

"Using the federal equivalent of \$24.14/volunteer hour, the total is more than \$2.5 million of economic impact volunteers gave to the community," said Brian.

Since its inception, more than 51,000 Spokane Gives volunteers have given more than \$6.5 million in volunteer impact in Spokane.

"The generosity and compassion of volunteers are why Spokane was the only city recognized by the Friends of National Service organization last year," he said.

"United Way of Spokane County and other partners have given their time, talents and treasures the past five years to make Spokane the most compassionate U.S. community," he added.

For information, email [bcoddingham@spokanecity.org](mailto:bcoddingham@spokanecity.org) or visit [volunteerspokane.org](http://volunteerspokane.org).



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### Taizé prayer service

Thursdays from 4:15 to 5 PM chapel at The Ministry Institute.

For more information contact Shonna Bartlett at 313-5765 or [bartletts@gonzaga.edu](mailto:bartletts@gonzaga.edu).

No charge for Taizé: **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

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# High school teacher introduces students to cultures, Holocaust survivors

*Continued from page 1*

Lori recently told her class that when she was a little girl, the bad guys in the movies were the Soviets. Now the bad guys in movies are Muslims, she said.

When she met students in the former Soviet Union, they said bad guys in their movies were Americans. Her students were amazed.

**"We are products** of our media," she said. "Most students do not watch TV news or read newspapers but follow news online.

"It's frightening that students today do not read or listen to news unless it's short," she said. "We educate students to pay attention to lessons of history, so they see the relationship."

**Lori lived in California** and moved several times before settling in Spokane where she graduated from high school. She earned a bachelor's in social studies and political science from EWU in 1985 and a master's in social sciences in 1988 with a thesis on how education systems in other countries treat history.

Since 1990, she has taught AP European history, AP and regular world history, history through the arts and—as an adjunct professor with Eastern Washington University (EWU)—a college-level western civilization class for college credit.

Lori first went overseas to Hong Kong when she was 21 after winning a Dick Clark \$25,000 Pyramid game show. She has since traveled around the world with and without students, mostly in

Europe, the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—when it was under communism and since.

**She has led two- to five-week** educational student trips, some including home stays, for 40 to 50 students and teachers from Spokane area high schools, and some parents. Over the years, she has taken hundreds of students to places they study in class.

"It's an extraordinary teaching opportunity to retrace Michelangelo's steps and contributions, or to go to Baku, Azerbaijan, where teens have never seen white American teens," she said. "I see students' jaws drop when they enter a cathedral."

Lori makes arrangements through a tour company, requesting opportunities to interact with local people. Part of a trip is about people and part about history.

**"We focus on society,** economics and politics, so we look at the culture," Lori said. "We are all human beings occupying the same planet, so we focus on similarities rather than differences. There are universals in every culture.

"We look at different religions and cultures to see what all value, such as family. Each has some kind of social organization. Some have nuclear families, and some extended families. In some, because of economics, 35-year-old children live with parents.

"Now that's happening more in the U.S.," Lori said. "We look at how economic, political and social challenges in other countries mirror those challenges here."

In Italy recently, students saw

growing racism against immigrants from North Africa and Syria, and saw similarities to U.S. attitudes about Hispanics and Muslims.

"In both cases, people left their homelands because of harsh economic and political situations," Lori said.

**She believes travel helps** students understand the U.S. position in the world, and helps them develop empathy for people and appreciate their own country.

Some later study abroad. Some try to speak Spanish or French they learn at school.

"Students go from being wide-eyed to being able to discuss meaty issues," she said.

This year, Lori has been teaching a class on history through arts. Students learn about the "rape of Europe" when Hitler stole and destroyed art, especially art created by Jewish people. Some was saved and some destroyed.

**For many years, Lori has** taught about the Holocaust, not only in the trips but also by bringing survivors, such as Carla Peperzak and Corander Koorkanian, and other speakers to class. Students hear different survivors' experiences.

"It's important to introduce them to survivors because the number of survivors is dwindling. They need to hear stories from people before they are only on video," she said.

**Some of the universal tenets** of the world's major religions are:

- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

- Honor your parents
- Honor and respect life.

Attentive to commonalities, she sees many "wonderful aspects" in each religion.

As part of history, Lori teaches about world religions, even including science as a way some understand the relationship of human beings to the world.

"My goal is to break down stereotypes to promote tolerance and acceptance," said Lori.

**She also takes students** on field trips in Spokane to religious

and cultural festivals, like the Greek Festival, the Kosher Dinner and Yom Hashoah, and encourages them to go to performances at St. John's Cathedral to see the architecture and art.

In addition, she connects students with refugees through World Relief.

"I want students to see people as people, and feel connected as I do with the many traditions and cultures around us," she said.

For information, call 710-7321 or email [jacobsenl@evsd.org](mailto:jacobsenl@evsd.org).

## Group plans Poor People's Campaign

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane and local faith leaders are planning local events to coincide with efforts across the nation as part of the Poor People's Campaign from April 4, the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. through June 21. Officially the campaign of 40 days of action starts on

Mothers Day, Sunday, May 14, with a focus on Children and Women in Poverty.

More than 50 people are involved in planning in Spokane. The next meeting is at 6 p.m., Thursday, March 15, at Bethany Presbyterian, 2607 S. Ray St.

For information, call 838-7870 or 408-593-9556.

## March concerts include baroque, soul music

The Spokane Symphony's second Baroque chamber concert, "Venice – the Magical City," will be presented at 7 p.m., Saturday, March 17, at Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, and at 3 p.m., Sunday, March 18, at Spokane Valley Church of the Nazarene, 15515 E. 20th Ave.

The music, which was written for both sacred and secular settings by Venetian composers, including Albinoni and Vivaldi, will be conducted by Eckart Preu with Mateusz Wolski on violin and the Spokane Symphony Choral.

**The Fox is presenting** the "Tower of Power 50th Anniversary 2018" performance at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 3, at the Martin Woldson Theater, 1001 W.

Sprague Ave.

Tower of Power combines rhythm-and-blues classics, funk-soul and jazz for intergenerational music lovers.

In 1968, Emilio Castillo, whose parents are Mexican and Greek, founded the band with baritone sax player Stephen "Doc" Kupka.

In an interview in the February issue of The Black Lens in Spokane, Emilio said music gives his life meaning. After years of involvement with drugs, alcohol and sex, when he was sober in 1988, he sought a spiritual path, and started to pray. Now the band, which includes Christians and Muslims, prays together.

Emilio said his life has changed profoundly, so when the band is not touring, he's at home with his

wife and children, and active in their local church.

The 10-member Tower of Power band includes saxophones, bass, drums, keyboards, trumpets, guitar and vocalists.

For information, call 624-1200 or visit [TicketsWest.com](http://TicketsWest.com).

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# Muslim community leaders lend insights to mobilize people to act

To talk to people with different beliefs can be difficult, said Admir Rasic, a Muslim refugee from Bosnia, who co-led the opening prayer and reflections for the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference (EWLC) on Jan. 27.

To demonstrate the difficulty, he read the poem "Refugees," by Brian Folsom, twice—reversing some wording to reinterpret it.

"They have no need of our help so do not tell me these haggard faces would belong to you if life had dealt a different hand." He later it read as: "If life had dealt a different hand, these haggard faces would belong to you or me."

Admir listed stereotypes of refugees some use to say they are not welcome, and said, "We should see people for who they are," and not only welcome them, but also share "our food, our homes and our country."

One version said not to see



**Rasheed Bellamy and Admir Rasic of the Muslim community in Spokane open conference with reflections on these times.**

refugees and immigrants as "just like us," but the other said to see them as "just like us."

While one version concluded not to think that the world can be looked at in another way, the other

concluded that "the world can be looked at in another way."

Admir said the system too often leaves the vulnerable behind.

"I pray we can put aside our disagreements, using reason and

thoughtful dialogue," he said.

Rasheed Bellamy, technology supervisor with Spokane Public Schools and a member of the Muslim community, read from the Koran in Arabic and then in English: "O Mankind, I created you from a single pair of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may get to know one another. Surely the noblest of you in the sights of Allah is he who is righteous. Allah is the all knowledge and the all aware."

Rasheed prayed tht these verses would ring true not only during the conference but also in the ears of leaders locally, nationally and globally.

"I pray that our different traditions, cultures, races and beliefs do not continue to rip us apart, but are used as a glue to hold us together as the human race. We must stop judging others who do

not look like or act like we do," he said, noting that the traditions present in the conference have examples of harmonious societies, such as the prophet Mohammed setting up the city of Medina as a place where Jews, Christians and Muslims could live safely and have equal rights.

He prayed that the Creator of Heavens and Earth would "continue to guide us, shower us with blessings of hope and inclusiveness to overshadow hate with love and understanding, and guide us in our discussions that we may organize and mobilize our communities to take a stand in the political arena, in a social discourse or just in our families for the betterment of all human beings," Rasheed said.

**The full poem and other content from the EWLC will be in video online at thefigtree.org related to stories.**

# Regional church leader's closing prayer is a call to courage and action

Courtney Stange-Tregear began closing remarks at the Jan. 27 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference telling of her role to help congregations think in new ways about vitality in her work as minister of church vitality with the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ

"We tend to think that education, evangelism and formation are on one side, and advocacy, social justice and lobbying are something separate," she said, "but there is no vitality without community connection and being relevant in the community.

"There is no way we can evangelize if we do not know with whom we are talking," she said.

Courtney helped participants debrief what they learned to help them look at where they were going.

She invited them to reflect on what value drives them and their communities, and how that value compels them to act.

She also encouraged participants to think about potential partners—people and organizations—to work with to accomplish their goals.

"It's great to come together to talk about justice, and to see that others care about justice and want their convictions, love and faith to change the world," Courtney said.

Through a prayer, she then spoke of people gathering from different places, economies, races and histories despite the "myth" that says "institutions are dead, community is lost, neighborhoods are no more and traditional families are threatened."

"This myth also says our in-



**Courtney Stange-Tregear is minister of church vitality for the regional United Church of Christ.**

dependence is our most valuable possession, might makes right, some worked hard and made it on our own, that bootstraps have pulled anyone up. This myth persists," she said.

Courtney said the participants gathered, not as independent, autonomous individuals, but as people formed by faith communities, institutions, families and neighbors.

"It is not our independence but our interdependence that matters most," she said. "Our interdependence changes lives, challenges the status quo and brings God's will on earth as it is in heaven."

She pointed out that the "myth" is not a myth, but is a "strategy" to keep people separate, keep people down, keep people afraid and keep people fighting each other instead of fighting injustice.

"It is a strategy to use power over us, so we can't recognize

our side we will change things," Courtney said, "but we know that community, love and connection change the world.

"So we pray we will go forth, not just with the courage of our convictions but also with the power of our communities," she said.

"We will dismantle white supremacy, loosen the bonds of poverty, house the homeless, care for this planet, de-escalate our habitual state of violence and, with #MeToo fresh on our lips to challenge sexual assault and harassment, we will also smash the patriarchy.

"We pray we will have the courage to listen to one another, to believe the truth of what we hear, especially from the voices of those who are different from us," she continued.

"We pray we can reject the strategy of independence and claim proudly our interdependence, because we are in this together. We've been called from all our different places, called together for just such a time as this," Courtney concluded.

For information, call 206-725-8383 or email courtney@pncucc.org.

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## Panel share ideas on how to 'change the direction of the wind' in public policy

Continued from page 1

hberg, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, asked, "How do we engage in discourse for the common good? How do we take our inner work to do that?"

She prefers looking for the common good—"moving from strength to strength" as Psalm 84 says—rather than judging what some are doing wrong: "How do we work with different approaches, acknowledging and understanding differences, not dismissing or demonizing them?"

She quoted poet Maya Angelou: "I did then what I knew best. When I knew better, I did better."

**Gretchen said that when** "we recognize we are doing wrong, we need to know we can learn and grow. We need to assume that the possibility to grow is there.

"Instead of leaving people where they are, we need to assume the best of people and believe they can grow. That way we can allow for healthy discourse of hearing and valuing each other," Gretchen said.

**The Rev. Sandy Messick**, executive minister of the Northwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), told of a former member of the Westboro Baptist group, which she said "hates everyone." From the age of five, she "protested everyone," believing what her church leaders believed. She went to protest after protest and held sign after sign, until she found Twitter.

Sandy said some responded to her hateful messages with hate, but some started to dialogue with her and engage in conversation with her. She defended the Scriptures and faith she knew. Then some Twitter friends came to protests to meet her in person.

A Jewish woman gave her home-baked goods, while the young woman held a sign against Jews. She entered in dialogue, felt heard and then was able to hear.



Elise DeGooyer, Bishop Gretchen Rehberg, the Rev. Sandy Messick, Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad, the Rev. Gregg Sealey and the Rev. Walter Kendricks participated in the panel.

She left the church and lived with people who had listened to her.

**Sandy listed four things** those who engaged her did:

- Instead of assuming bad intent, they assumed it's possible to have honest engagement, because honest, faithful people can disagree without being enemies.

- They asked honest, curious questions and let her ask questions.

- They stayed calm in the face of provocation.

- They stated what they believe, rather than arguing.

**The Rev. Walter Kendricks**, pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church and president of the Spokane Ministers' Fellowship, sees life through a spiritual lens. His career with an airline took him around the world, but it did not satisfy him. When he started to study theology, he concluded that God either is or is not, and God's Word, God's revelation, is either true or is not.

"As we explore the common good, we realize that from one man, God created all nations," Walter said. "The key is faith and faith conversations with those

who are not like me. I don't want to take anything from anyone when I ask for equal treatment, justice and my rights as a citizen, but it angers some."

**Walter knows "the common good"** means "I can't be all I'm called to be until I make sure you are all you are called to be. The common good calls us out of our comfort zone," he said. "I want you to be all you can be, so you allow me to be all I can be."

Walter opened discussion pointing out that society is as it is because the church has let God's Word be muddled. Instead of society reflecting the church, the church reflects society.

He said preachers should make people uncomfortable.

**Bill agreed that** a good sermon should not make people comfortable.

**Gretchen said Roman Emperor Constantine's conversion** was a missed opportunity then, but can be seen today as a tragic mistake. It's where Christians became part of culture and lost themselves.

"It's not just true of the church today, but also for the church of all decades. With his conver-

sion, Christians accepted that a follower of Jesus Christ could be in the military and lend money. What difference did it make to follow Jesus? The church failed there," she said.

**Gregg said people need** to look at themselves rather than blame others for homelessness.

**Sandy said the leader** of the Poor People's Campaign, the Rev. William Barber, a Disciples pastor, speaks out of faith and quotes Scripture in a pastoral and political way.

"The campaign is Christian and interfaith. It calls Christians, Muslims, Jews and people of all faiths to speak out about immigration, refugees, poverty and hunger, because Jesus modeled that and because faith compels us to work for the common good and care for the least."

**"Education, formation and evangelism** are about the common good and caring for the least," said Bill. "When a bomb goes off in Kabul, it hurts me and has an impact on the common good."

**To a question** about people assuming they are at a point of scarcity, but God speaking of

abundance, Gretchen agreed most do not see their abundance. She spoke of a theology of "enough."

"We need to live into awareness that some will not have enough, if we do not share. Capitalism can be a religious system," she said.

Another asked why more than 50 percent of Evangelical Christians and non-Hispanic Catholics voted for the current President.

**Walter said, "God loves everyone—black, white, straight, gay, Democrat and Republican. Where is the disconnect?"**

**Bill said, "the church is not to be partisan, and we need to look at all as brothers and sisters."**

**Gregg, who sees an urban/rural split**, said after the election, he visited some communities and saw many Trump signs. At a church meeting, many seemed pleased with the result.

"In the current culture of Facebook, social media and friends, we surround ourselves with people who believe as we believe. At church meetings, we need to see the diversity of opinions, engage people in conversation, hear their concerns and build relationships."

**Sandy told of being at a meeting** in Washington, D.C. with people who had supported Clinton and were dumbfounded that she lost.

"They were in a bubble, believing everyone believed as they did. They did not engage with or listen to others. We need to listen and engage more," she said.

**Gretchen's cousin, who is a right-wing Republican in Congress**, sees her as liberal. She said they agree on fundamental desires about solving hunger, homelessness and crime, but disagree on how to do that, so they listen to each other.

**Bill said that often people** are concerned about which way the winds are blowing.

"Our role is to change the direction of the wind," he said.

For information, call 535-4112.

## Faith agency advocates give overview of priorities for 2018 legislation

At the recent Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, faith community advocates Donna Christianson with Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC) and Paul Benz, co-director of the Faith Action Network (FAN), gave an overview of priorities of their faith communities on issues before the State Legislature.

With the November 2017 election shifting the Democrats to the majority of the Washington Senate, Donna said there is more progress on some issues.

**The 2018 session began** Jan. 8 and ends March 8. The 2018 supplemental budget passed Jan. 18, Paul explained.

Two issues FAN and the WSCC support are funding K-12 education and mental health.

**To reduce poverty**, the FAN advocates funding the Civil Legal Aid Program, full restoration of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grant program, and the Breakfast After the Bell nutrition program for student health and readiness.

Its priorities are: 1) advocating for a more humane and equitable Washington; 2) promoting safe and just communities with criminal justice reforms, gun violence reduction, anti-human trafficking, health care reform and immigrant

reform; 3) protecting housing and preventing homelessness, and 4) sustaining Washington's environment.

**Donna, who has worked 18 years** in government relations and as a lobbyist with the WSCC, listed the state Catholic organization's priorities that include supporting religious liberty and life through abolishing the death penalty, requiring parental notification for abortions of minors and opposing mandating abortion coverage in health insurance.

Its education priorities are to improve school safety and fund child abuse prevention education.

**Its priorities for poverty**, family and restorative justice include:

- 1) approving funding for the Housing Trust Fund;

- 2) supporting "safety net" programs;

- 3) changing legal financial obligations for those convicted of a crime;

- 4) continuing the document recording fee to support homeless programs;

- 5) prohibiting discrimination based on a renter's source of income, and

- 6) ensuring legal counsel for youth.

**Donna reported** that Joe Sprague became the WSCC director after Sr. Sharon Park OP

retired in 2017.

**Both the WSCC and FAN** oppose legal financial obligations (LFOs) being added when people commit crimes. A bill would prevent accumulation of interest and fees, and make the priority restitution. The LFOs help create a debtor's prison.

**A bill on housing** would eliminate the document recording fee, a regressive tax structure.

Donna mentioned bills that challenge several practices of landlords, including denying renters based on the source of their income. Two bills would require a just cause for eviction and a cap on rent increases.

"Landlords may not discriminate against those struggling to pay for housing," Donna said. "A landlord mitigation fund is available so landlord can make repairs."

**Both supported** the bipartisan net neutrality bill that passed in response to the Federal Communications Commission overturning federal regulations in 2017.

They also support a bipartisan sexual assault protection bill.

**For safe and just communities**, FAN also advocates repealing the death penalty and supports juvenile justice sentencing reforms, gun responsibility legislation—such as limiting access to assault-

style weapons and prohibiting the sale of bumpstocks—and requiring law enforcement to have violence de-escalation and mental health training

**To protect housing** and prevent homelessness, FAN is working to pass zoning regulations for faith communities and local options for building and funding affordable housing.

Actions to sustain the state's environment include support for carbon pollution pricing bills, wa-

ter rights and the Pesticide Drift Notification Bill.

**FAN has an online bill tracker** to help people know how bills are progressing and what actions to take.

It also has issue fact sheets and an advocacy toolkit.

FAN networks with faith communities in geographic clusters.

For information, call 206-625-9790 or visit fanwa.org for FAN, or call 206-301-0556 and visit thewsc.org for the WSCC.

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# CEO for Lutheran Community Services reflects on career journey

After more than 27 years of working with Lutheran Community Services Northwest in Spokane, and a total of 47 years in social services, Dennis McGaughy is retiring as of March 15.

A retirement party for him is planned from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 14, in The McGinnity Room at 116 W. Pacific, Suite 100.

Dennis said the desire he sees in staff at LCS in Spokane to make a difference in people's lives reminds him of his youthful passion to make a difference and reduce human suffering.

**"We do front-line work for the church in society,"** he said. "Lutheran theology says God works through all people for good. Anyone can use their gifts to help others. We don't ask where people go to church.

"Our mission is to bring health, justice and hope, and the greatest of these is hope," he said. "We let people know they are not alone. We help them through a trauma. People need hope to move forward.

"There is much pain in the world, and people need resilience to work through that pain. 'I am with you' is part of the message of hope we bring," said Dennis, who has understood his work as a calling to serve God and humankind.

"I looked forward to coming to work each day and spending time face-to-face with people," he said. "Human life is valuable."

**Dennis, who grew up** Lutheran in Seattle, earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1969 at Washington State University. He worked in a residential center in Portland and married, and then spent two years working with the Lutheran Church as a social worker in Nome, Alaska, and three surrounding villages.

While there, he connected people to resources, started a 24-hour hotline and a home for temporary foster care for infants, and helped people with drug and alcohol abuse.

Then Dennis worked two years with Anchorage churches on social services, before studying at the University of Utah, where he earned a master's in social work in 1974.

**His next seven years were** with Lutheran Community Services (LCS) in Wilmer, Minn., until he learned that the Spokane LCS needed a district director.

Dennis served in that role until the last 20 months when he was chief operating officer for the eight Lutheran Community Services Northwest offices in Washington, Oregon and Idaho, each of which has unique programs based on area needs. Spokane focuses on mental health, trauma, therapeutic foster care, unaccompanied refugee minor foster care and wrap-around services.

Other offices may focus on aging, drug-and-alcohol treatment



Dennis McGaughy retires after 27 years.

or foster care.

**Heike Lake, the new** executive director, has been with LCS in Spokane for 22 years, working as associate director until she became district director 20 months ago.

"LCS in Spokane is a certified sexual assault center with programs for education and advocacy for sexual assault victims and survivors of family homicide. LCS advocates and counselors help sexual assault victims navigate the legal system and provide them with resources for healing.

**Advocacy with the legal system** helps victims achieve good legal outcomes. It requires persevering because the system can work slowly, said Dennis.

"We stay with people as long as they need us, and are there if they need to come back," he said. "We seek to move families from trauma, out of crisis and into stable lives."

For two years, he said, the unaccompanied refugee program has brought youth from refugee camps to Spokane as one of two LCS Northwest sites approved to care for unaccompanied minors. Half of the 25 refugee children here are in foster care and half in group homes.

Adult refugee resettlement is done in Portland, Seattle and Tacoma offices.

"In Spokane, we partner with World Relief, which resettles adults and families, not unaccompanied minors," Dennis said.

"We understand here that we

are part of a network of services, not an island. We collaborate with other agencies to bring resources to the community," he said.

**LCS also connects** with the YWCA on domestic violence; VOA and Transitions for homeless women and children; Providence Medical Center Emergency Room to connect chronic users with less costly care, and law enforcement to combat human trafficking.

"Our success comes from employing dedicated people, passionate about and committed to serving others," he said.

Many employees have been with LCS in Spokane for many years. In 1990, there were 35 employees. Now there are 100.

"We embrace our staff, not only for their contributions to the agency and those we serve, but also for their lives outside the agency," he said.

**Growth in recent years** has come from 1) the Affordable Care Act's coverage of mental health care, 2) a federal lawsuit, in which the state won wrap-around services for foster children, and 3) the #MeToo movement giving women courage to access LCS services.

Dennis said that over the years, LCS has learned what to do and what not to do with sexual assault and trauma victims.

"We know to believe victims, not blame them," he said. "We know long-term healing is aided by professional and legal help leading to tangible closure. Part

of healing is to maintain a safe environment.

Lutheran churches support the agency, as do individual donors, corporations, small businesses, volunteers and other faith organizations.

**"Our belief as Lutherans** is that we are called to serve others," said Dennis, who attends St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

His hope for the future is for more collaboration among agencies, ministries and the faith community in serving people.

**Dennis added that one legacy** he leaves LCS in Spokane is a unique fund raiser that grew out of his passion for road cycling.

He helped found the Eight Lakes Leg Aches Bike Ride benefit for LCS in 1999.

There were 17 riders the first year, 68 the second year and 150 the third year. Now there are 600 to 700 riders, with 100 of them raising \$200 to \$5,000 each in pledges. To date, the ride has raised about \$1 million total.

**"It has been a great career,"** Dennis commented. "I am a better person for what I have been able to give and for all I have received. So many people have journeyed with me and I am so grateful for all they have done for me and those we serve."

For information, call 747-8224.

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- On Track Academy (specialized learning for grades 11-12)
- Institute of Science and Technology at North Central (molecular biology immersion for grades 7-12)
- Spokane Virtual Learning (instructor-led online courses for grades K-12)
- NEWTECH Skill Center (career and technical training for grades 11-12)

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# Grants help learning communities address six ways to transform churches

Whitworth University semester study experiences with students and other travel since the late 1980s to Central America—mostly Nicaragua—convince Terry McGonigal, director of church engagement at Whitworth, of the need for Christians to be committed to living “the third way.”

That commitment began with Christians in the Roman Empire seeking ways to have impact on the world. They did it by caring for the poor—widows, orphans and foreigners.

“Christians took seriously being a new community and living ‘the third way’—different from other religions and the empire in ancient times,” Terry said. “We are applying lessons from the first century to 21st-century followers.”

Recently he invited Ali Noorani of the National Immigration Forum to speak and helped World Relief on a letter to Congress supporting a clean DACA act, signed by 70 faith leaders in the Spokane region.

**Whitworth knows the impact** on young people in the U.S. without legal status, because it’s “brutal on students, who are treated like pawns in the political process,” he said.

He also knows firsthand how U.S. policies destabilize Central America and lead to immigration.

Terry shared those experiences as part of discussing a \$1.5 million grant for Whitworth’s Office for Church Engagement (OCE) from Lilly Endowment Inc.’s “The Third Way: Called to Lives of Meaning and Purpose Initiative” and a nearly \$500,000 from Lilly’s “Sustaining the Vision, Expanding the Network” program.

**Under the first grant**, the OCE supports six learning communities—cohorts of pastors and lay leaders in partner churches—to address common challenges and find opportunities to serve.

They will consider six topics, which are about transformation through 1) worship, 2) intergenerational youth ministry, 3) gospel faithfulness in the city, 4) refugee care, 5) hospitality for refugees and immigrants, and 6) churches as reconciling communities.

The grant provides theological education and vocational action through the Whitworth Academy of Discipleship and the Whitworth Institute for Ministry, which is July 23 to 27 this year.

**The second grant allows** the OCE to sustain operations and expand two programs:

- The Summer Ministry Fellows program has sent 140 students in the past three summers with about 75 more going this summer to explore vocations by serving churches and parachurch organizations for 10 weeks.

- The Preaching and Teaching Academy, started for Presbyterian pastors and commissioned lay leaders, will expand to other denominations.

**The OCE is a resource** for 40 Northwest and West Coast churches and parachurch organizations.

Through various fall gatherings, World Relief has recruited 37 churches into the Hospitality Learning Community. In February, 27 churches attended the first training session at Whitworth.

“We are furthest on the road with hospitality for refugees and immigrants,” said Terry, who was campus pastor for 20 years



**Terry McGonigal nurtures lives of churches.**

and helped launch the OCE four years ago.

World Relief is training and identifying churches geographically near Spokane where World Relief has placed refugees. In Spokane, refugees are spread in different neighborhoods.

World Relief has resettled 10,000 refugees since starting in Spokane in the 1990s. Before that, refugees came after World War II, Vietnam and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

“**There has been hostility** to every immigrant group over the centuries as they settled in the U.S., but I go to the airport and welcome new immigrants and see local people greet people as their feet hit American soil for the first time. It’s amazing and inspiring,” he said. “Then we listen to their stories about why they came and goals for their lives in a nation that gives opportunities.”

“For the six priorities, Lilly wants us to support church efforts from 2018 to 2021. The OCE will grant \$700,000 from Lilly funds to ministries supporting new, innovative, creative endeavors and will offer stipends to people leading in the six areas for meetings, books, materials, hospitality and speakers,” Terry said.

The grant will also support the Whitworth Institute of Ministry, giving it the ability to offer \$200 scholarships for the \$350 registration. People will come to delve into one of the six topics for five days.

In addition to the Lilly grant support, a Murdock grant provided a \$3,000 stipend for 30 students each year to be involved with churches and ministry partners for the Summer Ministry Fellows program, shadowing a pastor or agency leader.

While four went to Scotland the first summer, students mostly go along the West Coast. For example, in San Diego, students worked at the Solana Beach Presbyterian Immigration Center to help immigrants becoming U.S. citizens.

Students learn what is happening in this institution that has been thinking creatively for 25 years, he said.

“‘Institution’ is not a bad word,” Terry said. “Institutions do creative ministries.”

**The Academy** of Christian Discipleship equips lay leaders in biblical study, theology and history. Over three years, 500 have been trained in cohorts—small groups of five or more. They meet at Whitworth in the fall, winter and spring.

A cohort at First Presbyterian in Missoula grew from 12 to 25 to 40 in three years, involving five churches.

Jerry Sittser, coordinator, films Whitworth faculty teaching and offers a supplemental guide, outline, questions to prompt discussion and exercises to apply to ministry contexts.

**The calling and vocation** grant embeds the themes in Whitworth

programs so students grow in commitment to Christ and explore their calling.

To support ministries, Whitworth helps churches gain biblical literacy through the Academy of Christian Discipleship. It ties scripture to ministry churches decide to do. It matches financial resources with people addressing needs a church sees.

**While the OCE is identifying** leaders, it is not launching all six areas this year, Terry said.

“We are not in a rush, but want to be intentional, so we use resources wisely. It’s just beginning, so interested churches can still contact us,” he said.

The OCE serves, supports and partners with churches and ministries as they discern how to be the church. It is a resource for visioning, planning and developing new forms of ministry to engage the rapidly changing culture.

“**It’s equipping people** to live faithfully in their churches and communities,” Terry said. “Living

for the common good is not easy in these times. There are pushes and pulls in the current climate of divide that has invaded our churches, so we must focus on being reconciling communities. Churches with divisions need help to reconcile intentionally.

“Since the election, rather than our first identity being following Jesus, it is where we stand on a topic or candidate,” Terry said. “Spirituality, economics and social justice interplay. In the divisions, we need to be allies on race, rather than following rhetoric and stereotypes of races.”

Recently 35 churches met to discuss “The Church as a Reconciling Community.”

“**How do we talk** as followers of Jesus about people so our language is not the same as the secular world? Early Christians had profound disagreements, but they built relationships,” said Terry.

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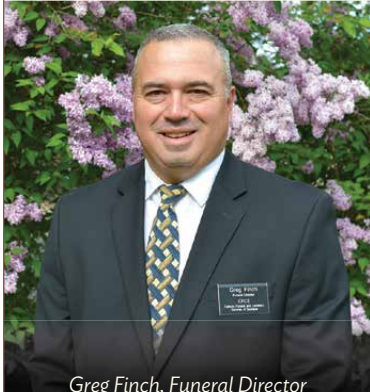
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# DADS Committee helps support fathers in their desire to be better parents

Having been a stay-at-home father for 15 years while his two children were growing, Carlos Alden now helps other fathers be better dads through his work for six years as the Fatherhood Project coordinator and counselor with Catholic Charities' Child-birth and Parenting Assistance (CAPA).

He leads a fathers' support group, teaches parenting classes and does counseling.

Soon after he started at CAPA, he joined the DADS Committee, a coalition of people from the Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Home Society, Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery, Office of Support Enforcement, health care professionals and other agencies.

**Service providers**, who realized there were few services for fathers, networked with father-friendly agencies to form the DADS Committee in 1993.

"Research shows fathers that if fathers are involved in a healthy way, children do better," Carlos said. "We need to train professionals and look at barriers. Fathers need to be involved with DSHS child foster care as much as mothers."

Ten years ago, the DADS Committee decided to do an Engaging Fatherhood Conference.

**In 2018, the annual Engaging Fatherhood Conference and Resource Fair** will be from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Friday, March 30, in the Lair Student Center at Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene St.

The event includes a keynote speaker, Clint Edwards, author of the "No Idea What I'm Doing" parenting blog.

Workshops include fathering success, digital device safety, the importance of dads, co-parenting issues, whole-brain parenting and reconnecting with older children after recovery. Workshops for social service professionals are on creating fatherhood groups and delivering father-friendly services.

Clint, who saw his father infrequently after he left when Clint was nine, knows it's challenging for fathers who do not have a model, but says if fathers know and love their children, they can be good fathers.

Carlos said 40 to 100 caregivers, fathers, mothers, social workers and counselors usually attend.

At CAPA, the Fatherhood Project helps men be good fathers. It has a facilitated group that meets once a week for fathers of children who are five years or younger, and referred by a social worker, the court or a friend.



Carlos Alden connects fathers to resources.

Catholic Charities has five volunteer father mentors to help with groups of two to eight fathers. Some come to a group one or two times. Others come for one to three years.

"It's a place to share the joys and struggles of being a father," Carlos said.

"People come to CAPA to grow as parents. They work hard to be parents. The system sometimes can prevent fathers from being with their kids. Dads are hungry to be with their children," he said.

**Carlos' roots were** in Buffalo, N.Y. He spent three years at the Rochester Institute of Technology and studied at the School of Visual Arts and Painting in New York City, in 1976. He graduated in 1979 from San Francisco State University with a master's in psychology in 1983.

From 1986 to 1987, he and his wife Janine taught English in China.

Then they lived in California's Central Valley of California, where they had good jobs. He was an outpatient counselor with an agency there. They found that his license as a licensed marriage and family counselor would transfer to Washington. They decided to move to Spokane in 1992.

Janine began teaching English as a Second Language to Japanese students at Eastern Washington University and retired in August.

**When they moved** to Spokane, Carlos decided to be a stay-at-home father for their children, Zac and Michaela, were two and four years old. They are now 26 and

29 years old.

"I liked doing art and music with them. I play banjo, guitar and mandolin. Zac, now an aspiring musician in three bands in Portland, learned electric guitar and base. Michaela studied piano for eight years," he said. "I painted, drew and did crafts with them, sharing from my art education," said Carlos.

"When they went to school, I picked them up and volunteered at school. I volunteered at church, at KPBX and with a band," he said.

"I wanted my children to see I was there for them and in school with them. Most of their friends' fathers were the breadwinners," he said.

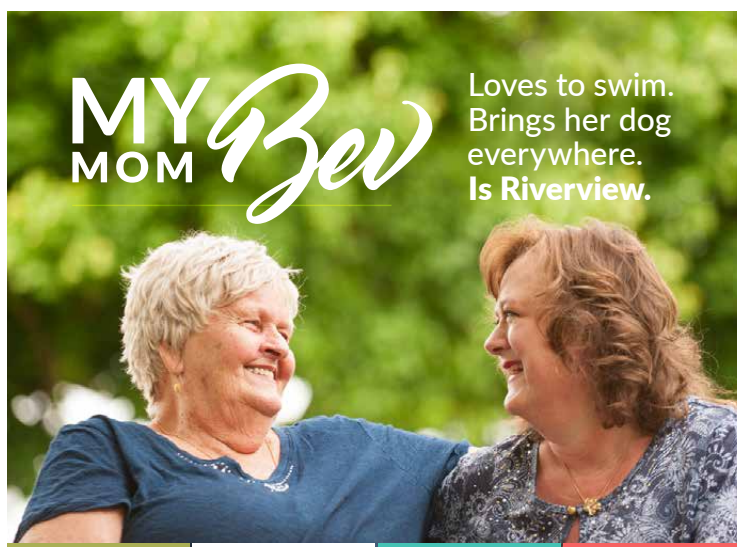
"I learned how to be a good parent without slipping into being a professional counselor," he said.

Carlos advises fathers to look at their long-term goals, accept their mistakes and simply be involved, so they know their children.

"Recently when I visited Zac, we were on a panel about fathers. He was aware that things were different because I was around," he said. "I was the carpool person, the one who shopped, bought food and cooked. My role challenged expectations of fathers."

Carlos said he experienced what many mothers experience, feeling alone and lacking adult company.

"My eyes were open to what mothers go through to maintain their sanity, and their fears of losing their college education and the goals they had before they were parents," he said.



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He kept up with continuing education when their children went to middle school and high school so he could return to the work force.

**Carlos grew up** Episcopal and tried different churches as a young man. He and Janine began attending Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ when they first came to Spokane. He was involved with the music program there.

"Where I work now, I feel I'm serving people who may be encountering challenges or lacking resources. Some come to CAPA after riding two buses for 40 minutes, carrying a baby and bringing a toddler."

"Parenting classes help parents be the parents they want to be, do things to change," Carlos said.

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# Florida students speak out and step into an ongoing journey for action

Praise for the students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., who are turning their anger and grief into action. They rode 400 miles in three buses to Tallahassee to ask state legislators to turn around attitudes on guns and ban AR-15 assault weapons like the one that killed 17 classmates and teachers on Feb. 14.

The pro-gun legislators turned them down, but there will be school walkouts, marches and meetings to turn around the thinking that keeps taking lives of children beginning their lives. After shootings in the past, the lines to dismiss such action is that "it's too soon" or "don't politicize it."

**Students bring new energy** to join parents and survivors of 208 school shootings, including Sandy Hook Elementary School at Newtown, Conn., in 2012, and Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999.

How long will media aid momentum to ban assault-style weapons and adopt other measures to prevent such carnage in halls of learning, malls, churches, streets and homes? What are vested interests and news practices that may mean they will go on to the next shocking news story after saturation with this story? Where are reports on Puerto Rico, Florida and Texas hurricane recovery efforts?

**Where will people gain strength** to continue for the long haul, as was required to end slavery, win suffrage for women or achieve civil rights—and there are still efforts to backtrack on those issues.

A friend on Facebook noted that there weren't such school shootings 20 years ago. His point was it must be something other than the guns—media violence, angry males, mental illness—but overlooked that 20 years ago an assault weapons ban was in place—1994 until it expired in 2003.

**How much media attention** was needed to keep pressure alive on the health impact of smoking, on the need for civil rights and equality, on the carnage and senselessness of the Vietnam War? What is the tilting point that drives escalation of momentum to the point of change?

Perhaps those supporting assault weapons need to prove those guns are not intended to kill. For example, why are some targets human-shaped?

**The momentum to control guns** would be slashed by self-control so there are no more school shootings, no more need for shooting drills that terrorize kids, no more sales to underage kids or people with criminal backgrounds or mental health struggles.

The momentum can be slashed by cutting down ever-mounting levels of media violence for entertainment in movies, games and online. Will we limit putting ideas of violence in people's minds?

**The right to free speech is limited.** We can't yell, "Fire!" in a crowded theater. Driving cars is limited by licenses, registration and tests. What are similar logical limits to second amendment "gun rights"?

Will advocates of an assault weapon ban accept less just to "win something"?

**Media are covering many proposals:** ban bump stocks, ban assault weapons, arm teachers, repeal the second Amendment, use metal detectors, background checks, age limits, mental health criteria, ban all guns in schools, don't name shooters, uplift heroes, focus on victims' trauma, value the right to life over gun "rights," students say "never again," gun buy-outs, vote out those accepting NRA campaign funds, join school walkouts, let the Center for Disease Control research gun violence as a public health issue, sign Gabby Gifford's pledge to flip Congress, and more.

**Action may take a long time.** Momentum to abolish the death penalty in Washington is building. A bill has passed the Senate and was in the House. Oregon had a death penalty in 1864. It was abolished in 1914 and reinstated in 1920, both by popular vote. My mother worked to abolish it in 1964, and it was reinstated in 1978, both by popular vote. Oregon's Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional in 1981. Voters reinstated it in 1984. The governor declared a moratorium on executions in 2011.

That's just to say that after a "win" on a policy, momentum and education must continue. We see that as necessary with efforts now to undo civil rights and allow hate speech. Momentum is needed for the long haul, even forever, to educate new generations. We can never assume something is won forever because there are often built-in sunsets for some laws to expire.

**What's needed are:** perseverance, per-

sistence, prevention, education, dialogue, ongoing momentum and readiness to keep on keeping on.

Elements include tracking and making unpopular/shameful legislators' support from the NRA, and lawsuits from families of those killed, as was needed to loose the grip of big tobacco companies.

**We need to "keep on,"** as Harriet Tubman did in bringing groups of people from slavery to freedom. We know much more was needed after freed slaves were brought the North. There was need to end oppression, racism, which still limits opportunities and equality for people of color.

The truth is, the Parkridge students are joining, not starting a movement. Parents and survivors of previous shootings welcome the new energy in the long march. There are plans for school walkouts or marches March 14 and 24, and April 20.

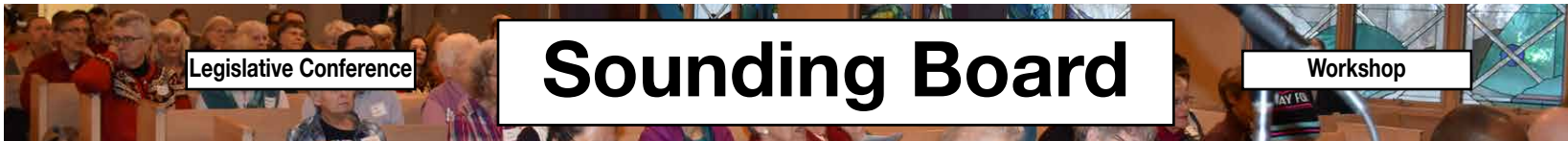
**We do need "thoughts and prayers,"** not just to comfort the grief or silence the anger of the survivors, but also to sustain the momentum for people to act, educate and end the trail of senseless violence.

We need the kind of "thoughts and prayers" that build solidarity and overcome divisions that are played up to stymie common, effective advocacy.

We need "thoughts and prayers" for ending hate, gun violence and fear that silences citizens and quashes elected officials who seek to adopt sensible solutions.

It's a long walk that we must continue.

Mary Stamp - Editor



## Educators discuss exclusion discipline and collaborate with schools

Educators from area universities who are on the Education Committee of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Spokane discussed how school discipline by exclusion contributes to more children of color and more poor children following "the school to prison pipeline."

They are working with Spokane Public Schools to identify what is happening, to make changes and to train teachers and administrators.

**"Children are often disciplined** like criminals," said Jeanne Baynes, who taught in Spokane Public Schools before retiring and now teaches Africana studies at Eastern Washington University. People of color make up about 30 percent of U.S. population and account for 60 percent of those imprisoned.

She said it costs \$62,000 a year on average in California to support one inmate in prison and that amount would support two students to go to college. The average cost for Washington inmates statewide is \$76.85/day, which is more than \$28,000/year. It's \$98.74/day or more than \$36,000/year at Washington State penitentiary, she reported.

"There is zero tolerance for students breaking rules. Many are punished harshly and unfairly," she said. "Suspension and expulsion leads to a higher dropout rate."

**Policies and practices that push** children out of classrooms and into the juvenile justice system include school-based arrests by a resource officer or referral to law enforcement, and indirectly, exclusionary school discipline, Jeanne said.

The NAACP is concerned about police presence in schools, teachers who yell at students and students who bring emotional and mental baggage from home to school.

"Children of color and children with disabilities are most affected," Jeanne said.

**Doreen Keller, assistant professor** and secondary coordinator in Whitworth University's master in teaching program, said data showed a drop in exclusionary consequences from 1,676 in 2014-15 to 969 in



Pavel Shlossberg, Jim Mohr, Jeanne Baynes and Doreen Keller serve on the NAACP Spokane Education Committee.

2016-17, and a slight increase in 2017-18.

The main types of incidents leading to exclusion are verbal or physical aggression, defiance of a resource officer, violence, fighting or a threat.

**In 2016, the state legislature passed** a bill calling for penalties for districts using exclusionary practices—taking students out of the classroom and educational experience.

Doreen showed statistics by race on the disproportional rate of exclusion used as discipline for racial/ethnic groups compared to the percentage of students of those races and ethnicities: 6 percent of African American students are excluded, but they are 3 percent of students; no Asians who are 3 percent of students; 55 percent of white students who are 68 percent of students; 13 percent of Hispanics who are 10 percent; 21 percent of multiracial students who are 13 percent; 3 percent of Native Americans who are 1 percent, 1 percent of Pacific Islanders who are 2 percent, and 47 of special education students who are 20 percent of students.

"Students struggling with financial insecurity are 86 percent of those expelled," Doreen added.

She said Spokane Public Schools' 8.5 percent rate of exclusionary discipline in 2015 was greater than the three percent state average, which means there was a need to train teachers and administrators on ways to support students.

**Doreen serves on** the School Superintendent's Working Group, which is examining disparities and how the district can better support students who experience disproportionate discipline. She said a training initiative is now underway.

**Jim Mohr, who taught** elementary, middle and high school, and special education before entering higher education, is vice chancellor for student affairs at Washington State University Health Science in Spokane. He chairs the NAACP Education Committee.

"Identity development is one of the biggest projects for adolescents," he said. "Identity forms how youth interact with people, trying new things and new behaviors to see how they are rewarded or punished."

**He told of an African American boy** who wanted to go to college and thought he had to go to prison first.

"How did that impact his interactions at school? Does he accept, reject or negotiate that identity? If a teacher thinks black boys are discipline problems, more discipline happens," Jim said.

If messages from media, teachers and parents about race influence identity, he asks how families, friends, school can create positive identities.

**"Low-income youth can enter** enrichment activities, like MESA (Math, English, Science and Technology) or Upward Bound, to help them know they can go to

college," he said. "It is possible to counter narratives by telling students they can be successful students."

**Pavel Shlossberg, assistant professor** in communication and leadership studies, and co-developer of the global leadership program at Gonzaga University, said the "deficit model" contributes to racist, classist attitudes that associate communities of color with problems.

"Parent involvement and support of learning at home make a difference," he said, noting that institutional racism and low-income affect parents' interaction with teachers.

Pavel noted that most local students studying to be teachers are white and middle-class. They may lack cultural competence to interact with minority and lower-income parents. So there are efforts to train teachers to increase that competence.

**"Parents are likely to participate** if they feel empowered by interactions with teachers, administration and staff," Pavel said. "Teachers may be less likely to engage minority parents in collaborative efforts to support their students. Outreach to minority parents is often for behavioral problems rather than positive issues."

Parents of minority and low-income students may also have barriers to meeting with teachers because of work schedules, losing income when they take time off or lacking transportation, said Pavel.

**He suggests that more schools offer** intercultural competence training to identify stereotypes and biases, increase the flexibility in scheduling meetings, and plan cultural events that promote inclusion and community building.

He believes change will also happen through training teachers, administrators and staff on restorative justice and positive behavior interventions.

Recruiting and retaining teachers of color are already part of the Spokane Public Schools' Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies, Pavel added.

For information, call 209-2425 or visit [naacpspokane.org](http://naacpspokane.org).

# Calendar of Events

- Mar 1** • **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **"Would There Be Christianity** without Migration? Church as a Community of Migrants," Peter Cho Phan, Department of Religious Studies' Being Religious Inter-religiously Lecture, Hemmingson Center Ballroom, 702 E. Desmet Ave., Gonzaga University, 5 to 6:30 p.m. 313-6782
- Mar 1, 15** • **Spokane Dances** with Universal Peace, Unity Spiritual Center, 2900 S. Bernard, 7 to 9 p.m., 534-4650, bkfergin@msn.org
- Mar 2** • **Opening for month-long "Unwanted Journeys"** art exhibition by Ildikó Kalapács, 1818 1/2 E. Sprague, 2nd floor, 5 to 8 p.m., 340-3934 or bhormann665@hotmail.com
- **Winter Waters 2018**, "Honoring Watershed Hero Journalists and Fact-Based Journalism," Patsy Clark Mansion, 2208 W. 2nd Ave., 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., 270-6995, waltsoe@allmail.net
- Mar 3** • **Retirement Party for Happy Watkins**, Davenport Grand Hotel Ballroom A & B, 6 to 9 p.m., for tickets or tables, call 535-1336
- Mar 3-11** • **"Nine Days of Grace,"** Novena at St. Aloysius Catholic Church, 330 E. Boone, 313-9856
- Mar 4** • **"Loaves and Fishes,"** salmon-and-bread lunch and presentations by farmers, fishermen, tribal members and faith leaders, Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway, noon to 2 p.m. leda@earthministry.org
- Mar 5** • **"Jewish, Israeli, or Middle Eastern?** Dilemmas of Israeli Identity and Its Place in the Middle East," Brent Sasley, associate professor of political science University of Texas, Arlington, Gonzaga's Wolff Auditorium in Jepson Center, 5 to 6:30 p.m.,
- Mar 8** • **International Women's Day Celebration**, Marie Mwange speaking, Fowler United Methodist Church, 3928 N. Howard St. 6 p.m., 325-3242, chaplainsue@hotmail.com
- **Coeur d'Alene Dances** with Universal Peace, The Harding Center, 15th and Wallace, 7 to 9 p.m., 534-4650, bkfergin@msn.org
- Mar 9** • **Fig Tree Benefit Lunch**, Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University, buffet begins 11:30 a.m., program noon to 1 p.m., 535-1813 rsvp
- **Discussion on Refugees** by Fred Strange and Kassahun Kebede, cultural anthropologists, with "Unwanted Journeys" exhibit, 1818 1/2 E. Sprague, 340-3934
- Mar 10** • **"Let Your Voice Be Heard!"** International Women's Day with Sandra Williams, editor of The Black Lens, Spokane Women's Club, 1428 W. 9th Ave., 789-9290, micolen@ywcaspokane.org
- Mar 13-15** • **"Watercolor Journey,"** Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, 208-962-2000, spirit-center.org
- Mar 14** • **Fig Tree Benefit Breakfast**, Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga, buffet begins as 7:15 a.m., program is 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., 535-1813 rsvp
- **Lutheran Community Services Retirement Party** for Dennis McGaughy, McGinnity Room, 116 W. Pacific, Suite 100, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., 747-8224
- Mar 15** • **Poor People's Campaign** planning in Spokane, Morning Star Baptist Church, 3909 W. Rowan, 6 p.m., 838-7870
- **Show Up for Social Justice** in the Age of Trump, Paul Kivel Conversation, Unitarian Universalist Church, 7 p.m., pjals.org/kivel
- Mar 16-18** • **"Sacred Celtic Landscapes: God's Evolving Message of Love,"** Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, 208-962-2000
- Mar 17, 18** • **Spokane Symphony Baroque concert**, "Venice: the Magical City," Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, 7 p.m., Spokane Valley Church of the Nazarene, 15515 E. 20th Ave., 3 p.m., 624-1200
- **Coins and Clovers**, benefit for Communities in School Spokane County, Northern Quest Casino, 5:30 to 9 p.m., 413-1436, ciswa.org
- Mar 19** • **"Instead of Red Face,"** Cherokee playwright Mary Kathryn Nagle, Wolff Auditorium in Jepson at Gonzaga, 6 p.m., 328-4220
- Mar 19-23** • **Holy Names Music Center**, Explore Music Week, 2910 W. Custer Dr., 326-9516
- Mar 20** • **Powers Chair Lecture** with Mark Anthony Nea, professor of African American Studies and English at Duke, Hemmingson Center at Gonzaga University, 7 p.m., 328-4220
- Mar 21** • **Center for Justice's Justice Lunchbox** Lecture, Tom Keefe, attorney, "Tradition on Trial: David Sohappay and the Fight for Indigenous Rights on the Columbia River," 25 W. Main, noon, 835-5211, cforjustice.org
- **Poor People's Campaign**, Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience, Veradale United Church of Christ, 611 N. Progress Rd., 9:30 a.m., 926-7173
- Mar 22** • **"Faith over Fear: Standing with Our Muslim Neighbors in Yakima,"** Central Lutheran, 1604 W. Yakima, 6:30 p.m., terry@neighborsinfaith.org
- Mar 22, 23** • **Hamletmachine,** by Heiner Mueller, multi-media theatre experience at Gonzaga's Magnuson Theatre, 7:30 p.m.
- Mar 23-25** • **"The Lamb of God: An Easter Celebration,"** Oratorio by Rob Gardner, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1620 E. 29th Ave., 7 p.m.
- Mar 23, 24** • **Chorale Coeur d'Alene**, "Requiem!" Trinity Lutheran, 812 N. 5th St., Coeur d'Alene, 7 p.m. Friday and 3 p.m., Saturday, 208-446-2333
- Mar 23-26** • **"Art in the Cascades,"** Holden Village, chuck.director@holdenvillage.org
- Mar 26-28** • **Women's Holy Week Retreat**, "Find Your Wholeness in Holy Week," Fr. Jeff Putthoff, S.J., Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 5:30 p.m., Monday to 1 p.m., Wednesday, 448-1224
- Mar 27** • **"Exploring America's Relationship With War,"** Mike Nemeth, U.S. Army veteran and editor of *Six-Word War*, Hemmingson Center Ballroom, 7 p.m., 328-4220
- Mar 28** • **"Partners in Progress,"** YWCA Spokane Annual Meeting, Historic SIERR Building at McKinstry, 820 E. Spokane Falls Blvd, Ste. #100, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., 789-9305, ywcaspokane.org
- **Spokane Police Accountability & Reform Coalition**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **"Dial M for Murder,"** Spokane Civic Theatre benefit for Partnering for Progress, 1020 N. Howard St., 6:15 p.m. appetizers, 7:15 p.m., performance, 720-8408, partneringforprogress.org/civic-theatre-benefit.html
- Mar 29-31** • **Men's Holy Week Retreat**, "Find Your Wholeness in Holy Week," Fr. Jeff Putthoff, S.J., Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 4:30 p.m., Thursday to 1 p.m., Saturday, 448-1224
- Mar 30** • **"Engaging Fatherhood" Conference**, DADS Committee, the Lair Student Center at Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene St., 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 455-4966 or calden@ccspokane.org
- Apr 1** • **Easter Sunrise Service**, Greenwood Memorial Terrace, 211 N. Government Way, 6:30 a.m., 326-6813
- Apr 3** • **"Tower of Power 50th Anniversary 2018,"** Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 7:30 p.m., 624-1200
- Apr 4** • **Fig Tree Delivery**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave., 9 a.m., 535-1813
- Apr 5** • **Fig Tree Benefit and Board**, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon for benefit and 1 to 3 p.m. for board, 535-1813
- Apr 8** • **Chorale Coeur d'Alene**, "Requiem!" Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, Spokane, 3 p.m., 208-446-2333

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**April 16-18 ~ Zentangle: Creating Art and Wellbeing**

**May 18-20 ~ A Woman's Call to Spirituality: Emerging Faith in Our Daily Walk**



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# Peer specialists walk with people as they step from homelessness into stability

By Nancy Hill

As permanent supportive housing coordinator at Donna Hanson Haven (DHH), Amanda Fowler considers her work a calling.

She hopes she can help make it, as Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad said at its opening in December 2017, “a dwelling place of love.”

Part of Amanda’s job is working with three peer specialists who have had life-altering experiences related to homelessness. They support individuals who have been chronically homeless and struggle with issues such as mental illness, psychological trauma and substance abuse.

**The building is named** after Donna Hanson, former executive director of Catholic Charities in Spokane, who dictated messages of love and gratitude before her death. In a Sept. 24, 2005, Spokesman Review article, staff writer Virginia De Leon wrote, “As the Diocese of Spokane’s secretary for social ministries and the CEO of the largest faith-based social service organization between Seattle and Minneapolis, Donna was recognized as a courageous leader, a champion for social justice and a Mother Teresa-like figure who became just as anxious over a malnourished child in Africa as she did when her own granddaughter had the flu.”

**Clients at DHH meet** the chronic homelessness standards set out by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Acceptance is based on length of homelessness and acuity scores through Spokane’s singles coordinated housing assessment. Those most in need are accepted. The average length of homelessness for referrals has been 10.5 years. The 50 units at Donna Hanson Haven are filled.

**Research shows that** permanent supportive housing is the best way to help people move from the streets, overcome barriers, and progress into a successful life, said Amanda.

DHH partners with Excelsior Youth Center in Spokane. Onsite services for mental health and chemical dependency are planned. Bible study is offered, and a priest is available for support.

“At our facility, peer specialists



Amanda Fowler supervises peer specialists.

are the bridge between homelessness and stability. With their help, personal success for the residents is possible by connecting clients to case managers and to the services that are available in the program,” Amanda said.

They also help clients with basic life skills, such as doing dishes, storing food in refrigerators, being a good neighbor and recovering from “housing guilt.”

“Residents may feel guilty leaving friends who are still living on the streets,” she said. “In the beginning, living here can be isolating. Peer specialists help each individual build community while checking to make sure they aren’t withdrawing.”

**Amanda has** a bachelor’s degree in social work and plans to complete her master’s degree this summer. She has worked with the homeless population for five years.

Beginning with outreach in Walla Walla, she went into case management with Volunteers of America’s Health, Housing and Homeless program serving the medically vulnerable homeless population. Then she became care coordinator for the House of

Charity in Spokane.

Growing up in a family who lived in poverty and suffered with mental illness, she knows what it’s like to be ostracized by those who consider poverty to be a personal failing. Amanda said her French, Irish and Spanish heritages did not have a strong influence, but her family poverty culture did influence her life.

“**My family was poor** growing up but we had a strong sense of community with those around us, and everyone did their best to support everyone else in times of need. They all helped to instill the value of giving back and taking care of those who are the most vulnerable in the community,” she said.

“Poverty and homelessness are complicated issues,” she said. “On the streets, dodging threats of

weather, rape, abuse, violence, addiction, incarceration and hunger were everyday modes of life for residents who now live at DHH.

“However,” Amanda said, “life doesn’t have to end that way. With the steadfast help from those who care, Bishop Skylstad’s prayer is becoming a reality.”

**Multiple issues can have** a snowball effect on an individual, making existence debilitating. Residents at Donna Hanson Haven realize no one knows this better than a peer specialist, who becomes the stepping stone into a better life for the client.

Service providers help individuals with mental health issues, help residents pay rent on time and understand their rights and responsibilities, and help people with chronic illnesses manage their care to keep them out of hospitals or nursing homes.

The multiple tasks service providers perform add up to individuals reconnecting with society in a healthy way, Amanda said.

“A decent and productive life filled with love is meant for these residents. Away from danger, a new journey begins,” she said.

“Service providers help reconnect clients to families. Some will obtain jobs while others may move into their own place.”

**According to the Center** on Budget and Policy Priorities, supportive housing achieves better housing stability than case management without rental assistance. This type of housing can reduce the use of other costly systems, especially emergency health care and corrections, Amanda said.

People with disabilities who live in supportive housing after release from jail or prison were 61 percent less likely to be reincarcerated one year later than those not offered supportive housing, she added.

One reason the program is effective is that the peer specialists have understanding from personal experiences.

**Like so many in the world** who have their own stories to tell, a peer specialist’s “quiet, yet extraordinary life, infused with love and gratitude, exemplifies grace freely given,” Amanda added.

For information, call 960-8092 or 290-9217, or email [afowler@ccspokane.org](mailto:afowler@ccspokane.org).



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