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

Art can transform people's lives

By Mary Stamp

The Black Lives Matter mural painted last May and June by 11 Black artists and five other artists of color has borne out Ginger Ewing's belief that art is transformative.

"There has been an incredibly positive response. It has been beautiful to witness people coming there to spend an hour going letter to letter, and parents telling their children the meaning in the art and the importance of Black Lives Matter," said Ginger, the executive director and founder of Terrain, which commissioned the artists to do it.

Jeff Oswalt, president of 14Four and co-owner of the building at 244 W. Main Ave., paid for the work to be done on the east side of the building along with his business partners Tyler Lafferty and Nick Murto, who also own Seven2.

The two digital advertising agencies that serve major national clients decided to turn the blank wall into the 147-foot mural as other murals were being painted around the United States after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

"In all honesty, I was a bit



Ginger Ewing in the Terrain Gallery is beside one of the pieces on display.

skeptical of Jeff's motivation at first, but a few moments into our conversation, it was clear he would be an authentic partner," said Ginger.

The project was completed in a month. His staff painted the outlines for the letters and white background.

"At first, there was some hostility in the neighborhood and some unfortunate incidents. A few people screamed profanity at the artists as they were creating the mural, but as the letters were filled in, the hostility of people on the block changed," she said. "They saw the artists as human beings. They saw their talent and humanity."

In July, vandals splashed red, white and blue paint on the word, "Black," but the section was quickly repainted and a protective coating was applied.

"The paintings had humanized the artists," Ginger said. "It was hard to be angry when people saw a beautiful person creating beautiful art."

"It shows the transformative power of art," she explained. "Art opens us to receive a new perspective."

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Young Life reaches youth by being involved in their everyday lives

By Erin Endres

Young Life started in Spokane at Whitworth University in 1948 after Jim Rayburn, a Presbyterian youth minister in Gainesville, Texas, founded it in 1941 to draw youth into churches.

Kent McDonald, professor of practical theology and regional trainer for Young Life (YL), now leads the Whitworth's partnership with Young Life. He and his wife, Linda, who both grew up in Seattle, have been involved with it for many years.

From Jim's emphasis on making the Word flesh, Kent said

that YL leaders make an impact through "an incarnational ministry in which loving adults enter the world of teenagers."

Jim, a friend of Whitworth president Frank Warren, thought the Presbyterian university was an appropriate place to train young leaders in his new organization. In 1948, he relocated five young men from a Texas high school discipleship group to Whitworth.

The partnership has ebbed and flowed since then.

Kent began youth ministry in high school and discovered YL in 1977 as a freshman at Seattle

Pacific University. He saw a sign, "Interested in serving in Young Life," and thought "Wow, I should give my life away and do something crazy."

He earned a master of divinity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, Mass., and a doctor of ministry at Carey Theological Seminary in Vancouver, B.C.

Before Whitworth, Kent was in youth ministry in Bellevue, Wash., and Portland, Ore. In 1994, he and his family moved to Nairobi, Kenya.

His doctoral dissertation, "Nairobi Youth: Challenges toward the New Millennium," led him to start Young Life in Africa. He was there until 2000, when he joined the Whitworth faculty.

Kent decided to reactivate YL at Whitworth. He is regional director of YL's Mountain West Region, which extends from Wenatchee to Wyoming.

He teaches Christian leadership and youth ministry, and trains college students preparing for ministry.

Continued on page 6

Fig Tree survey gathers COVID, vaccination info

The Fig Tree, with support of a grant from the Department of Health, is doing a survey of rural, urban and ethnic congregations and nonprofit agencies to learn about and share what difference increased numbers of vaccinations will mean in the lives of their communities and ministries.

"We encourage readers to respond to, and to mail or email responses to several questions, as well as to share stories," said Mary Stamp. "In this issue, we offer some examples of comments from a bishop about changes, from two local congregations and an agency that tell their COVID/vaccination stories."

The questions are:

- How has COVID affected your congregation or agency and its ministries or services?
- What ministries or programs did you have? What ministries or programs have you added or closed?
- About what percent of or number in your congregation, rural community or agency staff is vaccinated?
- What difference does it make for members to be vaccinated?
- Have you done education about vaccinations? What are attitudes about being vaccinated?
- Has the church/agency served as a vaccination site?
- What difference has COVID made to your congregation, community or agency in transportation, food, homeless/housing, emergency, public health or other needs?
- What gaps have you identified during COVID? What gaps existed before COVID?
- What impact will vaccinations have?

Email replies to mary@thefigtree.org by May 15.

Related stories on pages 2 and 3

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Faith leaders help promote vaccinations

For World Immunization Week in late April, church leaders from many continents joined 300 Vaccine Champions that UNICEF mobilized to promote benefits of immunization.

Along with web and social media posts, the World Council of Churches (WCC) produced a health handbook.

"We must exercise the influence and trust we enjoy as church leaders in a worldwide fellowship, and do everything we can to save lives and ease burdens on health care workers," said WCC acting general secretary Ioan Saucă. "This is an opportunity for faith leaders to encourage people to get vaccinated, counter misleading information and raise our voices in favor of immunization programs."

UNICEF organizes the annual week, so health organizations and others can raise awareness on benefits of all immunizations.

"As COVID-19 vaccination programs are rolled out, religious leaders of all faiths play a critical role in sustaining public trust in health authorities and services, as well as in the approved vaccines themselves," Ioan said. "As a Christian fellowship, it is our moral obligation to publicly challenge rumors and myths with facts. As moral and ethical concerns also loom over vaccine access and distribution, we must advocate for what is right from a medical, ethical and human rights perspective."

Gloria Ulloa Alvarado, WCC president for Latin America and the Caribbean, said vaccination is important: because vaccinated people can approach their loved ones without fear of infecting them or being infected; it will reduce stress for health care and education workers, and human history has shown us the effectiveness of vaccinations.

Archbishop emeritus Anders Wejryd, Sweden, WCC president for Europe, said in the spirit of "do unto others": "I don't want to be infected by COVID-19 and I don't want to infect someone else. Vaccination is about solidarity."

Fidon Mwombeki, general secretary, All Africa Conference of Churches, said: "COVID-19 is far from over. It continues to cause disruptions of communities' and congregations' activities and actions. Strict adherence to prevention and management guidelines has made life difficult. We have a long history of vaccinations saving millions of lives, so we should reject conspiracy theories against scientific evidence and advocate for everyone to be vaccinated against the deadly COVID-19 virus."

Jim Winkler, the U.S. National Council of the Churches of Christ general secretary, said: "We support this effort to save lives and relieve burdens on healthcare facilities. It is our responsibility as Jesus' followers to take the vaccine so we can be part of the global effort to end the pandemic."

"As part of this effort, the NCCUSA has joined Faith4Vaccines, a multi-faith effort led by the NCCUSA, Union for Reform Judaism, National African American Clergy Network, Islamic Medical Association, Sojourners, and Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers."

"Our goals are to demonstrate religious communities' trust in the vaccine, support houses of worship and faith communities to innovatively distribute vaccines, create space for multi-faith collaboration, and pave the way for global, equitable vaccine distribution."

James Bhagwan, general secretary, Pacific Conference of Churches, said: "We need vaccine equity and access."

Mathews George Chunakara, Christian Conference of Asia general secretary, said: "As COVID-19 vaccines are rolled out gradually, there are alarming disparities in access across the world. Access, misinformation and mistrust are challenges in the midst of the horrifying catastrophic impact of the pandemic. Asian churches are engaged in advocacy for effective vaccination drives and urge members to promote grassroots health-seeking behavior to make the world healthier."

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Resource Directory ad deadline nears

Fig Tree staff are progressing on producing the annual, comprehensive, much used Resource Directory with information on services for people in crises, in need and in transition.

The deadline for ads is May 15, with progress being made on commitment for ad spaces.

"We are still finalizing commitments and copy," said Malcolm Haworth, directory editor.

Marijke Fakasiieiki, development associate, is securing ad commitments and community partnerships to assure support.

Northwest Offset Printing will again be the printer, but adjustments have been made to the page sizes for consistency.

Fig Tree Annual Meeting for its Board of Directors will be held at 1 p.m., Thursday, June 3, on Zoom. At the Annual

Meeting, new board members, who serve as liaisons to regional denominations and faith communities are elected.

In other news, Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp rejoices at being vaccinated so she can take photos outside without a mask that fogs up her glasses.

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

Faith Action Network holds Spring Summits

Faith Action Network (FAN), Washington's statewide, inter-faith advocacy and social justice organization, has announced their Spring Summit dates for 2021.

Participants have a choice of two summit dates to join. They are from 2 to 4 p.m., Sunday, May 23, or 2 to 4 p.m., Sunday, June 6.

People from across the state will gather to celebrate wins from this year's legislative session and plan for the year ahead. There will be breakout

groups by region and issue topic.

"Through this legislative session, people connected with FAN have had an opportunity to advocate for the change that they want to see in our state. Faith communities in our region and across the state have taken their beliefs and values beyond words to make lasting policy change through our legislature. The FAN Spring Summits will provide an opportunity to hear about the impact our advocacy made,

and help us plan for how we can continue to build momentum in the interim," said Lauren Schubring, FAN's Eastern Washington regional organizer.

The free Spring Summits may be joined by registering to receive the Zoom link.

The May 23 registration is at bit.ly/2021SummitMay and the June 6 registration is at bit.ly/2021SummitJune. For information, call 313-719-8150 or email schubring@fanwa.org.

PJALS plans virtual benefit on May 19

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) will hold its 2021 Virtual Benefit: Breathing In Community: Healing, Transformation, Joy" and launch its Spring Fund Drive at 6 p.m., Wednesday, May 19.

"In our Peace and Justice Action League community, we believe everyday people can accomplish extraordinary things together," said Shar Lichty, development coordinator.

"For more than 45 years, we have organized for racial equity, economic justice, peace and hu-

man rights. As we continue to build a movement to transform systems and strengthen community, part of our calling is to create room to breathe, heal and embrace joy," she said.

Members, donors and new friends gather to be part of a movement for peace and justice. Guests will hear how PJALS members work together to expose and transform systems of hate, violence, exclusion and oppression to build a just and nonviolent world and create a culture of love and belonging.

The keynote speaker is Eric Ward from Western States Center. He is a nationally-recognized expert on the relationship between authoritarian movements, hate, violence and preserving inclusive democracy. He has 30 years of leadership in community organizing and philanthropy as Western States Center's executive director and senior fellow with Southern Poverty Law Center and Race Forward.

PJALS seeks table hosts. For information, call 838-7870 or visit pjals.org.

River Forum, Riverkeeper plan clean-ups

Spokane River Forum and Spokane Riverkeeper are hosting the "Spokane River Get Up, Get Out, Clean Up" on five dates at eight locations.

The 2021 goal is to collect 25,000 pounds of litter. They already have picked up 7,000 pounds toward that goal.

Spokane River Forum and Spokane Riverkeeper provide field support, bags, gloves, pickers and disposal. Volunteers may join a public cleanup, organize a private cleanup or do a DIY operation.

The 2021 public cleanup dates and locations are:

May 8 is the Spring Time Kick-Off at TJ Meenach, University District, People's Park/High Bridge and Mission Park.

June 19 will be at Mission Park, July 10 at People's Park

and August 21 at the University District.

Sept 18 is the Spokane Valley Upriver Scrub at Harvard Road, Barker Road and Mirabeau.

For information, call 535-7084 or email info@spokaneriver.net.

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Churches shift from diocesan to local worship

Episcopal Diocese of Spokane has been holding common worship experiences for the diocese, but after Easter, congregations are back worshipping on their own in some form or another, and common worship offerings on the website are discontinued.

"It has been a year of highlighting the virtual worship many of our congregations have been doing, and we hope that members took the time to pop into a service from a different church here and there along the way," said Bishop Gretchen Rehberg.

The diocese will, however, continue on with its home worship resources that are posted weekly on the diocesan website.

The bishop also encourages people to visit the Faiths4Vaccines website for resources, including a video produced by the Skinner Leadership Institute to learn how to be part of encouraging vaccinations and ending the COVID-19 pandemic.

For information, call 624-3191 or visit spokanedioocese.org.

Small church in small town had been doing social distancing for years, says pastor, noting that most members are vaccinated

Life at Metaline Falls Congregational United Church of Christ (MFCUCC) has been "pretty quiet," said the pastor and Metaline Falls mayor Tara Leininger.

"We were shut down from March 2020 until we moved into the first 'phase 3,' with masks, hand stations, gloves and no communion," she said.

The "strangest irony" for the congregation was making sure to "social distance" in worship, because the church has been doing that for years, she said.

"With our small numbers, and the Protestant custom of never sitting next to anyone unless you have to, everyone has been six feet apart for the past 15 years," Tara quipped.

During the closure, she sent out bulletins and a written sermon. A few of the congregation tried online worship.

"Once we were able to re-open last June, we discovered how precious feelings of community and fellowship were," she said.

The community outreach that MFCUCC did before the pan-



Tara Leininger is pastor and mayor in Metaline Falls.

Photo courtesy of Rosemary Daniel

demic continued without much change, and they added the "Community Pantry," which continues to be used.

"I've been dealing with this not only as a pastor but also as the mayor," Tara said. "While we have our 'pandemic deniers,' most everyone has been good about masking and other protocols.

"We are in an area, because of our remoteness, small popu-

lation and fewer crowds, that there were no major outbreaks," she said. "Our school district handled the end of the 2020 school year well. Businesses closed and our few restaurants went to take-out only. We have been blessed in that we lost no businesses from pandemic closures, but it has been a tough year none-the-less."

The school continues to be vigilant with few outbreaks, but is glad to be back in the classroom. Businesses continue to reopen as spring and Phase 3 eases the community into, "what we hope," is a positive summer season, she said.

Most in the congregation are now vaccinated. The county health department has a drive-in station at the Tiger Fire Department, or residents can schedule a time with the New Health/Selkirk clinic.

Tara and her husband, Don, recently had their second shots.

"I was so glad when I was finally eligible for the shot!" Tara said. "Around town, I know those who won't get the vaccine so we just do what we can to take precautions and pray that everyone stays healthy."

"What surprised us most was that it wasn't so much innovations in response, but was an affirmation that our church's small, but visible presence in the community remained strong."

The church's Easter Sunrise service was socially distanced, masked and "a welcome new beginning," she said, "as we continue to be a 'tiny but fierce' presence in our community."

With that in mind, Tara led a break-out session at the Pacific Northwest Conference of the UCC Annual Meeting April 30 to May 2 on "Small Churches, Tiny But Fierce."

For information, call 466-3301 or email mfcucc1911@yahoo.com.

MEBA helped businesses access resources

AHANA-Multi-Ethnic Business Association (MEBA) promotes mitigation practices and resources for businesses to stay open, and assure safety among clients, employees and their families, reported Maria Gutierrez, a member of the AHANA-MEBA outreach team.

African Hispanic Asian Native American (AHANA)'s and MEBA's work has been mostly through in-person encounters.

"Closeness to business owners allows better understanding of their businesses, struggles and needs, not only short term from the pandemic, but also mid- and long-term," Maria said.

"We work hard to put as many resources in hands of minority-owned businesses not only for them to open or stay open, but also for them to become more robust and expand their possibilities," she said. "We are committed to partner with big organizations to explore and implement diversity vendor programs."

AHANA-MEBA leaders are heartened that some business owners they talked to encourage employees to be vaccinated. In

many cases, they found a vaccination clinic for them.

At the same time, they are frustrated that some owners or employees still do not believe in vaccination, don't care or are reluctant to get it.

Maria won't know percentages until AHANA-MEBA start their vaccination campaign.

Given that site visits are valuable, as more people are vaccinated, the less risk their team will have of exposure to COVID. They will also have more flexibility in those encounters.

"We miss in-person group training sessions and community gatherings, and we have been forced to be creative in finding alternative ways to stay engaged and increase our organization's engagement with the community," Maria said.

"We educated business owners and provided materials they can share with employees, their families and friends on the virus. We are starting an education campaign on vaccination," she said.

Attitudes they meet include some who do not care, some linking any kind of vaccination

with autism or other illnesses, some who have religious beliefs that prevent them from being vaccinated and some who are hesitant for cultural reasons.

"We promoted a vaccination site the Hispanic Business Professional Association organized among Hispanics. It was a success," said Maria, who is principal at ASAP Translation Services.

AHANA-MEBA has a contract with the Department of Health to educate people on vaccinations and increase access to them.

For information, email ben-cabildo@gmail.com or maria@asap-translations.com.

Building closed, but church active, vaccinated members ready to return

Although Shalom United Church of Christ in Richland closed its building, services went online and the church remained active in the community. Worship was on SoundCloud and then video. After-service feedback is on Zoom, as are most meetings and ministries. The music director posts anthems on Facebook, drawing attention to the church and its music, said a church leader in response to The Fig Tree survey on COVID and vaccinations.

Youth and Christian education programs were on hiatus until fall. This spring they are meeting bi-weekly with monthly meet ups outside, masked and distanced.

With plans to return to the sanctuary in May, pre-recorded services will continue and transition to live streaming. That will continue because online services allow people who no longer live in the town to "attend" and participate.

"Members who can get a vaccine have or are in the process because vaccinations are readily available in Richland. Some who are vaccinated are eager to return to in-person activities," said the leader. "Most members are positive about vaccines, but some in the community are not."

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Join FAN advocates from across WA state for the virtual 2021 Spring Summits where we'll celebrate FAN wins and begin to consider what action steps for justice we might take together in the year ahead! We will have breakout groups by region as well as issue topic.

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Black Lives Matter mural has helped many to amplify their voices

Continued from page 1

Now, the mural has been showered with praise and appreciation, she said, and people have expressed pride to have it in the city.

"I did not paint a letter but, as a black woman, I feel it has channeled my own pain and anger," Ginger said. "Before we did it, for the first time in my life, I was so angry I had started to lose hope. The project enabled me to channel my frustration into something profoundly positive. It took a stand. It was cathartic.

It helped Ginger amplify her voice and process her pain and sorrow.

"Now the mural is done, it is becoming an iconic part of downtown, a place to do events, like an NAACP Spokane COVID education gathering in March. It's a place to gather the community and celebrate."

Ginger heard that it inspired a father and son to drive around the U.S. to visit other Black Lives Matter murals.

Flight attendants staying in nearby hotels have said they did not expect such a mural in Spokane.

The mural is just one way Terrain enables the transformative power of art.

Terrain began 13 years ago to fight for under-represented people as they try to cultivate power in today's social uprisings expressed in art.

Ginger and her husband, Luke Baumgarten, former arts editor for The Inlander, started it with three friends, music booker Patrick Kendrick, marketer Sara Horner and community organizer Mariah McKay.

Of its five founders, Ginger and Luke are still with Terrain, which started as an event.

Ginger, who grew up in Cheney and Spokane, said her father came to Spokane from New Orleans at the age of eight, worked 40 years with Kaiser and is now 70. He is French Creole. Her mother, who grew up in Spokane, taught English at Gonzaga University, Whitworth University, Eastern Washington University and Spokane Falls Community College. She is English, Irish and Italian.

Ginger grew up being told that if anyone was going to have fun in their 20s or be 'successful,' they needed to do it anywhere but here. Despite that advice, she knew there were pockets of creativity in Spokane."

Graduating from Whitworth in 2001 in history, biology and film, she hoped to be a forensic anthropologist until she learned there were only two jobs in the state.



Black Lives Matter mural has become iconic part of downtown Spokane.

Ginger worked six years as a curator of cultural literacy at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture.

Then Terrain emerged.

The aim was an event to gather pockets of creativity in one room for one evening and celebrate pride, place and creativity in Spokane, she said.

"We sought to redefine who could and could not engage in art in Spokane. We sought to break down silos," she said. "While there were pockets of creativity in musical, literary and visual arts, part of the problem, we felt, was that they didn't know each other existed."

Twelve years later in one evening, Terrain 12, highlighted 274 artists and drew 13,000 people who bought nearly \$40,000 in art.

Now Terrain offers two other events, Bazaar and Brzaar. Both art markets typically see about \$125,000 worth of art sold in a single day.

Although not originally intended to be an art organization, Terrain is now an art organization.

Terrain has other ventures.

- Terrain Gallery, which is a permanent gallery on the main floor of the Washington Cracker Building at 304 W. Pacific, is open from 6 to 8 p.m., Thursdays

through Saturdays.

- From Here, its retail store, features 92 artists on the second floor of Riverpark Square, open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week.

- The Creative Enterprises Incubator Program holds a 36-hour course over 12 weeks for professional development to help artists and creative entrepreneurs develop business plans.

- Window Dressing offers site-specific art installations and public art in vacant buildings downtown.

- Uncharted has partnered with the Spokane Symphony, taking the theme and characters of symphonic music, like Peter and the Wolf, and inviting local artists to develop original works of art related to it. The characters came in and out, merging with the local artists. It won national attention.

Ginger volunteered with Terrain for 10 years. In the last three years, Terrain had funds to hire staff. Ginger is the full-time executive director. Jackie Caro is the full-time operations director. Four part-time employees work in the From Here store, and Edward Hendrickson is their gallery sitter for the permanent gallery.

"What is my role as a black

woman and citizen living in Spokane and owning an art organization? What is Terrain's role?" Ginger asked.

"It's not enough to be an anti-racist organization. It's not enough to cultivate relationships. We need to lead the way, to push the community to allow us to lead us to a more equitable, socially just world," she said.

"Terrain wants to be a leader in pushing our beloved city in that direction," she said. "We push to make the city be the city we want it to be in terms of art with a social justice lens."

"The importance of artists and the arts for our community is clear when we feel hopeless, seek community, express frustration and seek to organize," Ginger said.

She believes that art is impor-

tant for survival.

"Art is a necessity, not a nicety. It is the heart and soul of who we are as individuals, a community and society," she asserted, telling of individuals who say art and creating it saved their lives.

"On individual, community, city and global levels, we see how important art is to survival, humanity and life," said Ginger.

For information, email team@terrainspokane.org.

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Gonzaga students do documentary, hold march to end homelessness

By Lillian Piel

Service Gonzaga sociology major Michael Larson did with people experiencing homelessness led him to ask what it would take to end homelessness in Spokane entirely. Last May, he began asking people if ending homelessness was something that could be figured out. He received varying answers and opinions.

"I have a deep desire for people to have more compassion for the least of these in our city, because right now we are not having that," Michael said.

He decided to learn what policies and root causes were behind increases in homelessness in Washington and across the nation. He found poverty, domestic violence, rent increases and lack of affordable housing are primary factors.

In September 2020, Michael asked a few friends if they wanted to be involved with creating a documentary about the issue and help lead a march on April 24 to push for policy change in Spokane.

What started out as a team of four or five people grew into a student-led team of 19 students, who make up the organization called Humanizing Spokane.

One is special education major Leila Lewis, who joined the public relations team after Michael made a presentation in one of her classes. She helped organize the march that drew several hundred people to the Lilac Bowl at Riverfront Park calling for tenant protections, ending single-family zoning and building public facilities.

Michael hopes the march will stir momentum to change policies.

"Humanizing Spokane is a student-led group that believes in the inherent dignity and worth of all people, and believes that everyone deserves safe and stable housing," said Michael.

The goals are to humanize those experiencing homelessness by telling their stories through a documentary he directed, and to change policies in Spokane to decrease homelessness over time and build more affordable housing.

"Each person has infinite worth, and those who live on the streets and experience homelessness are treated terribly," Michael said.

"How do we tell people's stories to inspire people to care and have compassion toward people who are experiencing homelessness and hopefully do that to break down some biases and stereotypes by telling people's stories?" Michael asked.



Leila Lewis and Michael Larson have been working through Humanizing Spokane to end homelessness.

The documentary, "Humanizing Spokane," is available to view at humanizingspokane.com and at [youtube.com/watch?v=Yr_NffmjYpE&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yr_NffmjYpE&t=2s).

The video, which took two months to plan and two months to produce, highlights stories of four people who are currently homeless or experienced it in the past.

It goes in depth into their lives to humanize them and raise awareness of how every person's story is different, Michael said.

The video also features experts on homelessness and its root causes, including Spokane City Council members, a member of the Spokane's Planning Commission and the executive director of Transitions. It ends with a call to action.

The documentary has had more than 90,000 views on Facebook and about 8,000 views on YouTube.

While some people disagree with Humanizing Spokane, Michael believes they have achieved the goal of humanizing homeless people in Spokane with the documentary.

"These are just people like you and I. We label them 'homeless as people' and think they are so

different than us, but they're really not," he said.

Leila, who grew up Catholic in Auburn, researched what issues to push the city on to see change.

The march made three demands to the City Council:

- The first demand is to increase tenant protections by adopting and enacting Washington State Senate Bill 5160, which will protect renters' rights. It will help more people stay in their homes, Leila said.

- The second demand is to eliminate single family zoning across Spokane to increase affordable housing options. Most of the city is zoned for single family and single unit housing, which is a historically classist and racist zoning law that prevents building affordable housing, she said.

- The third demand is for the city to use American Rescue Plan Act funds to construct new public facilities that will meet basic needs of the homeless population. This demand comes from listening sessions held with unhoused individuals, who voiced the need for access to

public facilities, she said.

"When advocating for oppressed people, we can't forget to stand with them or to create those relationships with them. While we're creating relationships and caring for people on an interpersonal level, we can't forget about systems of oppression. They have to come together," Leila said.

While Humanizing Spokane does not have a religious affiliation, Michael, who is from Everett, said his motivation is driven by his beliefs as a non-denominational Christian. He was drawn to Gonzaga by its Jesuit social justice emphasis. He believes in Jesus' example of leading for love, compassion and justice, he said, and explained that he believes "the way we treat the poor in society is how we treat God."

Fear, stereotypes and biases prevent people from loving those who are experiencing homelessness, and they are often criminalized, Michael said.

Seeing this as part of an endless cycle of lacking compassion, he hopes people will gain more compassion and realize they can volunteer, do something small to participate or participate in long-term activism.

In his time at Gonzaga, Michael learned what works and what doesn't in activism to mobilize people. Trying different projects over recent years, bringing people together and sometimes failing has influenced his thinking and understanding of how to create change.

With Humanizing Spokane, he is able to apply his skills to try to change policies to create long-term change.

"What I learn from this project will inform the next one, and hopefully we only become more effective in terms of the policy

changes and long-term change that can happen," said Michael, who will work next year as a videographer in Bellingham.

Leila's work with Humanizing Spokane taught her about the complexity of social issues, which are not as easy to solve as they may seem. She found it rewarding to combine efforts with people already doing this work and see new people become involved.

With most of the 19 members graduating, Leila will encourage other students to pick up the work and carry it on. She is staying in Spokane, considering work in early childhood education or housing.

"This is something we are all responsible for," she said. "Collective traumatic experiences create cultures. They might create cultures of fear, or they might create cultures of justice. I'm involved with this because I really, really hope that it can be a culture of justice and a culture of equity."

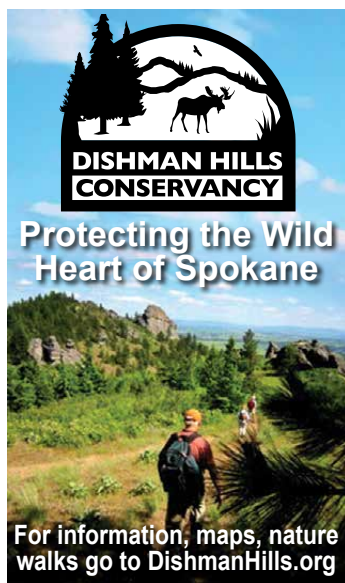
For Michael, a key takeaway from Humanizing Spokane is the importance of relationships in activism.

"Activism isn't so much about what we know, it is about who we know and who we can bring together and organize," he said.

He hopes Humanizing Spokane can set an example of the compassion and other qualities needed to serve the homeless population.

"We can all play a role, and I want people to know that they also play a role in the responsibility for meeting the needs of homeless vulnerable members of our society," Michael said.

For information, email michaelparlson23@gmail.com or llewis2@zagmail.gonzaga.edu, or visit humanizingspokane.com.



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Young Life's incarnational ministry means entering the world of teens

Continued from page 1

"Before we ask youth to come into our world, we go to their world. We call it 'earning the right to be heard'—one of Jim's lines," he said.

Kent has modified that mantra. "Young Life's incarnational approach models the life of Jesus who put skin on, moved into the neighborhood and entered our world. I like 'earn the right to be heard' because it means that we spend time with youth and get to know them. I also like, 'earn the right to listen,'" he said. "It feels less like an agenda to hear me talk and more like a friendship with no strings."

The YL mission introduces teens to Jesus and helps them grow in faith. Adult leaders and volunteers spend time with youth in their world.

At summer camps, students and their leaders "get away to experience God in another way," Kent said.

Most area youth attend Malibu Club in British Columbia, and Washington Family Ranch in Antelope, Ore.

"These camps allow youth to have fun, adventure, laughter, and serious talks about life and God," he said.

The Mountain West Region has more than 40 full-time, 25 part-time staff, and hundreds of volunteers who know about 38,000 teens in the region. They serve about 10,000 in clubs—what YL calls youth groups—or camps and discipleship.

Whitworth has 70 students who serve 25 Spokane Metro YL clubs in high schools and middle schools.

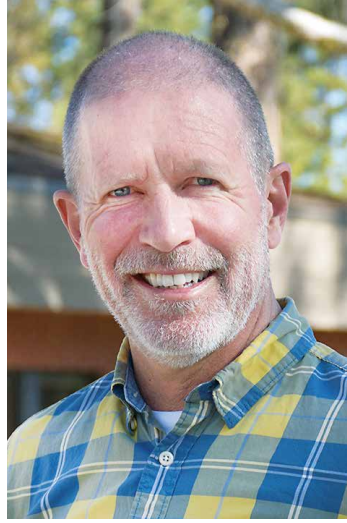
"YL clubs are non-Christian meetings which present Jesus. When volunteers are trained, they enter a team of adults and college students who are praying and have a vision for their school. The goal is expressed in the prayer, 'Lord, let us find and build relationships with some students in this school,'" he said.

A club's ministry focuses on one school.

"We pray for the school, visit kids at lunch, volunteer as coaches, help at track meets, and tutor and mentor youth. All is in the hope of building relationships and earning the right to listen," Kent said.

Along with clubs, the region has two ministries: 1) Capernaum—named for the town where Jesus did his first miracle—works with special needs students who are physically or mentally impaired, and 2) Young Lives works with teen parents, aged 14 to 21.

Whitworth graduate Shauna Edwards started Young Lives in



Kent McDonald

2008. Kent's wife, Linda, joined her in 2009.

Monthly meetings and life skills nights include child care and meals so the parents can play games, do crafts and hear a YL talk. Mothers receive clothing, diapers, wipes and other items donated for their children.

Linda left Young Lives to work at Lumen High School, 718 W. Riverside Ave., which Shauna founded in 2020. The school caters to parents aged 14 to 21. Grants from the Washington Charter Association and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation fund it. The school has an early learning center.

The idea is for the school to fill the gap for teen parents who drop out because they have nowhere to take their children. Alternative schools often are not taken seriously and are less rigorous academically. Lumen takes teen parents seriously, understands and programs around their needs, and is rigorous academically, Linda said.

In working with youth during the pandemic, Kent and Linda have encountered teens' depression and loneliness. Teen suicide has risen, becoming the second leading cause of death among teens, Kent said.

"It's tough for youth. More than ever, we want to have relationships with them and help them navigate challenges of being teens in today's perplexing world," Kent said.

He described younger genera-



Linda McDonald

tions as "connected but alone," seeing isolation as a challenge.

"We have not been able to be with youth on their turf. That's hard. How do we meet youth when the pandemic makes access to them at school, sports and other activities impossible?" he asked. "It's hard to be incarnational when we cannot meet in person."

Technology has been a silver lining as Zoom allows Whitworth students who established relationships with youth to have clubs online with activities and laughter while discipling kids they know who want to learn more about God.

"Zoom meetings have been hard, but we've done well," Kent commented.

One Whitworth student held a Bob Ross-themed painting club, collecting supplies so everyone could paint the same mountain scene over Zoom. After painting, they talked about God's imprint on their lives.

Linda said opening Lumen, where she is executive assistant/office manager, was challenging during a pandemic. She helped set up weekly student food de-

liveries, provided computers and internet hotspots.

The school's capacity is 120 students, but only 43 are enrolled because of COVID. The school is in-person two days a week, but hopes to move to four days in the fourth quarter.

Kent, who considers himself multi-denominational, defines youth ministry as "creating a safe place where kids can hear other kids' stories, feel safe enough to tell their story and eventually hear the story (of God)."

Working for Young Life has been a blessing for him given the Northwest has historically been considered the most unchurched area in the U.S.

"To reach young people in a 'post-modern,' 'post-Christian' world is challenging," he said, "but we are making headway. Now our biggest task is researching this generation called 'Gen-Z' and understanding how they are different from the previous generation, 'millennials.'"

"We are part of God's church,

but have a unique role, like Catholic orders. We serve as a mission arm to reach young people," he said.

"Churches are vital. Our goal is to reach youth who would never go to a church and we hope they become part of a local congregation to continue growing in faith," Kent said. "It starts with leaders meeting kids, sharing Jesus' love and taking them to the church we attend."

For information, call 777-3241 or visit mountainwest.younglife.org or lumenhighschool.org.

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Worship leaders learn ways to incorporate anti-racism in worship

Eighteen pastors and worship leaders in seven denominations and from eight states have been meeting virtually since January to learn, share and nurture worship experiences on “Anti-Racism and Christian Worship.”

Whitworth church music professor Ben Brody and Kalani Padilla, graduate ministry student intern, gather them in the Formational Worship Calling Community as part of Whitworth University’s Office for Church Engagement, which is funded by the Lilly Endowment.

The goal is to equip church leaders to plan engaging worship incorporating themes of racial justice.

Discussions focus on several books, including David Swanson’s 2020 book, *Redisciplining the White Church: From Cheap Diversity to True Solidarity*.

“Worship practices have the potential to support or undermine our formation as disciples of Christ. Prayer, song, table and word shape our perspectives on race for good or ill,” said Ben, who is also chair of Whitworth’s music department.

“Racism is prominent in our society. Churches have a responsibility to address it. With worship a weekly community gathering, it is the central point of contact for engaging issues,” said Kalani, a 2019 graduate in music ministry and English, who earns a master’s in theology in May.

After meeting every two weeks for six months, participants will join Whitworth’s Ministry Summit June 21 to 24 and develop projects in their churches through December.

Ben, who grew up in Portland, Ore., is in his 18th year at Whitworth. In directing campus worship, he works with 30 student worship and music leaders. He is also music director at Colbert Presbyterian Church.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in music education in 1997 at Whitworth, a master’s in 2003



Ben Brody

and a doctorate in 2007 in choral conducting at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Ben’s interest in race in the church started when he was music director at First Presbyterian in Seattle and the church studied *Divided by Faith* by Michael Emerson and Christian Smith.

“It was my awakening to challenges churches have in engaging racism,” he said. “I began to understand what Martin Luther King Jr. meant when he said 11 a.m. Sunday is the most segregated hour of the week.”

Realizing it was important to partner with someone from another culture for the “Anti-Racism and Christian Worship” project, he chose Kalani.

A third-generation Filipino American, she grew up in an Asian-American Pacific Islander majority community in Hawaii.

When Kalani first came to Whitworth, she experienced culture shock that made her more attentive to race, but Spokane has been her home for six years, more than a quarter of her life.

In the fall, she begins master’s studies in fine arts, poetry and teaching writing at the University of Montana.

Because Kalani’s father was worship leader of a Foursquare church, Kalani was immersed in jubilant, charismatic, non-denominational worship music. She works with Ben to oversee



Kalani Padilla

Whitworth’s worship teams.

The “Anti-Racism and Christian Worship” group includes seven pastors and 11 worship leaders from Washington, Oregon, California, Montana, South Carolina, Nebraska, Texas and Utah. They are in Presbyterian, Lutheran, United Church of Christ, Episcopalian, Evangelical Covenant, United Methodist and non-denominational churches.

One is in a 4,000-member Lutheran church. Others are in churches with 40 members.

They meet 90 minutes every other Monday on Zoom, opening with songs and prayers that uplift justice.

In discussing *Redisciplining the White Church*, they explore what anti-racism means. Some participants are helping their congregations develop anti-racism statements.

“Statements are often developed by small groups of church leaders, discerning how to introduce anti-racism and build buy-in by the church,” Ben said. “The way churches understand racism continues to evolve.”

“In academia, we seek to develop expertise, but never reach the point of arriving. As we move ahead, we find the next thing to deal with. We need to view anti-

racism as a lifelong process, not a topic to master,” he said.

“How we pray shapes our understanding of God’s concern about racism,” Ben said.

Kalani observes that few churches effectively use sacred space to create conversations on race, while society has already been creating such conversations in secular space.

“We need to acknowledge the sacred space in storytelling and learning from each other’s stories,” she said.

“It takes a certain bravery for a pastor or church leader to initiate conversations that may make some members uncomfortable,” Ben said, adding that in small groups people over time build trust and reveal personal dynamics that help them see the racism they harbor and need to address.

“The church leaders said they often want to say things but are afraid of offending people,” said Kalani, who values hearing them share their ethnic histories. “Some realize for the first time that even if they are white they have an ethnic history.”

Ben said the gatherings energize participants, who had thought they were the only ones in their spheres of influence concerned about racism. In the group, they feel encouraged and empowered to go back to their congregations and address issues in ways they might not have been comfortable to do before.

Some started reading groups on anti-racism and bring elements from their study into worship. They believe the church has a role in advocating for change in the community, Ben said.

Several find that prayers in worship are a way to address race.

“Many lacked the language to pray in a way that addresses institutional racism,” Ben said. “For many, confessing sin was

about personal sin. Now they realize it’s also important to confess institutional sin.”

One pastor during the season of Lent added a prayer of lamentation for the sins of racism in “our culture and community.”

“It’s a new idea for many. Confessing systemic racism in worship together can be a powerful first step to acknowledge racism and advocate for change,” Ben said. “It’s a small change, but disruptive change can be healthy for growth.”

Kalani said they introduced social justice songs that help people see institutional racism and introduced prayers from blackliturgist.com.

She pointed out that when Paul preached to Jews in Jerusalem, some rejected his teaching, but he continued to preach the Gospel.

“When we look at anti-racism in worship in the U.S.,” said Ben, “we must help our congregations realize that racism had a formative role in our nation’s founding. We are living through the results of that history.”

Kalani observed that the goal is not necessarily a multi-ethnic church, but dismantling racism in church life and expanding respect for different cultures and people through songs, stories and ideas shared in worship.

For their projects—study groups, retreats or anti-racism worship resources—Kalani and Ben also encourage participants to engage the congregation in the wider community.

For information, call 777-3214, email bbrody@whitworth.edu.

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Catholic Charities develops two housing projects

Catholic Charities is developing two new permanent, affordable, supportive housing projects—Pasco Haven for individuals and Mother Teresa Haven for low-income families.

Pasco Haven will have 60-units of affordable housing for vulnerable residents. Monthly rent will average \$196. Residents will have onsite access to services to help them improve their lives, including counseling, case management and health care.

Catholic Charities is partnering with Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health and the Benton Franklin County Continuum of Care and others to provide more services.

Mother Teresa Haven is a 48-unit permanent supportive housing project beside Catholic Charities' 72-unit Sisters Haven family affordable housing community at the Holy Names Campus. Monthly rent will average \$245. On-site services will include counseling, case management, healthcare and recreation. It is funded by an allocation of 9 percent tax credits and a loan from Catholic Housing Services Eastern Washington.

Construction on both begins in 2021 with opening in 2022.

“Low-income individuals and families face unimaginable hardships now. People can't move forward in their lives unless they have a safe and healthy home to

sleep in each night,” said Rob McCann, Catholic Charities' president and CEO. “We will continue building housing in Eastern Washington until every person in need has a home to call their own.”

Another 72-unit affordable housing complex for families in Spokane broke ground last month and will be ready for families to move by September.

These projects are helped by the Day 1 Families Fund grant awarded to Catholic Charities in November 2019. Pasco Haven and Mother Teresa Haven are its 12th and 13th affordable housing projects since 2012.

For information, call 358-4500 or visit cceasternwa.org.

In May, Washington Nonprofits offers conference, COVID grant opportunities

The annual Washington Nonprofits virtual State Conference, “Rethinking Place, Space and Time,” looks at how the pandemic has challenged ways of thinking about place, space and time in personal and professional spheres, as well as across communities nonprofits serve.

Held from May 17 to 21, it will include nearly 50 sessions on topics such as racist roots of nonprofits, white nonprofit leaders and anti-racism, shared leadership, networking tools, collaboration tips, resilient leadership, policy advocacy, nonprofit health, transformational leadership and workplace health.

For information, visit wastatenonprofitconference.org.

From May 10 to 24, Washington Nonprofits reports that Commerce via ArtsFund is receiving applications for \$2,500 to \$25,000 grants for COVID impacts on nonprofits in three categories:

- Arts/culture groups promoting artistic, creative, cultural, scientific, technological or heritage enrichment programs.
- Neighborhood nonprofits improving the social health, safety and wellbeing of their area.
- Sports/recreation groups doing programs for children and/or adults with coaches and organized practices.

For information, call 990-6835 or visit artsfund.org/nonprofit-community-recovery-grants/.

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Created May 2021

City subcommittee seeks feedback to Sustainability Action Plan

By Catherine Ferguson, SNJM

More than 40 volunteers who are passionate about Spokane's future have given significant time in the last two years to draft the City of Spokane's Sustainability Action Plan on issues related to how climate change may affect Spokane.

The Sustainability Action Subcommittee (SAS) led by Kara Odegard, manager of sustainability initiatives for the city, serves under the City Council's Public Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainability Committee.

Kara, who has a background in environmental and social impact consulting, felt her own passion for environmental policy develop from a 2018 trip she made with a group of local business, government and nonprofit leaders to Copenhagen. The trip included then City Council President Ben Stuckert, current City Council President Breean Beggs, former Mayor David Condon and others.

"Our group went there to observe the many changes made to make the city more sustainable and learn what might be possible in Spokane," she said.

Her experience has led her to seek more education in the field and she plans to attend online programs at either the University of Vermont or Arizona State University in the fall.

"People and stakeholders need to come together to co-create solutions and move our community towards resilience in the face of climate change," Kara said. "The climate strategies must address historic inequalities and environmental injustices and undo environmentally racist actions and systems."

Now that the plan is drafted, she is overseeing a six-month period of consultation with the public.

The committee seeks input that will lead to consensus on seven areas of sustainability the plan addresses, said Kara, referring to the subcommittee's public outreach efforts prior to its consideration by the Spokane City Council.

"Climate change is a global issue that needs local action, and cities are a part of the solution. The plan does address climate, but it really aims to make the community more resilient in the face of such things as the pandemic and economic downturns," she said, explaining the importance of the plan.

The SAS has also researched solutions the city and its resi-



Kara Odegard manages sustainability initiatives for city.

dents can take to mitigate Spokane's contribution to climate change.

Beginning with a look at the sources of greenhouse gases in the Spokane area, the plan identifies seven key areas and provides a comprehensive set of strategies it recommends the City Council adopt on 1) energy and buildings, 2) transportation and land use, 3) water resources, 4) economic prosperity, 5) waste diversion and material conservation, 6) natural environment, and 7) health and wellbeing.

"As we worked on the plan," Kara said, "we became aware of new concerns which needed to be included. For example, some of the changes recommended could impact the jobs available in Spokane. We reached out to labor unions and others in the community concerned about work and added a section on justice for workers in transition."

This Sustainability Action Plan is not Spokane's first. In 2009, under then mayor, Mary Verner, a plan was developed but never reached the implementation stage because of a change in administration.

Kara said that although they actually started over with this plan, they were impressed when they looked back at the 2009 plan with how far ahead of its time it was.

As they developed the plan, the subcommittee did refer to action plans in other cities and modeled some of the approaches on plans that had been developed in Reno, Flagstaff and Portland.

Everyone working on the plan besides Kara is a volunteer.

Elyse Hochstadt, who has taken on the role of communications lead for the subcommittee, is an example of the kind of passion that motivates the participation

planet," she said.

Both Elyse and Lisa Gardner, the council's director of communications, emphasized how important it is for the future of Spokane that the public engage in the planning process now while there is a six-month period of study and response from the public.

First, it is important that the mayor and City Council members know this plan is important to the public.

Second, there is need for substantial public input for any changes that can make the plan's implementation improve the quality of life for everyone in Spokane, particularly communities that are sometimes marginalized and left out.

Lisa commended Kara's work in reaching out to communities of color to assure that their input is included in the plan.

The subcommittee offers several options for people in Spokane to become involved with this plan during the study and response period when public opinion is being solicited.

The complete plan and a 24-minute video overview on it

is at the subcommittee's page of the city's website, where there is also a link to a survey through which the public can make their views known.

The subcommittee is also offering three virtual workshops to inform people about the plan and provide an opportunity for asking questions and giving input.

Those workshops are from 6 to 7:30 p.m., Thursday, May 20, 10 to 11:30 a.m., Saturday, May 29, and 6 to 7:30 p.m., Thursday, June 3. Registration for the workshops is on the SAS webpage.

Kara emphasized that only with community support can the planning goals be fulfilled to ensure Spokane's future.

She said all of Spokane would benefit from the proposed environmental programs and policies.

"Members of the community should be prepared for the challenges to come, and this means all city actions must be evaluated for their impact on the climate," Kara said.

For information, email kodegard@spokanecity.org and visit <https://my.spokanecity.org/sas/>.

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Kristine Hoover - director of Gonzaga's Institute for Hate Studies

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It plays a role in our aspirations to be a better, more inclusive community as it supports ecumenical, interfaith, nonprofit and community efforts.

Articles point to work that needs to be done to help us value one another and build empathy. It shares inspiring stories of those who model leadership to counter hate and leadership for the common good. The Fig Tree helps us see ourselves as a rich and diverse community that has both a moral imperative and an economic imperative.

Our work is to create welcoming communities that name justice and equity as criteria to define what leadership is and is not. We also promote what is needed to move society forward towards the beloved community. That is what The Fig Tree has done, does and will do for us.

Ben Cabildo - director of AHANA-Multi-Ethnic Business Association

I worked with The Fig Tree for more than 10 years through Unity in Action.



I appreciate The Fig Tree for two reasons: It provides a voice for our struggle in the community and a sense of belonging we need in our daily work to fight discrimination and marginalization.

We can read The Fig Tree and not feel alone. It gives a sense that people are out

there doing the same things so we do not feel alone in the struggle. The Fig Tree is strong support for justice in the community. When people get to the point they feel like giving up, the Fig Tree's reports of struggles gives a sense of belonging and being part of a big movement.

Kiantha Duncan - president of NAACP Spokane

I learned of The Fig Tree soon after moving to Spokane. It is community driven, a good read about different faiths, about different initiatives bringing the community together through justice, love and kindness.



The NAACP and Fig Tree have had a relationship for years that is important to the city and members, supporting work and organizations that do justice, love, peace and unity.

I hope you will support it.

Verne Windham - program director of Spokane Public Radio

We are not alone.

Ever stammered, stuttered and glanced at the ground when admitting you are a Christian? That happens, because we live alongside Fundamentalism that says, "I am right and you are wrong."



What do we need?

Our personal fundamentalism challenged. Seeing the "other" is not a spineless capitulation to an external tolerance while we protect deep-seated pre-conceptions. We need both information and the challenge of the "other." This is a value The Fig Tree brings me: The voice of the "other."

There is so much more than my com-

fortable assumptions. There is the recognition of the many diverse challenges for our brothers and sisters. Then there is recognizing them in us, in me. When that happens, we begin our journey on the path to solutions.

Did I say path? There are many roads. The Fig Tree points to important ones. The ones that can lead us forward are widened and paved by our need and our collective will.

That's why I value the enlightened mechanisms of our civilization. In Spokane, The Fig Tree, its Resource Directory, and the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference are paths on that journey.

On that journey, we need to remember: I am not alone. We are not alone.

Terri Anderson - Spokane director Tenants Union of Washington

The Tenants Union has been in partnership with The Fig Tree since we opened our Spokane office in 2013. We participate in the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, making citizens aware of tenants' needs for policy changes. Few know of landlord-tenant laws, tenants rights, what policies do and what gaps lead people to be homeless.



People also learn of our services through The Fig Tree newspaper and Resource Directory. The newspaper has run articles on the housing crises and the racial divide in housing. They bring volunteers to our agency and draw people to testify for city ordinances. Articles inspire people to write legislators.

We advertise in the Resource Directory every year and many tenants learn about us from that. Our services do no good if people do not know about them.

The Fig Tree shares our concerns for equity and justice for all.

Jeff Lambert - director of Dishman Hills Conservancy

The Fig Tree is the only publication in Spokane focusing on nonprofits. It keeps us up on innovative programs of the faith and nonprofit communities.



I was recently interviewed as director of the Dishman Hills Conservancy. The article informed readers about plans for our education program and inspired response of one woman donating a five figure amount.

Jerry White - Spokane Riverkeeper

The Fig Tree helps us speak truth to power and collaborate. Riverkeeper communicates ways the river needs protection and seeks to connect communities, like the five upper Columbia tribes who were water keepers for millennia.

We appreciate The Fig Tree covering issues that are hard to communicate, helping people understand why they are important. It shares stories of community members, leaders and advocates, connecting us to leaders and water advocates on law and advocacy. It's easy to lose perspective and the spiritual side. The Fig Tree highlights the spiritual nature of environmental, justice and community advocacy.



The Fig Tree is more than written words. It relates to work of creating just and loving relationships with communities and nature.

To donate, visit thefigtree.org/donate.html or send a check to The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane WA 99202.

Reflections

Sounding Board

Commentaries

Reflections shared on decline in members, land acknowledgement

A recent headline has me pondering changes I've seen in my life. For the first time in 100 years, less than half the people in America even claim to be church members. Also, less than half of Americans say religion is important to them. How did this come about?

It's not immigration. Immigrants are much more religious than people born here. Yes, culture has been more and more secular, but churches have changed, too.

For many years, and certainly in the 1940s, the traditional denominations were focused on sharing the good news of God's love in Jesus. Pastors were starting new churches and walking neighborhoods, dropping in to talk to people. In those days nearly everyone was ready for company any time.

By the mid-1950s those churches were overrun with baby boom children and those churches turned inward. It would be enough to raise those kids in the faith, and they set out to do just that. They hired young, happy youth directors. They felt successful even while they were failing to convince their own young people that a life of faith and life in a community of faith was something they would want.

I grew up in that time, burgeoning Sunday School and a hundred kids in youth group. How many of my peers are living a life of faith, in a community of faith, today? With each generation it faded further, yet ask a long-time Lutheran, Methodist or Presbyterian for their best vision of the future and it's likely a return to that time of vast failure.

When I was a kid, the evangelicals weren't worldly. They were focused on

winning souls, filling stadiums for Billy Graham crusades, introducing people to Jesus. Their focus was on decisions for Christ. Then they had their own time of growth and apparent success.

Even as the traditional denominations' youth groups shrank, the evangelicals' youth groups soared. As they built megachurches and experienced such success, they took another look at the world.

We should be running this place, they said, and began to put time and energy and resources into politics. Now they have good news to share with those who are politically and culturally conservative. Those who support gay marriage, accept evolution as fact or vote for people without an R by their name are soldiers on the other side of the culture war.

Many are still in denial, but they're losing their next generations just like the traditional denominations did. They have not convinced their youth that a life of faith and in a community of faith is something they want.

The traditional denominations never made a rational decision to turn inward and give up sharing good news with the world. In fact, they kept trying, weakly. The evangelicals never made a rational decision that culture war, fighting for their vision of America, was more important than anyone's relationship to God. Both turns happened, and so, we're a less and less religious nation.

The question is, will there be other turns? Will we become as secular as Western Europe? Will a few folks find themselves led to help all kinds of people see the difference Jesus makes in our lives?

Will younger generations want a life of faith, in a community of faith?

Ladd Bjorneby
Retired Lutheran pastor

The Spokane Public Library partnered with the Spokane Tribe of Indians to create a land acknowledgement statement to be displayed at all branches. It includes a version translated in Salish:

The statement says, "This building sits on the traditional homelands of the four bands of the Spokane Tribe of Indians: Sntút?ulixw'i, Snxw'mene?i, Sçqesciłni, and Sçewile? (Upper Band, Middle Band, Lower Band, Chewelah Band). Since time immemorial, the Spokane Tribe of Indians has lived and cared for these grounds, identifying themselves as 'sqélixw,' or 'Flesh of the Earth.' We pay our respects to their Elders—past, present and emerging.

"We show gratitude to the land, river and peoples who have been fishing, hunting, harvesting and gathering here for generations. May we learn from one another's stories, so that we may nurture the relationship of the People of the Spokane Tribe and all those who share this land."

A land acknowledgement formally recognizes the Indigenous Peoples as the original residents of the land. It also educates and brings attention to the history of the land occupied and is a commitment to stand in solidarity to combat Indigenous erasure.

Land acknowledgements have been released by a growing number of institutions across the United States and Canada.

The Spokane Tribe of Indians has also honored the library with a Salish name

for the third-floor hall of the renovated Central Library. The new nx'yx'yetk'w Hall—pronounced n-whee-whee-et-k-wh—overlooks Spokane Falls.

The Spokane River, an anthology about the Spokane River edited by Paul Lindholdt of Eastern Washington University, found five or six different traditional names for the Spokane River and nx'yx'yetk'w was one.

"The Central Library is one of the few places in Spokane with a commanding view of the river. It's hard to ignore the presence of the river there," said Barry Moses, Spokane Tribal member and Salish translator. "Naming the space nx'yx'yetk'w Hall, which translates to 'Life in the Water,' speaks to the ancestral significance of the river to our people."

Naming public spaces with Salish words gives the Spokane Tribe of Indians more visibility.

"We are adamant about getting the Salish language back into the native lands and having the presence of the language in our ancestral spot," said Devon Peone, instructor at the Salish School of Spokane.

Andrew Chause, executive director of the Spokane Public Library, expressed commitment to work with the Spokane Tribe of Indians to develop more future collaboration and partnerships for outreach, education and the community.

The Spokane Public Library has six branches and houses nearly half-a-million items.

For information, visit spokanelibrary.org.

Amanda Donovan
Communications Director

Calendar of Events

- May 2** • **Perry Street Thursday Market** opens, 924 S. Perry St., 3 to 7 p.m., thursdaymarket.org
- May 3** • **"Trauma and Healing in Asian American Communities Today,"** with New York University psychology professor Sume Okazaki, hosted by Anthropology Department, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, gender Women's and Sexuality Studies and WAGE Center, Eastern Washington University, bit.ly/aapiheal, noon to 1 p.m.
- **"Always On: How to Turn Up the Volume on Everyday Communication,"** Monica Cortés Viharo, actor and consultant, online 7 p.m., humanities.org/events
- May 5, 12, 19, 26** • **PBS Asian Americans** Documentary Discussion Series, virtual event of EWU Libraries, plam@ewu.edu, noon
- May 6, 13, 20, 27** • **Taizé Prayer Service**, Zoom, 4:15 to 5 p.m., bartletts@gonzaga.edu
- May 6** • **Peace and Justice Action** Committee, videoconference, 5:30 to 7 p.m., amurillo@pjals.org
- May 8** • **Spokane Farmers Market** opens, 5th and Brown, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., spokanefarmersmarket.org
- May 12** • **Immaculate Heart Retreat Center** Morning Prayer, "Easter Reflections on Bishop Daly's Pastoral Letter, The Most Holy Eucharist," Sister Mary Eucharista SMMC, Our Lady of Fatima, 3327 S. Perry St., 9 a.m. to noon, pre-register at 448-1224 ext. 100 or online www.ihrc.net
- **Luis Rodriguez**, poet, novelist, journalist, Spokane Community College Hagan Center program online, Facebook Live at 10.30 a.m., YouTube at 6:30 p.m., scc.spokane.edu/News-Events/Live-Events
- **Kendall Yards Night Market** opens, 1335 W. Summit Pkwy., 5 to 8 p.m., kendallnightmarket.org
- May 12, 19** • **"What's Age Got to Do with It?"** Dori Gillam, online, 11 a.m., humanities.org/events
- May 13** • **25th Annual Hispanic Graduate and Young Scholar Recognition** Virtual Ceremony, Facebook Live, 5:30 p.m., hbpasokane.org
- May 13, 27** • **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, videoconference, 5:30 to 7 p.m., slichty@pjals.org
- May 14** • **Appalatin**, foot-stomping, hip-swinging sounds unite Appalachian folk and high energy Latin music, Zoom Webinar, 6 p.m., mwpac@gonzaga.edu
- May 14-16** • **World Relief virtual silent auction** fund raiser to support accessible legal help for immigrants, 6 p.m. Friday to 6 p.m. Sunday, wrsokane@wr.org
- **"Angels in America, Part 1: The Millennium Approaches,"** 7:30 p.m., Main State Production virtual livestream, kdawson@whitworth.edu, 777-3707
- May 15** • **Stage Left**, Zoom Webinar on Stage Left Theater as a force for political, intellectual and social stimulation, noon, mwpac@gonzaga.edu
- May 17** • **NAACP Spokane** General Meeting, 7 p.m., Facebook
- May 18** • **Fairwood Farmers Market** opens, 319 W. Hastings, 3 to 7 p.m., fairwoodfarmersmarket.org
- May 19** • **"Breathing In Community: PJALS Virtual Benefit: Healing, Transformation, Joy,"** launching Spring Fund Drive, 6 p.m., <http://pjals.org/2021-benefit>
- **"Sometimes Heroes: America's Changing Relationship with Its Veterans,"** online, noon or 1 p.m., humanities.org/events
- May 21** • **"Molly in the Mineshaft,"** Zoom Webinar on the Newgrass group, bluegrass music with a new twist, 6 p.m., mwpac@gonzaga.edu
- May 21, 22** • **"From Mexican to Mexican-American: A Family Immigration Story,"** professor Carlos Gil, 6 p.m. Friday, 2 p.m., Saturday, online, humanities.org/events
- May 22** • **"Higher Power: The History of Evangelicals in American Politics,"** WSU professor Matthew Sutton, online, 7 p.m., humanities.org/events
- May 23, June 6** • **Faith Action Network** Spring Summits 2 to 4 p.m., Zoom, schubring@fanwa.org
- May 26** • **Millwood Farmers Market** opens, Millwood City Park, 3 to 7 p.m., farmersmarket.millwoodnow.org
- **PJALS Campaigns** Workshop, 7 to 8 p.m., pjals.org
- **"Heating Up: The Ethics of Climate Change,"** Brian Henning of Gonzaga, online, 7 p.m., humanities.org/events
- May 28** • **Wolfelt Professional Training: "Sudden Death, Suicide Grief and Trauma Loss,"** Hospice of North Idaho, 2290 W. Prairie Ave., Coeur d'Alene, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., hospiceofnorthidaho.org
- May 30-June 5** • **"Lakes Leg Aches** Virtual Challenge," lcsnw.org/8lakeside, 343-5020, cmckee@lcsnw.org
- June 1** • **"Are Salmon Doomed? Hatching a Plan to Save the Northwest Icon,"** climatologist Nick Bond, 6 p.m., online, humanities.org/events
- June 2** • **Fig Tree mailing** and distribution, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 10 a.m. on for pick up, 535-1813, kaye@thefigtree.org
- June 3** • **Fig Tree Annual Meeting**, Zoom, 1 to 3 p.m., 535-1813 or mary@thefigtree.org
- June 4** • **Emerson-Garfield Farmers Market** opens, 2310 N. Monroe, 3 to 7 p.m., market.emersongarfield.org

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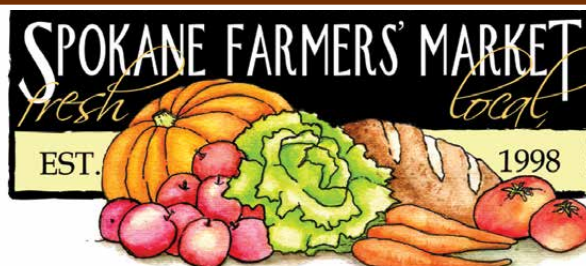


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Saturday, May 8 & Wednesday, June 9

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Food Stamps/EBT, Visa/MC, WIC & Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Coupons

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Upcoming Retreats at Spirit Center:

- June 8-10 ~ Our Earth Through the Eyes of Faith
- July 19-21 ~ Praying with Jesus
- July 23-30 ~ Come to the Quiet
- August 23-29 ~ Living as a Monk in Everyday Life: A Benedictine Cohort

Flexible dates available for private retreats and hosted groups.

Spirit Center is open as of May 2 with Covid safety protocols.
 Learn more at www.spirit-center.org.

Spirit Center retreats at the Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho
 208-962-2000, www.Spirit-Center.org



KPBX KIDS' CONCERTS

Listen on KPBX 91.1 FM

SIBLING REVELRY

Saturday, May 15 at 1 p.m.

Siblings from four different family ensembles play a variety of classical music on



strings, piano and brass instruments in a special concert hosted by Verne Windham. Tune in for excellent performances and fun family dynamics.

Stream online at SpokanePublicRadio.org

Event Donors



with a grant from the Johnston-Fix Foundation



Taizé prayer service via Zoom
 Thursdays from 4:15 to 5:00 PM

Celebrating new life!

For more information, contact Shonna Bartlett at bartletts@gonzaga.edu.

We invite you to join us for reflection, prayer and spiritual renewal.

Spokane Mobility Services reaches out to feed hungry in new ways

Bringing her commitment to feed people with dignity to Special Mobility Services (SMS), Holly Chilinski developed a way to use county CARES funds to meet needs of hungry people who lack mobility.

Working with the Spokane Food Security Coalition, she sees the need and coordinates logistics related to pandemic needs and transportation resources, using SMS vehicles to deliver food. The coalition works for an equitable, resilient food system.

To scale the daily need, the project used partnerships with Jewels Helping Hands, New Hope Resource Center, the Zone Project, Meals on Wheels and SMS drivers. They delivered food to food insecure households. The STA loaned a Vanpool vehicle to move more food. Second Harvest provided most of the food.

“I’ve long been in the world of food services. Transportation is a departure from my usual vein of work since I came to Spokane from Montana after high school to be near my sister,” said Holly, who first worked for a year with AmeriCorps VISTA with Feed Spokane in 2007.

Next, she worked three years with Shalom Ministries, which serves meals with dignity to people downtown in the New Community Church building at 518 W. Third Ave.

There, she learned the names of the 300 people who came. She helped the program shift from using long rectangular tables to round ones and to having volunteers sit with guests to break down barriers.

Then she worked with the region’s two Meals on Wheels programs—two years with the Greater Spokane County MOW and three years with Mid-City Concerns MOW, until March 2019, when she started at SMS.

“With Meals on Wheels, I saw the effects of isolation and the importance of having caring people visit seniors,” Holly said.

Her role as mobility manager for SMS services for seniors and disabled people gives her the opportunity to increase transportation options so all people in the county have what they need for health and are visible.



Holly Chilinski connects food and accessibility.

Holly finds joy in serving people in all circumstances.

“I value the dignity that delivery of food offers. I strive for new ways to promote someone receiving help in a compassionate, kind manner,” she said.

“For food distribution, it needs to be low barrier and accessible so dignity plays out,” said Holly, who would like to see the month-long food delivery pilot project continue.

On March 9, the five agencies that received CARES funding in 2020 approved by the Spokane County Board of Commissioners provided a food insecurity report. This report included effects of the funding and projections of future need, Holly said.

Themes of the presentation were: 1) collaboration is essential to the efforts, 2) funding has economic benefits for farmers and restaurants and 3) new ways of ensuring access were essential to the program’s success.

The commissioners allocated \$48,307 for December to create a COVID food delivery system as part of SMS’s one-click-one-call system.

“Our goal with SMS is to provide a service for individuals that is effortless, rather than confusing or frustrating. People are not used to asking for help, but the privacy of their request for food was honored through sms1.org, or by calling or texting 211.

“For at-risk homes, food needs show first. Food is a gateway to other care in our partnerships in the community,” Holly said.

In December, SMS met daily requests for 60 to 1,000 boxes of food, delivering a total of 80,000 pounds of food to 2,000

households in the county.

“People needed deliveries because they were at-risk of catching COVID, lacked access to services of food banks because of the days and times they were open, lacked access to transportation or had limited mobility—using walkers, canes or wheelchairs,” she said.

A follow-up showed a high level of food insecurity in the population SMS serves downtown, with 44 percent saying they felt food insecure more than 12 times a month.

“Most deliveries were in the downtown core where the pov-

erty rate is 46.3 percent and 62.4 percent are in no-vehicle households,” said Holly. “East Central, West Central and Hillyard neighborhoods have high need.”

“Many individuals said they choose between paying bills on time and eating, or worry their family will not eat,” she said. “Having food delivered meant they were able to plan meals, they felt the community cared and they were able to focus on work or caring for family members.”

Holly hopes SMS can continue the project for people with no access to a vehicle and have limited mobility, because “there is need to deliver food to more than seniors and need for more services.”

In April, SMS began a pilot program, Growing Neighbors. Volunteers go outside, exercise and care for the environment while taking care of neighbors.

Holly seeks volunteers to deliver food by bicycle and food partners to be hubs to distribute food in their neighborhoods.

Partners support the food delivery project with excess food resources and benefit from having increased service capacity with deliveries to people who cannot

get to food distribution centers, even in their neighborhoods.

“To increase the sustainability, equity and resilience of this program and neighborhoods, volunteers will also pick up excess produce from community gardens, stock little free pantries and pick up compostable food scraps to deliver to community composting hubs,” Holly said.

SMS’s role is usually to transport people to have access to medical care to be healthy.

Food assures health, so it is an area for growth and may include transportation to grocery stores or farmers’ markets, she said.

SMS’s mission since 1973 has been to provide opportunities to move people, connect communities and provide mobility and opportunities in the lives of seniors, people with disabilities and people with low incomes.

SMS transports people to Medicaid appointments, provides a community shuttle to connect rural communities—Newport, Ritzville, Davenport and Deer Park—to Spokane.

For information, call 217-9375 or email hollyc@special-mobility.org or visit sms1.org.

Keep gatherings safe.

Protect your family and your community



Gather outdoors, if at all possible. If indoors, open windows to increase ventilation.



Separate servings. Avoid communal food and sharing utensils. Don’t share drinks.



Mask up. Wear a face covering when not eating. Consider having extra masks on hand if people forget.



Wash early and often. Ask adults and kids to wash hands on arrival, before and after eating, and before they leave with soap for at least 20 seconds. If there is no access to a sink, provide hand sanitizer.



Avoid close contact. Give smiles and air hugs only, and prepare kids ahead of time to do the same.

Get vaccinated so we can all get back to our gatherings.

Anyone 16+ years is eligible to receive the vaccine.

vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov

SPOKANE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Boundary changes are coming!

- 3 new middle schools
- 6-8th grade middle school configuration
- North side: adjusted in 2022
- South side: 2023-2024 school year

The SPS School Board will hold a public hearing on the final proposed boundary adjustments on June 2.

Tune in to KSPS channel 7 at 7 p.m. on May 13 for a detailed look at what these changes mean for your family.

Visit spokaneschools.org/boundarychange to learn more about this important topic.