

36TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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September 2020  
Volume 37 Number 7

Micah 4:4

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(509) 535-1813 • 535-4112

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

# Riverkeeper keeps making progress

By Mary Stamp

Fishing for Chinook salmon each spring with his grandfather on the Willamette River, Jerry White fell in love with rivers. Now he seeks to preserve rivers so others can fall in love with them, too.

With Spokane Riverkeeper, he works to keep waters clean, banks litter-free, users healthy and safe, and fish runs sustainable.

“If the waters are healthy, people are healthy,” he said.

River use includes fishing, boating, floating, swimming, paddleboards on or in the river, walking and biking on trails beside the river, or just going to the river to enjoy the sounds, serenity or sunsets.

Spokane Riverkeeper, which began as a project of the Center for Justice, is now an independent nonprofit with its own board and bylaws. It moved to a new office in the Community Building at 35 W. Main after the Center for Justice closed March 17.

Jerry has worked there six years, five as executive director, along with half-time technical director Jule Schultz.

“As a member of the International Waterkeeper Alliance, we protect the river and give it a voice,” Jerry said, referring to efforts to limit



Jerry White seeks to keep river waters clean and banks picked up.

toxic discharges, reduce turbidity, pick up litter, serve river users and restore fish runs.

“The river is cleaner. As a society, we have made progress on certain types of pollution, like phosphorous and bacteria. Cities now have stormwater systems. Dischargers have put in more sophisticated treatment and filtration,” he said.

Jerry considers the Columbia River Watershed his home, living his early years in Corvallis, Ore., on the Willamette River. His family moved to Cheney where his parents taught at middle school.

“I remember coming into Spokane when I was in the fifth grade, looking over the Howard Street Bridge and marveling at the green water,” he said.

While studying anthropology at Western Washington University in Bellingham, he often spent summers salmon fishing in Alaska.

After graduating in 1988, Jerry worked five years as an archaeologist with the Bureau of Land Management and National Forest Service in Spokane. He assured environmental compliance under the 1980s National Historic Preservation Act that required cultural

*Continued on page 4*

## Undoing Racism involves awareness of history, of one’s culture, of truth

Until COVID-19 curtailed her travels, Victorya Redstarr was facilitating “Undoing Racism” workshops from Alaska to Rhode Island as one of 100 core trainers who help groups understand what racism is, where it comes from, how it functions, why it persists and how it can be undone.

Workshops through the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond help participants learn from history, develop leadership, build community accountability, create networks, undo internalized racial oppression and understand the role of organizational gate-

keeping in perpetuating racism.

The institute believes “the fabric of racism” was an inextricable part of the U.S. founding, but can “be undone through anti-racist organizing with accountability to communities most impacted by racism.”

Victorya, who grew up in Nespelem among Nez Perce Tribal members on the Colville Confederated Tribes Reservation, had just wanted to be a secretary. She had no thought of standing up before a group of people to train them, but she believes her mother led her into this work when she

said, before she died in 1988, that something was coming down the line for her.

As a People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond trainer for 16 years, Victorya has seen the training transform people “to understand the truth of racism” so they no longer hold onto the “status quo of racism.”

After graduating from Coulee Dam High School in 1967 she went to business school in Portland, Ore., guided by the tribe’s education director.

She was secretary at Hanford United Nuclear for five years, which paid for her hobby of photography.

Returning to the reservation, she was a teacher’s aide for three years, before working for the City of Spokane in purchasing for five years and in data processing for another five more years.

Driving to powwows and root fests on the Yakama Reservation and elsewhere, she and her mother talked. Victorya had decided not to marry. Her mother told her about Chief Joseph, her grand-

*Continued on page 5*

## Resource Directory sent by mail, bulk deliveries

The 2020-21 Resource Directory has been published and mailed. Four Second Harvest Inland Northwest volunteers—John Ammann, Chuck Richardson, Debbie Taggart and Michael Teague—helped deliver 4,600 copies on Aug. 27.

Fig Tree volunteers will deliver 2,500 copies bulk orders in early September. About 4,350 copies were mailed, 1,300 went to Catholic Charities of the Inland Northwest and 3,200 copies remain to meet requests.

“Marshalling resources efficiently and effectively is key to feeding and nurturing communities,” said Jason Clark, president and CEO of Second Harvest. “The Fig Tree’s resource directory is an important, user-friendly guide of the broad range of faith and nonprofit groups and organizations that make up our region’s support network. We’re proud to play a role by helping Fig Tree distribute the directory.”

Information in the print edition is online at [thefigtree.org](http://thefigtree.org) by clicking “directory” in the menu and choosing the category.

Directory editor Malcolm Haworth continues to receive calls and emails for updates to listings in online pdfs and the COVID-19 pdf.

This year The Fig Tree implemented technical changes to page size, formatting and type styles to bring more consistency to the typography. Now those are implemented, setting up the pages will be quicker in the future. The 2020-21 directory added eight pages, going to 208 pages, and shifted from a stapled to a perfect binding. Northwest Offset Printing in Spokane Valley did the printing.

“Each year, we make phone calls, send emails, search web-

*continued on page 2*

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## Religion News Briefs

### Around the World

World Council of Churches News, PO Box 2100  
 CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: +41-22 791 6111  
 Fax: +41-22 788 7244 www.oikoumene.org

#### WCC, Pontifical Council release document

The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue have released a joint document, "Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action During COVID-19."

#### Churches seek to prevent violence against women

Latin American churches lead efforts to prevent rising violence against women. As coronavirus cases rise sharply in Latin American countries, so has violence against women.

#### U.S. NCC issues statement on police shootings

The National Council of Churches (USA) released a statement Aug. 26 expressing outrage over still more police shootings of Black men. The statement reads: "It is hard to believe that we are in the position to have to issue another statement on police shootings. Yet here we are."

#### GEM School panel calls for prophetic action

"We are in the midst of four pandemics, and they are intertwined. The COVID pandemic has revealed more vividly the pandemics of economic injustice, racism and climate change," said Cynthia Moe-Lobeda in her presentation to the 2020 GEM School. "This could be the gateway to far more compassionate, just, and ecologically sane ways of structuring our life together in God's good garden earth." The GEM School is the Ecumenical School on Government, Economics and Management for an Economy of Life. It is a joint program of the Council for World Mission, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the WCC. Its program runs through October.

#### Thursdays in Black is growing in Namibia

The Thursdays in Black campaign for a world free from rape and violence has been intensified in Namibia, bringing awareness of the heightened risk of violence against women and children during the COVID-19 lockdown.

#### Bossey alumni from Thailand continue their ties

Alumni from the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute Bossey who live in Thailand are continuing to foster ecumenical activities and relations. Every year for a decade, they have offered a local orientation for new students from Thailand who are headed to Bossey.

#### Campaign calls for donations for Beirut victims

"Beirut Hope" campaign calls for donations for victims of Beirut explosion.

George Ziadeh is CEO of the Compassion Protestant Society, which has started a fundraising campaign, "Beirut Hope," to help the hundreds of thousands of people affected by the explosion in the port of Beirut on Aug 4.

#### Global concern for human rights in Zimbabwe

The World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Communion of Reformed Churches and Methodist World Council sent a letter to the churches and people of Zimbabwe expressing solidarity with the nation in its difficult quest for human rights and justice.

#### Prayers continue for Korean reconciliation

'History and memory' connect with the Korean reconciliation process, say churches. The war on the Korean Peninsula 70 years ago to divide Korea has yet to end, so more prayers and discussion are needed to raise awareness for the path to reconciliation and peaceful co-existence. In August, the WCC published "The Light of Peace: Churches in Solidarity with the Korean Peninsula," a collection of resources WCC member churches can use to recognize 70 years of unresolved conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

### Resource Directory connects the community

*continued from page 1*  
 sites and send mailings to update listings to keep the ever-changing information current," said Malcolm. "We encourage people to update information all year."

The Fig Tree produces the annual Resource Directory as part of its mission to connect people so they network and engage in common action, as well as to inform people in need of resources to assist them in times of crises, through transitions to housing, jobs, education and more, said Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp.

"Reading the copy this year, I realize how many resources offer opportunities to volunteer, connect for information and find ways to serve the community and make it a better place to live," she said.

One hundred businesses, agencies, nonprofits and government entities supported the directory with their advertising.

"We are also grateful to the 12 community partners that made major donations," said Mary.

They are Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington, Banner Bank, Catholic Charities of

Eastern Washington, The Community Building Foundation, Dennis Cronin Attorney at Law PS, Empire Health Foundation, Innovia Foundation, Meals on Wheels - Greater Spokane County, Providence Health Care, Second Harvest, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary and St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Coeur d'Alene.

Others may still join this list. For information on bulk orders or advertising, call 535-1813 or email mary@thefigtree.org, call 216-6090 or email resourcedirectory@thefigtree.org.

### Partnering for Progress plans virtual auction

The Partnering for Progress "Into Africa" Auction will be a virtual auction this year, with bidding from 9 a.m., Monday, Sept. 28 to 5 p.m., Friday, Oct. 2.

Attendees will bid on live and silent items and join a livestreaming program from their own

homes. The auction catalog viewing began Aug. 24 at <https://partneringforprogress.org/virtual-into-africa-auction>

The livestream event with professional auctioneer Rose Backs and special guests will be held from 7 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 1.

P4P is a nonprofit, Spokane-based organization that facilitates health, education, sanitation and economic development programs in rural Kenya.

For information, call 720-8408 or visit [www.partneringforprogress.org](http://www.partneringforprogress.org).

### Disability Action Center awarded grant

The Disability Action Center Northwest in Moscow has been awarded \$94,458 as part of the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation National Paralysis Resource Center (PRC) 2020 Expanded Impact grants program.

The grant will allow the center to expand its current Ramp Up Project in its service area that

includes counties of Northern Idaho plus Garfield, Asotin, Whitman and Spokane Counties in Washington.

This project increases the independence of people with paralysis by purchasing aluminum modular ramps for temporary loan, while a permanent solution can be developed.

The Ramp Up Project works with its partner organizations to install and remove the ramps. They also work with the consumer to find permanent options, so the ramp can be used by someone else.

For information, call 208-883-0523, email [dac@dacnw.org](mailto:dac@dacnw.org) or visit [dacnw.org](http://dacnw.org).

### IHRC becomes quarantine medical facility

As COVID-19 negatively impacted Catholic parishes and institutions in the Spokane Diocese, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC) had to cancel its programs at least through the end of the calendar year.

Deacon John Ruscheinsky, IHRC executive director, engaged groups to strategize on IHRC's future. Then Bob Lutz, clinical

director of the Spokane Regional Health District, asked Catholic Charities to help his office identify and staff a quarantine medical facility for individuals with COVID.

Catholic Charities suggested IHRC. Beginning Aug. 1, IHRC became legally licensed as a COVID-19 quarantine facility, with a contract through Dec. 31,

renewable monthly. Catholic Charities will provide social support services, sanitizing and maintenance. IHRC staff will continue to work from home.

This development gives IHRC staff time to reconfigure programs for spiritual enrichment COVID when limitations are lifted.

For information, call 448-1224 or visit [ihrc.net](http://ihrc.net).

### Faith Leaders will hold a virtual fall vigil

Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC) will hold a virtual vigil for its fall "Healing of the Earth" event beginning at 5 p.m., Sunday, October 4.

"Look What's Being Done" will be the theme, with agencies showcasing what is being done even in the midst of a pandemic to heal the Earth.

FLLC will read an opening statement on "Hearing the Wisdom of the Earth," followed by readings from faith and non-faith texts, said FLLC facilitator Gen Heywood.

Franciscan Sr. Pat Millen OSF will do a virtual Blessing of the Animals.

There will be three-minute videos from sponsoring groups, sharing what they are doing to heal the Earth, and a virtual visit to their display tables.

Participants will go to chat on Zoom to sign up volunteers.

FLLC has continued to hold Truthful Tuesday Vigils through the summer, with three focused on COVID-19, including one on vaccines.

The Poor People's Campaign has events planned, said Gen, who has been involved with Moral Monday call ins. Information is at <https://www.breachrepairers.org>.

For information, call 408-593-9556.

The Fig Tree is published 10 months each year, September through June.

#### Deadlines:

COPY - 3rd Fridays ADS - 4th Tuesdays  
 It is published by The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization.

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## Marijke Fakasiieiki consults part time with The Fig Tree to build support

Marijke Fakasiieiki began in June as development associate for The Fig Tree, working a few hours a week. Her full time job is serving as executive director of Refugee Connections of Spokane, helping refugees and immigrants gain access to resources.

She brings more than 20 years of interfaith and ecumenical nonprofit and development experience and was nurtured in the mission and values of The Fig Tree, often volunteering with it—to help edit, make calls, plan the Legislative Conference and fundraisers—growing up in Spokane, daughter of editor Mary Stamp.

After graduating from the University of Oregon in 1994 in international studies, she earned a master of religious studies at Gonzaga University in 1996, a certificate in ecumenics at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, in 1996, and a master of divinity at Pacific School of



**Marijke Fakasiieiki**

Religion in Berkeley in 1998.

Along with ecumenical/interfaith commitment from study and work with the World Council of Churches, Church World Service, the California Council of

Churches and as an ecumenical/interfaith consultant in California, she brings skills in raising funds, building relationships and understanding faith and nonprofit communities.

“The key to interfaith and ecumenical relations is to share stories of organizations with constituents through email, social media, website, phone, mail and face to face,” said Marijke. “The Fig Tree mission of sharing stories about what people do to make a difference is much needed to inspire others to be hopeful and act.”

“The Fig Tree is a valuable educational tool for congregations, nonprofits and the community to encourage leaders to work together on common projects,” she said.

Since joining The Fig Tree as a contract consultant, she helped the Resource Directory approach its budgeted goal in advertising and helped it meet the goal for community partners. She has helped

connect with community agencies to get acquainted while arranging deliveries for directories in the midst of COVID closures of many agencies.

With advertising is down because some businesses and nonprofits are closed, she has helped make new contacts to fill the gaps.

Last fall and into the spring, The Fig Tree’s “Branching Out” Campaign raised \$40,000 with the motivation of total of \$20,000 offered in matching funds to help underwrite a development associate position over several years, with the goal of strengthening The Fig Tree and Resource Directory reach for the future.

COVID-19 hit during the search process in March.

“With COVID, we could not reach out as previously anticipated,” said Mary, editor, “but we have been able to stretch more than we could have without the added consulting.”

Marijke’s main focus is her work with Refugee Connections Spokane. With COVID, the usual programs for refugee elders, English classes, refugee children, informational workshops, leadership training and a new program to provide services have readjusted. In the summer, part of the role was to provide food boxes.

Marijke’s cross-cultural skills mesh with The Fig Tree’s role of building understanding, bridges and dialogue.

“The Fig Tree fits my interest in supporting interfaith, ecumenical and secular nonprofit organizations through networking, education, advocacy, fundraising, communicating with constituents and media to empower vulnerable populations,” Marijke said.

Directory editor Malcolm Haworth is her brother.

For information, call 535-1813 or email [development@thefigtree.org](mailto:development@thefigtree.org).

## PJALS plans virtual benefit

Ingrid Sub Cuc, who is Indigenous Maya Kaqchikel and Q’eqchi from Guatemala, is the featured speaker for the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane’s Virtual Benefit from noon to 12:45 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 16, on Zoom.

The theme, “Believing in the Yet to Be: This Is the Moment, Building a Movement,” will focus on a world that is free of the racist, sexist and exclusionary obstacles and challenges.

Members, donors and new friends will share in an opportunity to be part of a movement for peace and justice, hearing how to expose and transform systems of hate, violence, exclusion and oppression through a just, nonviolent world and a culture of love and belonging.

Ingrid, who moved to the United States at the age of 12, is a graduate student at the University of Washington, where she continues to pursue her passion for indigenous rights and public health.

She is a passionate advocate for issues effecting indigenous peoples around the world, specifically focusing on indigenous identity, language, immigration, health and environmental issues. Raised in a Kaqchikel-speaking household with her grandmother and mother, she has since learned Spanish and English to pursue her studies, but remains an active student of her ancestral language.

Ingrid has participated in and presented at events such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA), PeaceJam UK and at various universities across Washington.

Her goal is to be an active member of her community as she continues to evaluate and develop her role as an indigenous woman in academia in the United States. Her work focuses on how to constructively and collaboratively advocate for local and global Indigenous initiatives.

Other speakers are Larry Valadez, who runs Azteca Investigations and Interpreting; Liz Moore, PJALS director; Duaa-Rahemaah Williams, a community advocate; Fernanda Mazcot, a social work student at Whitworth and advocate for health care and immigration; Sarah Hegde, in PJALS Young Activist Leaders Program, and Naghmana Ahmed-Sherazi, who is active in the Spokane Islamic Center, Spokane Women Together, Muslims for Community Action and Support, Asian Pacific Islander Coalition – Spokane.

PJALS seeks table hosts, guests and sponsors. For information, email [slicityt@pjals.org](mailto:slicityt@pjals.org) or visit [pjals.org/2020virtualbenefit](http://pjals.org/2020virtualbenefit).

## CELP honors UW Law Center director

The Center for Environmental Law and Policy (CELP) will mark their 25th anniversary with a live Facebook presentation and its annual fundraiser, “Celebrate Water,” from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 17.

They will present Robert Anderson, professor and director of the Native American Law Center at the University of Washington School of Law, with the Ralph W. Johnson Water Hero Award to honor his career at the center and his work protecting natural resources and tribal interests. He is also Oneida Indian Nation visiting professor of law at Harvard Law School.

Robert teaches American Indian law, water law, natural resources law and property law.

Funds raised will help CELP accomplish more victories for waters. One supporter will match up to \$5,000.

CELP became an independent nonprofit in 1995 with the mission to protect Washington’s waters. It was founded in 1993 by Ralph Johnson, University of Washington Law School professor, to serve as a voice for the public interest water resource management and preservation to improve

water laws and protect rivers and streams. He also established the Native American Law Center and Asian Law Center.

CELP has established standing for citizen challenges to state water right decisions, won recognition of the interrelationship of ground and surface waters, and convinced the Department of Ecology to meter water rights critical to salmon watersheds.

In addition, it helped win recognition of counties’ responsibilities to protect instream flows,

required Spokane county’s new waste water treatment plant to limit new discharges of PCBs into the Spokane River, organized U.S.-Canada alliance to support modernizing the Columbia River Treaty, and built relationships with community members, recreation business owners and Native American Tribes to protect watersheds.

For information, call 260-829-8299 or visit <https://celp.org/celebrate-water-2020/> or <https://www.facebook.com/CELPwater/>

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### Thank you to our community partners

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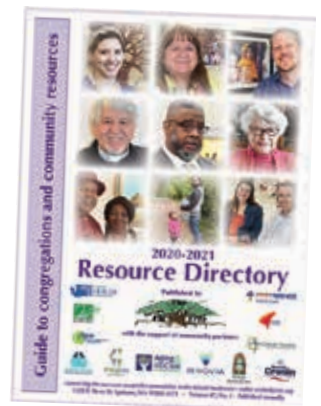
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**Published  
July 2020**

**Distributed  
Mailed in Summer  
Bulk Delivery  
in August/September**

## The Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience

of Eastern Washington and North Idaho invite you to our virtual

**Vigil for the Healing of the Earth**  
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# River cleanup efforts require persistence to keep standards once approved

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and biological clearance before federal lands were cleared for a road or timber sale.

In 1996, he earned a master's degree in teaching and for 15 years he taught history and English at Medical Lake, St. George's School and Shaw Middle School. His commitment to rivers, fish and environment wove into his lessons.

In 2004, he joined the Trout Unlimited Board. In 2008, he became an advocate with Save Our Wild Salmon. In 2014, Spokane Riverkeeper hired him.

**Jerry understands why** people settled along rivers.

"Indigenous cultures were spiritually, culturally and economically attached to rivers and fish. Rivers impact people today. My attachment to rivers is more than economic or social. I have a spiritual connection to the Spokane River and the Columbia River watershed that's deeper than having fun," he said.

"The river, people, fish and other creatures belong to the river and are entitled to the river's health and wellbeing," he said. "My caring is part of my belief that rivers, native fish and blue heron are entitled to exist because they are part of creation.

**"The river as part of creation** is sacred," he said. "It brings life and it brings death. The river is beautiful and dangerous. The river has an awesome energy—beyond power to turn water wheels.

"My mission with Spokane Riverkeeper is to protect the Spokane River. It's our river," he said.

Riverkeeper prioritizes several ways to protect the river.

• **First, Spokane Riverkeeper litigates** to defend clean water and wins cases. It upholds laws and policies, such as the Clean Water Act, to preserve and maintain waterways.

Deregulation threatens the laws, Jerry said. Some entities seek variances to standards that prohibit dumping toxic pollutants, such as PCBs, in permitted discharges through pipes into the river. The dischargers are Kaiser, Inland Empire Paper, Liberty Lake, Spokane and Spokane County, he said., adding that they seek variances because they say it's hard to remove PCBs from wastewater.

"We fight variances as a rollback to safety. Unfortunately, it is an ongoing epic. There's a long-term effort to weaken water quality," he said.

This summer, Spokane Riverkeeper submitted comments to the Environmental Protection Agency and Washington Department of Ecology on why variances should

not be approved and water quality standards weakened.

**Gonzaga Environmental Law Clinic** helps them uphold policies and laws, doing legal analyses of recent applications for 20-year variances.

"It's hard technically to meet the standard, but if a discharger wins a 20-year variance, it may become a permanent change, allowing them to continue dumping high levels of toxins in the river," Jerry said. "The river already exceeds the level of toxins for fish, making it unhealthy for wildlife and people. It's not okay to change the standard, just because it's hard to meet."

Riverkeeper joins in litigation with Puget Sound Waterkeeper, other Waterkeepers and the Makah Tribe to prevent rollbacks related to multiple toxins—such as PCBs and other pollutants.

Because litigations are part of its mission, Spokane Riverkeeper began as part of the Center for Justice. Now it works with a coalition of lawyers.

**Sometimes litigation is** not needed. The Department of Ecology set up a cleanup plan for the 70-mile-long, 600-square-acre Hangman Creek.

Jerry said they recently participated in a settlement with Darigold to protect the flow of turbidity into the stormwater system in North Spokane.

"It's an example of corporate stewards responding immediately," he said. "They settled out of court in the early summer, agreeing to install filters and pay \$125,000, which Spokane Riverkeeper gave to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe for restoration work to reduce turbidity on Hangman Creek above Tekoa."

The tribe is planting trees along the creek to prevent runoff when livestock enter the creek. That reduces turbidity, so the creek is

getting cleaner.

• **Second, this year,** Spokane Riverkeeper has partnered with Spokane River Forum to do the Get Up and Get Out Spokane Litter Program. They volunteers to pick up litter—sleeping bags, glass, plastic bags, aluminum cans, bikes and shopping carts—along the river corridor from Wellpinit to the Post Falls Dam.

Individuals, congregations, schools, businesses and other groups set cleanup days through the summer.

"We go with volunteers, encouraging them to wear masks and social distance," Jerry said.

**There have been 19 group** cleanups, plus two public litter events. In 2019, more than 400 volunteers picked up more than 20,000 pounds of riverside litter. With COVID, there are fewer people because of the need to distance.

"Refuse is from careless floaters and boaters, homeless camps and urban trash blowing," he said.

**"Plastics are pernicious.** There are huge amounts. It is the most concerning. Plastic breaks down into tiny pieces that pollute in the water and on the land. Birds, fish, animals and people eat the micro-plastic pieces. Plastic not disposed of properly, winds up in the environment," Jerry said. "We also find a lot of glass, which is an aesthetic problem, but not a pollutant, because it's inert.

"We don't know how to dispose of plastic. If it's burned at the Waste to Energy Plant, it emits carbon dioxide and PCBs. Only #1 and #5 plastics can now be recycled," he explained.

• **Third, Spokane Riverkeeper** patrols the river in three boats in

an outreach to homeless people. They partner with the Spokane Neighborhood Action Program and the Washington State University College of Medicine.

This summer, they have taken SNAP staff and physicians to people in 20 camps on the banks in inaccessible areas to avoid having camps moved, and to escape violence and theft.

"There are more people poor and homeless in times of economic insecurity," Jerry said.

SNAP helps people sign up for social security cards and move into transitional housing. Street medicine volunteers help with medical needs.

To deal with sanitation and litter issues, Riverkeeper offers litter bags so trash does not go in the river.

"Most use them because they want to keep the camp clean," he said.

• **Fourth, Spokane Riverkeeper** promotes wild fish populations, helping sustain redband trout and

supporting tribal efforts to sustain steelhead and salmon.

Jerry also connects farmers and environmentalists as stakeholders to encourage best agricultural practices to improve water quality.

As technical director, Jerry assists in all the efforts, with a focus on scientific data gathering. He takes river temperatures to assess the river's health and studies turbidity.

**Two events are planned** in the fall.

• The Wild and Scenic Film Festival with 90 minutes of short films and a group chat will be held virtually Thursday, Sept 10. Tickets give access to the virtual link and door prizes.

• The "Spoken River" on Oct. 28 will include a virtual auction of art and access to stories of connection with and inspiration from the Spokane River.

For information, call 464-7614, email [jerry@spokaneriverkeeper.org](mailto:jerry@spokaneriverkeeper.org) or go to [spokaneriverkeeper.org](http://spokaneriverkeeper.org).

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# Trainer moved out of her comfort zone, and invites others out of theirs

*continued from page 1*  
 mother's uncle, and about the medicine ways.

Her mother told her, "One day something will come to you to help change and transform the world. When the medicine way falls in place, you will know it."

After her mother died, she "ran away" to Seattle with no job. She was a secretary in insurance companies and then in customer service and human resources with the City of Seattle for seven years, before becoming a secretary at Antioch University.

**One day in 2001** when taking photos of West Seattle High School students challenging their Indian mascot, she met a woman who talked about Youth Undoing Institutional Racism and invited Victorya to a workshop.

After accepting that invitation, Victorya kept going to meetings and eventually met Ron Chisom of New Orleans, co-founder and director of the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. He asked her to facilitate trainings.

"I was bashful. There was no way I would talk in front of groups," said Victorya, who eventually trained to be a trainer.

**In 2004, she became** a full-time paid trainer and was assigned to co-facilitate a training in Juneau, Alaska.

"I hate flying, but when I went there I met other indigenous people and felt I was in heaven. I was hooked. Now I will travel anywhere," she said.

In 2006, she left Antioch and went to the reservation for a month to help her younger sister, Vivian, who was sick. Then she moved to Spokane to work with New Horizon Outpatient Treatment as a chemical dependency trainee, having become clean and sober in 1997. She then worked with the Kalispel Chemical Dependency Program at the Casino.

With a year of study at Seattle Central Community College, Victorya decided to complete studies at Spokane Falls Community College and Whitworth University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in liberal arts, community work and social services in 2013



**Victorya Redstar asks groups to look at history, selves, society.**

and "retired" to focus on doing trainings.

"I was doing People's Institute trainings in Alaska, Texas, Rhode Island, New York, Portland, Seattle, Everett and more," she said.

At each two- to three-day event, she is one of three trainers.

**When cancer slowed her**, she wrote a book on Chief Joseph, based on six stories handed down from her grandmother and family about how he stayed true to the Seven Drums tradition of the longhouse, drumming, gathering, songs and ceremonies. He did not convert to white colonial values and ways.

"My faith is from that spiritual tradition. In the spring, women gather roots and trained children on their roles, preparing roots and feeding the community. I'm a root digger and huckleberry picker. Even after the longhouse burned, I went back to the Colville Reservation for ceremonies on that place," she said.

**"Once you appreciate** your own culture you can appreciate others' cultures," she said.

Over the years, Victorya has learned every piece of the two-day "Undoing Racism" workshop and

puts "a medicine spin" on what she does.

**"Undoing racism is a lifetime** commitment," she said.

Not only does she facilitate groups in different communities, but also she shares Undoing Racism with her niece and nephew, who share the information with Reza youth.

"What we do in different communities differs," she said.

**One evening last fall**, with Kurtis Robinson of NAACP Spokane who has gone through the training, she gave an introductory presentation on "Undoing Racism" at First Presbyterian Church in Spokane, the first time she did a session at a church. He spoke about what the NAACP Spokane does and the impacts of racism in Spokane.

"I talked about the People's Institute as a multicultural, multigenerational organization with

white, black, Latinx, Asian and Native American anti-racists coming together as examples of what transformation looks like and how anti-racism impacts whites and people of color," Victorya said.

In groups with people of color, trainers of color speak openly about what they experience and how they are impacted, to establish their common ground in pain.

**"We do not say we empower** people. Participants are usually empowered already," she said. "We are not experts in what race or racism is. We let people guide us. It's about community self-discovery of how institutions condition us to uphold the status quo.

"Sometimes white people may be offended, feel guilty or want to intellectualize rather than work through their feelings," she said. "People who are tired of hearing about Black Lives Matter still need to hear about and understand it.

**"This work is sacred,"** she said, noting that she tells groups that transformation comes with truth first, then love follows.

"People who 'get' the workshop message know they are hearing the truth as never before, especially the history of how race belief began and who benefits," she said. "People of color blossom when they begin this journey by bringing their ancestors into the room. For indigenous people, it is about their tie to the land. This begins the transformation if they allow it."

Undoing racism begins with

awareness of one's own culture and continues as a life-long process, she said.

"White people need to accept they are white and take accountability for a collective process their ancestors started, including ancestors who created individualism that means no one has to answer," she said.

**Facilitators ask how** willing people are to be "anti-racist" and help dismantle "the race construct." She said their acceptance of that is the transformative moment.

People in denial, guilt and shame may not come to transformation, unless they are in touch with their "Sacred through Truth," she said.



"We watch individuals and groups work through their conditioning to come to a new way of being. This gives us hope," Victorya said. "Hope is in a collective energy sense. We cannot focus just on individuals or one group to 'get' it."

**COVID meant trainings** across the nation were cancelled.

Since George Floyd's murder and COVID, the People's Institute has shut down travel and in-person trainings.

Now they offer Zoom training. Victorya said they are relying on technology experts until travel can resume. She is also looking at local options.

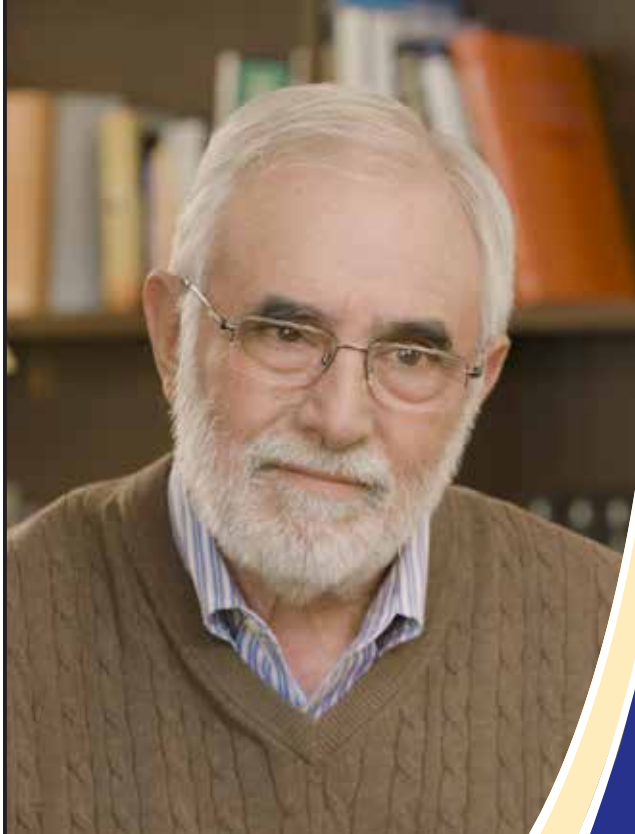
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# Lonnie Mitchell retires as pastor, continues to serve the community

Lonnie Mitchell, Sr., who was first appointed as pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Spokane 29 years ago, has stepped aside, so a new leader can be appointed to “take the church to the next level.”

He will continue involvement in community service and have an office at the Emmanuel Family Life Center next to the church.

“I started my ministry here to help people grow and improve their quality of life by being part of the solutions,” he said.

Over the years, he has worked with parishioners, politicians and community members to make Spokane a better place to live by creating solutions to poverty, homelessness, affordable housing, racism and police accountability.

**Some of his efforts include:**

- In 1994, he led an effort to rename the Laura St. cul de sac by the church “Richard Allen Ct.,” after the first AME bishop. Then New Bryan Arms Apartments were renamed Richard Allen Apartments and Richard Allen Enterprises formed to offer programs for low-income families.

- In 1995, he helped organize Unity in the Community. The first



**The Rev. Lonnie Mitchell, Sr.**

gathering 25 years ago in Liberty Park brought together people from all walks of life to showcase Spokane’s diverse cultures.

- In 1996, the Richard Allen Youth Academy, a preschool for infants to age four, formed when Community Colleges of Spokane closed its Head Start program in the church basement. When it disbanded in 2012, children went to the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center and Liberty Park Child Development Center.

- In 1997, Lonnie, Ben Cabildo, Nate Greene and others established

AHANA, the African, Hispanic, Asian and Native American business and professional association to support people of color in business.

**Lonnie then shifted** from managing programs to housing programs that move people from dependence to independence.

He and the church envisioned a community center in the Perry District. In 2005, the church broke ground for the Emmanuel Family Life Center. It was dedicated in 2010. The hope was for the ground floor to be a child care-preschool, but the building had no sprinklers, so the Richard Allen Youth Academy disbanded.

**When Emmanuel** Family Life Center opened, it housed the South Perry Learning Center after-school program, and a gym used by several basketball coaches to help youth to build skills.

Other tenants are Operation Healthy Family and The Fig Tree.

For several years, the Family Promise Open Doors day program for families was there. It moved last year to 2002 E. Mission.

Lonnie will continue to address homelessness, affordable housing and police and city policies, and work with the Spokane Ministers

Fellowship, the Spokane Coalition Against Racism, the United Way Board and the Hospice of Spokane Board.

“When I came in 1991, I believed my mission was to love people, to have had a ministry of love, instilling the idea of loving one another as Christ loves us,” he said.

**Lonnie, who grew up** in Franklin, La., went to Seattle after high school in 1973, joined the Army and served six years in Missouri, South Carolina and Germany, returning to Seattle. He worked 17 years with Pacific Northwest Bell and married Gospel singer Elisha in 1984. Through the AME church there, he began in ministry in 1985, was ordained a deacon in 1989 and an elder in 1991. His first church was Bethel AME. It had 13 members and now has more than 200.

**“Ministry is about** allowing God to shape our lives to love, not hate,” which he said has been important in challenging white supremacy and hate in the region.

“I have seen changes and progress, but there is still work to be done. Spokane is a predominantly privileged area, lacking awareness of its diversity,” Lonnie said.

“Over the years, I have seen leaders come to understand challenges faced by communities of color as we become a more diverse city.

Since the pandemic hit, he has urged people to move from doing what they have always done, to doing what they can to move forward and make improvements.

**In early August**, the church started in person worship services with distancing. Before that, he recorded sermons and posted them on YouTube. Meetings continue with social distancing in person.

“Despite COVID-19, the church and its financial support have grown,” he said.

**In the midst of protests** against police brutality after George Floyd’s death, he has been among leaders of the African-American community to help encourage the people to gather peacefully and seek solutions to systemic racism.

Lonnie and Elisha, who has just released a gospel album, “You Turn,” plan to visit their four children and 11 grandchildren in Texas, Colorado, Nevada and Seattle.

For information, call 389-6918 or email [revlonnie@yahoo.com](mailto:revlonnie@yahoo.com).

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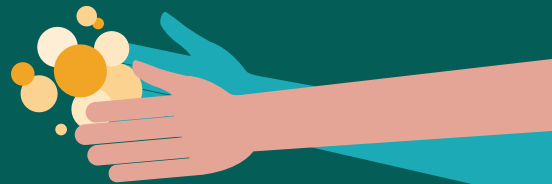
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## Inland NW Land Conservancy preserves land by agreements with owners

By nurturing partnerships and establishing agreements with private landowners, David Schaub helps protect land from development. Two recent efforts are creating wetlands for tundra swans and connecting two Spokane parks.

In 2017, he started as executive director at the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy (INLC), applying his experience in the outdoors, as a teacher and running a small business to help protect land and connect people to nature.

The conservancy seeks to create meaningful connections to nature for individuals, families and communities.

**“Only by direct experience with nature do people learn to care about it,”** he said.

INLC works with landowners to create conservation agreements that permanently obligate the conservancy to monitor those lands.

“We work with willing private land owners and communities to protect the land they care about,” he said. “We protect habitat, farms, forests and parks for the benefit of the community.”

“Our tools include buying land or establishing conservation easements that stay with the land even when it is sold. The landowner helps set the agreement, and can continue to live on the land or can sell it, but the agreement is in the title, limiting the use or prohibiting it being sold for a subdivision.”

**Through different tools,** he said the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy has protected 22,000 acres of land in Eastern Washington and North Idaho. It does not sue or lobby to change laws that may be overturned.

“I’m drawn to this work because I’m a consensus builder and look for solutions to problems, solutions that work for as many people as possible,” David said. “I like the cooperative approach, permanence of solutions and the variety of tools to bring conservation solutions to benefit our region. I love partnering with people who are thinking beyond themselves, and making land deals happen in partnership with community partners.”

David, who left Spokane after graduating from Lewis and Clark High School, said he is among Spokane’s “boomerangers,” returning first to Sandpoint after college and then moving in 2010 to Spokane with his wife, Heidi, and two children—now 13 and 15.

After graduating in 1993 from Swarthmore College in Philadelphia with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and environmental studies, he could not wait to return to the Pacific Northwest.

He spent six months in 1994 hiking the Pacific Crest Trail from



David Schaub collaborates to conserve land.

Mexico to Canada, using skills from growing up in a family active outdoors and from his experiences with scouting, backpacking and canoeing.

**“Living out of a backpack** on the trail in the mountains with a college buddy was formative and eye-opening. I realized how little I needed to be comfortable, hiking 30 miles a day, sleeping on the ground and waking up refreshed,” David said.

“I learned resilience and faith in my body when I looked at thousands of soul-wrenching miles ahead. I felt relief and accomplishment when I was done, and I had comfort and confidence in the natural world I wanted to share with others,” he said.

**So David settled in Sandpoint,** teaching elementary and middle school children and youth outdoor, environmental experiential education with a nonprofit, LEAP, the Leadership Education Adventure Project.

“Teaching children outside the classroom gave them a different way of being and learning, building confidence while developing community, and building leadership and communication skills,” he said.

As he led programs at Schweitzer, in the National Forest, along Priest River and at a LEAP camp, he realized that not everyone is comfortable outdoors.

**David then decided** he wanted to teach, so he moved to Seattle to earn a teaching certificate from Pacific Oaks College Northwest in 1998, a school with a social justice emphasis.

His studies, which included exploring his own racial identity, internalized racism and white privilege, were followed by teaching children of color in an urban school.

After a few years, David and

his wife started a small business selling environmentally friendly building materials in Bozeman, Mont. In 2010, they sold the business and moved to Spokane to allow his wife to pick up her career in public health. David was a stay-at-home father for six years, involved with the Dishman Hills Conservancy and learning about land trusts.

**The Inland Northwest Land** Conservancy started in 1991 as a volunteer organization. It first hired staff in 1996 and set up a nonprofit board. Some of the conservancy’s public projects include the Cedar Grove Conservation Area with the Liberty Lake Loop Trail, Mirabeau Point in Spokane Valley and expanding Palisades City Park. The staff of seven is supplemented by three dedicated volunteers.

Over the years, many projects have permanently protected 22,000 acres of land, including 62 private conservation easements, 38 partner projects and seven preserve properties that the conservancy owns and manages.

**INLC is working currently** with 12 different land owners on projects, which will be completed in coming years, because land deals are complicated and take time.

INLC collaborates with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeking Superfund money to help identify, conserve and clean wetlands in the waterway of the Coeur d’Alene River that is saturated with toxic heavy metals affecting organisms

from micro-invertebrate aquatic insects to migratory waterfowl. In particular, tundra swans die there every season as they migrate to the Arctic. When the swans dig their long necks into the mud to feed, they ingest mud that is saturated with heavy metals. Every year, hundreds die.

“It’s tragic because they mate for life. If one dies, the mate stays there, waiting and feeding and often dying there, too,” he said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife has identified some cleaner spots not contaminated by the metals and have helped create new wetlands there.

**“We seek to hold** conservation agreements with landowners so no one can undo the work,” David said.

“Toxics have been there since mining began in the Silver Valley and mining companies disposed of waste—lead, zinc, arsenic and cadmium—by dumping it in the river. It settled in the river valley and bottom of Coeur d’Alene Lake,” he said.

Fish and Wildlife surveys soil in the river basin to find less contaminated areas. It uses earth movers and dredges to create ponds that tie to the Coeur d’Alene River system. In the new areas, they control how deep swans can go into the mud for food.

**“It’s a complicated problem** and impossible to fully solve,” David said. “These strategies are efforts we *can* make.”

Now about 500 acres from three land owners are permanently protected for this purpose. By late October, David expects that INLC will add another 140 acres of conserved land to this project area.

Another project of the INLC is to connect the Rimrock Hiking

Trail in Palisades Park to the south end of Riverside State Park, creating an 11-mile trail and habitat corridor to Long Lake. Palisades Park is a forested, undeveloped park along a basalt bluff that connects with downtown.

**For 20 years, neighbors** wanted to acquire more land to connect the two parks, he said.

INLC has worked for nearly three years and has completed protection of 123 acres, which will eventually be added to Palisades City Park, so it extends to just south of the Burlington Northern Rail Line. Riverside State Park is on the other side of the rail line. In the future, a bridge may be built over the rail line to connect the two parks, creating a trail for hiking, biking and horseback riding, he said.

INLC is raising money to make improvements to the area so when it is transferred to the City of Spokane, the trail system with signage and parking will be in place.

**Coronavirus has delayed** INLC’s annual fall fundraiser.

David mentioned two other projects in process:

The conservancy envisions long-term land conservation inspired by the Olmstead Brothers Landscape Architects plan for parks throughout the city and county in the early 1900s.

INLC seeks to use a social justice lens to identify neighborhoods and communities underserved by parks, David said.

In addition, they are working with the Spokane Tribal Fisheries to protect land along the Little Spokane Watershed for fish habitat restoration.

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# YWCA Spokane's CEO continues advocacy for women in new role

Regina Malveaux, who has been CEO of YWCA Spokane since 2013, is the new director of the Washington Women's Commission as to Sept. 1.

In her new role, she will continue to advocate for women about sexual assault, domestic violence, child care and economic issues.

For now, she will stay in Spokane, and work remotely as other state staff are doing.

Since 2018, Regina has been a member of the Washington Women's Commission, which does research to advise the governor and works with state agencies "so policies create opportunities, not barriers, for women," she said.

"We insert our expertise to build relationships with local women's organizations," she said.

The nine commissioners are developing a survey on issues women face and their unique needs related to COVID-19 impact. She will work to build a strong leadership team, as she has done with Spokane's YWCA.

When Regina came to Spokane, YWCA Spokane was a \$3 million organization. Now its annual budget is \$5.5 million. It has expanded programs in mental health therapy and work readiness, remodeled Spokane's emergency shelter and added a shelter in Spokane Valley. It expanded its board of directors and created programs through partnerships with the city, county, law enforcement.

In 2015, Spokane Family Justice Center opened at the YWCA to provide coordinated services for victims of domestic violence.

The YWCA broadened community education on domestic violence and families living in poverty, which has helped "increase brand recognition and build support," Regina said.

With nearly 70 percent of the YWCA's income based on state, federal, local and private grants, she said it has kept the emergency shelters in Spokane and Spokane Valley open, while reducing in-person services such as advocacy-based counseling, therapy, job readiness, family law, legal advocacy, and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). Staff are providing some of these services remotely for clients who have internet access, so the YWCA has been able to maintain its funding and keep its staff.

"I would have liked to do more related to our mission to engage the community in eliminating racism and promoting social justice," Regina said. "We have expanded our Stand Against Racism event."

Since the murder of George Floyd, the Spokane YWCA joined in sharing resources from the



Regina Malveaux accepts role with Women's Commission.

national 21-Day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge in a 14-Day Challenge.

The local challenge sought to help community members create time and space in their schedules to build more effective social justice habits, especially around addressing race, power, privilege and leadership.

Each day focused on different topics.

The challenge was offered through daily emails from June 15 to 28 and sent to 700 people who signed up. It is still online—[ywcaspokane.org/challenge](http://ywcaspokane.org/challenge)—offering prompts that invite reading articles, listening to podcasts and reflecting on personal and historical experiences.

The daily themes are: "Anti-Racism vs. Non-Racism," "Equity vs. Equality," "Micro-aggressions," "Stereotyping and Cultural Appropriation," "Intersectionality," "Understanding and Utilizing Privilege," "Race and How It is Covered in the Media," "COVID, Xenophobia and Racism," "Inequities in the Legal System," "Housing Segregation," "Domestic Violence and Racism," "Education Disparities and the School to Prison Pipeline," "The U.S. Census and Voter Disparities," and "Call to Action."

"As other resources are available, the YWCA will add them to the website," said Regina, noting disappointment when in late May Spokane police used tear gas on the Black Lives Matters protesters because a small fraction began looting at the end of the march. She was also disturbed by the presence of the armed white mili-

tia, who seemed to have free reign on the streets.

"The days after George Floyd's murder were disturbing because I'm the mother of a bright young black man and the grandmother of two black grandsons," she said.

As she leaves the YWCA Spokane, she will stay on the national board of the YWCA to continue her connection to YWCA work. With YWCA USA, she worked with Sen. Patty Murray and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to help launch the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act campaign in 2019.

She helped pass gun violence prevention policies in the state, including initiatives for universal background checks and legislation for victim protection, extreme risk protection orders and victim notification.

"I chose to work with the YWCA because it provides practical direct services, works for public policies and promotes systemic change," said Regina.

Although her roots are in San Diego, where she was born and spent most of her adult years, she lived in Casper, Wyo., from second to eighth grades. Her father, an African American from Louisiana, decided to follow opportunity to the oil fields there. Her mother grew up in a South Dakota family with roots from Sweden.

Regina felt an affinity for the YWCA's mission to eliminate

racism, because she experienced race-based bullying in Wyoming, and felt an affinity for its work to address domestic violence because of having been in an abusive marriage.

She started studies at Alabama A & M University majoring in journalism and finished a degree in public policy at San Diego State in 1997. She earned a law degree at Howard University in Washington, D.C., in 2000.

Regina felt her goal to be in a public policy career wasn't consistent with being the mother of children who were five and seven. So she returned to San Diego and worked for nonprofits including the YWCA promoting public policy on behalf of women and children. She founded the Women's Legal Center and served as a director at the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation in San Diego.

In 2010, she began working

for the YWCA Norfolk, Va., but in 2012 returned to San Diego to help her family.

Deciding to return to the YWCA network, she moved to Spokane.

Regina is grateful that Spokane has embraced her as a civic leader. She believes the YWCA Spokane and its nonprofit service providers, social justice and government partners will continue to provide services and support women.

"In a city the size of Spokane it is easy to build relationships and collaborate with key decision makers to move people forward," she said.

The YWCA Spokane Board of Directors has named Jeanette Hauck, its long-time chief financial officer, as the acting CEO.

Jeanette has worked with the YWCA for 10 years, updating its financial plan.

For information, call 326-1190 or visit [ywcaspokane.org](http://ywcaspokane.org).

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# Liz Montgomery founded SIDS group to save lives of infants after her baby died

By Kaye Hult

After Northwest Infant Survival and SIDS Alliance (NISSA) decided to withdraw funding from their Eastern Washington office in 2011, Liz Montgomery, executive director, founded the Inland Northwest SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) Foundation, based in Coeur d'Alene in 2012.

NISSA reached out to her when her son, Mason, succumbed to sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) in 2002. She became a volunteer.

"Safe sleep guidelines didn't come out until 2012," she said. "I knew something that could save the life of someone else. Why wouldn't I spread that message to others to spare them the heartache I live with? These babies deserve to live. Their parents deserve to know the information."

Now, eight years later, the Inland Northwest SIDS Foundation (INWSIDS) has come under the NISSA umbrella once again. Liz is the executive director of this expanded organization. On Jan. 1, 2020, this merger created a single nonprofit organization in the Northwest focused on eliminating infant and child mortality.

• One of its programs, Healing Together, offers support for grieving people affected by a pregnancy, infant or child loss. The bereaved can access a 24-hour support line or join in monthly peer-to-peer support groups. They hold memorial events and provide phone, email and in-person support, referrals to professional counseling and emotional support packets.

• The Share Hope Memorial Garden also is available to the bereaved. The 24-hour support line is 206-548-9290.

• Safe Start offers education about infant and child health and safety.

• Their Safe Sleep for Northwest Babies program provides families in need with life-saving education, along with the necessary tools to keep their babies safe during sleep.

• In 2019, they offered 129 classes in Washington, Idaho and Montana. When needed, they provide cribs and sleep sacks.



Liz Montgomery visits the Shared Hope Memorial Garden in CdA.

• In addition, they offer training targeted to nurses, doctors and first responders. In 2019, 254 individuals received the first-responder training.

• NISSA Safe Start has a North Idaho Child Passenger Safety Team focusing on car seat safety education for parents and professionals.

"We want to make sure every parent has the knowledge and skills to keep their child safe during every ride," she said. "Our Safe Seat program allows us to provide car seats free of charge to children in need."

In 2019, they did 258 car seat checks, distributed 134 safe car seats and trained 89 professionals.

Eastern Washington has the state's highest SUID rate, she said. Health District 1 in Idaho, which includes the five northern counties, has the second highest SUID rate in Idaho, following Health District 2, which includes Lewiston.

**Ninety percent of these deaths** are caused by unsafe sleep environments, she explained. The use of pillows and blankets, tummy sleeping and bed sharing all contribute. Even twins need to have their individual beds, because they may roll on top of each other.

These deaths are preventable when babies do not sleep in bed with their parents or on a couch. When they use sleep sacks rather than blankets, they avoid suffocation, strangulation and overheating. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants use wearable blankets or

sleep sacks all the way through their first birthday.

Safe Start has a safe sleep class on Zoom, which is at safestartnw.org.

**With COVID-19**, child passenger safety and safe sleep classes are being held only on Zoom. INWSIDS is offering online classes for parents, caregivers, grandparents and babysitters. All in-person classes and car seat checks have been canceled through the end of 2020, when there will be re-evaluation on safety.

"Families who complete our Safe Sleep 101 class are mailed a sleep sack and safe sleep materials," she said.

**"When INWSIDS began** its prevention education work in 2012," Liz said, "Idaho's five-year average SUID rate was 94 deaths per 100,000 live births. After seven years of hard work, our education is working. The five-year death rate is dropping. A baby born today in Idaho has 13 percent less chance of dying from a sleep related death than one born six years ago. That's amazing!"

The best way for Safe Start education to happen is by partnering with agencies that already serve families, said Liz.

"We train staff at the Pregnancy Crisis Center in Bonner County, as well as the Bonner County EMS and Early Head Start once a year to reach rural communities," she said.

Safe Start also works with hospitals to make sure all staff are safe sleep certified. Sacred Heart,

Deaconess and Holy Family Hospitals were certified last year. Kootenai Health has received the training.

These medical centers have safe sleep policies to follow. Focus is on Eastern Washington and Pierce County, which includes Tacoma.

**"Every child deserves** to celebrate their first birthday and more, free from accidental death and injury," said Liz. "In our Every Child program, we partner with like-minded individuals, nonprofits, local health and safety organizations, and concerned people passionate about the well-being of children related to health and safety."

Every Child delegates traveled to Washington, D.C., in October 2019 to meet with Congress about the upcoming Scarlett's Sunshine Act, a bill to amend the Public Health Service to improve children's health and help better understand and enhance awareness about unexpected sudden death in early life. It passed the Senate in May, she said.

Through the Every Child program, October 2019 was declared "Safe Sleep Awareness Month" by governors of Idaho and Washington, and mayors of Post Falls, Coeur d'Alene, Spokane and Tacoma.

Liz said the NISSA board includes people who agree to volunteer for a minimum of 10 hours per month. Some teach safe sleep classes. Others offer office support. They help recruit donors and connect NISSA with their acquaintances. Board members come from Tacoma, Boise, Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls.

One member from Boise, paramedic Bart Buckendorf, took time off work to spend September and October 2019 walking more than 600 miles throughout Idaho. He taught 36 Safe Sleep 101 classes on his trek. He said SUID is heartbreaking. This was his way of working to eliminate it.

He ended his walk in Coeur d'Alene in October. The fire and police departments were at the celebration.

**Liz grew up in St. Maries,** Idaho. She attended North Idaho College and the University of Idaho, graduating in 2000 with a degree in elementary education. During her last year in college, she was required to do community engagement.

"It's part of my personality," she said. "It's who I am, and I love my community."

It has taken much time and effort to build support for her work, she said. She has only been able to work full time for the nonprofit for two and a half years.

NISSA receives no state or federal support, except for car seats. Much of the work has been done by traveling and training professionals in Idaho, Washington and part of Montana. They then go out and serve families. NISSA partners with other agencies.

Three to four times a month, they have offered classes in Coeur d'Alene. They offer classes on Zoom at multiple times a month.

**"I could write a book** about the serendipitous stuff that has happened," she said. "Whenever we have a need for Safe Start, it appears. Many people show support for our work. The generosity of volunteers, donors and board members has led to unbelievable growth. They are grateful for the information we offer, and respond by asking how they can help.

"Every year my job gets easier," she said. "Our fundraising and education are more established. We've come to the 'teen-age stage.' We are solidifying and fine-tuning what we're doing. We're finding ourselves, connecting dots and acting on plans. We have learned what works and are planning for the future."

For information, call 206-548-9290 or email [info@nwsids.org](mailto:info@nwsids.org).

## International Peace Day events planned Sept. 21

"Oneness of Humanity and Racial Harmony" is the theme on which Ann Dinan, founder of the Deeper Leadership Institute, will speak for International Day of Peace events, Gonzaga University and One Peace Many Paths will be on Zoom and/or in person at 6 p.m., Monday, Sept 21.

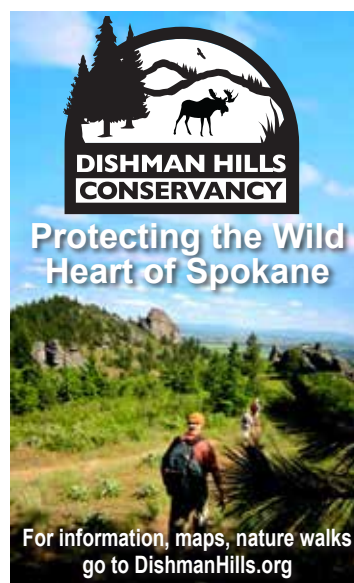
The event will include music by Gonzaga students directed by

Tim Westerhaus, the Eva Lassman Take Action Against Hate Awards and the World Peace Flag Ceremony.

Ann is an international leadership consultant, coach, speaker and author in the emerging field of peace leadership, which applies to corporate social responsibility mandates and culture change initiatives.

Kristine Hoover, director of Gonzaga University's Institute for Hate Studies, is working with Joan Boeckling of One Peace Many Paths to coordinate the events.

For information, call 313-3831, [hoover@gonzaga.edu](mailto:hoover@gonzaga.edu)



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## Cultural and religious symbolism set attitudes about dark and light

“We’ve got to be carefully taught,” and we are.

Where do we connect black with evil, bad or not knowing, and white with salvation, good and wisdom?

It’s in our everyday word choices. It’s in scriptures, too. It’s in the image politicians are painting to say they are the ones to choose. We need to be alert to those who divide to gain power *over* us.

Images of light and dark pervaded both party conventions in August.

Recently, a journalist referred to the 1920 Ocoee Election Day Riots as a “dark episode.” It’s about a white mob sweeping through a small Florida citrus town after a black man showed up at the polls to vote. It was two days of terror and a mob setting fire to houses and driving out black residents.

Seems like it really was a “white-perpetrated” episode...

Recently, Sen. Cory Booker, D-NJ, in a press release announcing a bill to make Juneteenth a national holiday said: “Our nation still has a long way to go to reckon with and overcome the *dark* legacy of slavery and the violence and injustice that has persisted after its end.” He could have said the “*white*” legacy of slavery. Instead, he could have said the “oppressive” legacy or “unjust” legacy, but he chose “dark,” reinforcing stereotypes connecting “dark”

with evil or wrong.

Black Lives Matter—like Black is beautiful in a previous generation—is a corrective to the ingrained assumption that black lives are expendable. We say Black Lives Matter as part of our re-education to value the “dark,” the “black,” the “night,” because we have been carefully taught by culture and faith to question, fear, reject, close out, hate and demonize that which is black or dark.

The imagery permeates our worship, our prayers, our Bible studies, our theology. Even the prayer of St. Francis calls us to move from dark to light, along with other word pairs that tell us what dark is.

We are carefully taught, even by our trusted spiritual symbols.

How can we overcome those entrenched images?

First, we don’t need the extra adjectives. In training writers for The Fig Tree, I teach that adjectives and adverbs, like “very,” add little. “Very” doesn’t tell exactly how much. The adjective “dark” also tells little.

Second, we need to set aside fears of the night, the unknown, the dark and relish in the beauty, wisdom, adventure and mystery of night, the unknown, the dark. Instead of hiding from the night, we can embrace it, overcoming fears, questions and uncertainties to relish the sounds of the names of those who have died and enter the dream for new relationships and equal rights.

Third, speaking of moving people from spiritual darkness to spiritual light can feed the colonial mindset that enabled people to enslave and convert others, to set up hierarchies of power, to set up acceptance of a diminished status that allowed for exploitation.

We all move back and forth, from times of wandering away from faith and to times of new perspectives.

We need to value the times of questioning, doubting and exploring that move us into deeper faith. It’s a shallow understanding to think that darkness is far from faith, and light is nearer to faith.

Fourth, we are all awakening, people of all skin tones and cultures, bringing our varying insights and innuendos. When we interact as equals, we can learn from each other. We have to be the change.

We need to see and value people with diverse skin tones and to value that people with diverse lives, characters, experiences, insights and wisdom can enhance our journey along the road of life and faith.

The dichotomies of extremism, either/or, good/bad, black/white, leave us embroiled in the extremism that undermines the American dream of people of different perspectives, opinions and political stances working together through democratic processes in a free republic to share with each other and grow from interactions to develop

a healthy society that includes all.

Some believe that an autocratic law-and-order governance is needed to control or police “evil” people who don’t look or think like they do. Some may espouse a good-bad perspective, comfortably assuming they are among the saved, while ignoring the call of faith to love God and love *all* the neighbors who God has created as we love ourselves.

Enlightenment and transformation come in democratic interaction, listening to and learning from each other in story sharing, give-and-take that helps us overcome our limited viewpoints. Fear blocks that.

We need to be open to seeing God in the dark and the light, the day and the night, and the beauty God created in our nuanced shades of skin, cultures, religions, opinions and insights.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton wrote recently about “God’s Beautiful Dark Works” through Creation beginning in the dark, Jacob wrestling at night, Israelites escaping slavery at night, God’s glory revealed in darkness, Jesus’s at night and the Resurrection happening the night before Easter.

We need to be careful about understanding what we have been taught, so we don’t jump to simplistic misunderstandings that limit our lives and the lives of others.

Mary Stamp - editor



## Readers share on evictions, being church, voting, diversity and more

As we face the demands of our changing world, I want to be real and hopeful with you. The ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are far reaching and one of these ripples will be more like a tsunami when it hits.

As we move into fall, the moratorium on evictions—extended recently through Oct. 15—will run out and we are expecting an unprecedented wave of homelessness.

In 2016, evictions were at a rate of 1 in 40 renters and, in order to address this reality, Family Promise opened a walk-in emergency family mass shelter with 60 beds to meet the demand. Today, one in three renters are behind on payments and could be facing eviction in October.

Family Promise is currently operating two 24/7 locations and are turning away families because of lack of capacity. The reality is that the community is not prepared to respond to the wave of homelessness that is coming.

Despite this reality, I am hopeful. I am hopeful because we have not been given a spirit of despair, but one of hope-filled endurance. We are fortunate that we can see what is coming and have a small window to adjust to meet the demand. Here at Family Promise, we are currently setting up the internal capacity to expand.

We need the help every one of our supporters and partners during this time.

We need supporters to dig deep and make significant financial investments in the lives of homeless children and families.

We need our volunteers to champion the cause of homeless families with children.

We need you to hold Family Promise guests, staff and volunteers in your thoughts and prayers.

It is going to be hard.

It will not be over fast, but together, we can endure.

Since June, Family Promise helped resettle 115 people in 43 families and helped place 21 people into permanent housing.

Other agencies in place to help respond to a surge of evictions are the Spokane WorkForce Council, which has \$1.4 million available in rental assistance. Catholic Charities will have \$500,000 in rental assistance.

The Eviction Defense Project will help

with unlawful evictions.

Emma Hughes and Joe Ader  
Family Promise  
familypromiseofspokane.org

### As we prepare for the fall,

I want to encourage you to continue to do any and all spiritual practices that will help you be grounded in the power of the Holy Spirit. As a reminder... Our churches are not “closed,” but we have in effect left the building while in-person worship gatherings are on hold. My prayer is that we will do the necessary internal and spiritual work that will allow us to continue to adapt to the changes swirling around us. May we be granted the gift of a fresh imagination that will help us deal with the fallout from this global pandemic as well as to work for racial equality in all of our communities!

The Rev. Gregg Sealey  
Inland Missional District - Pacific  
Northwest Conference of the United  
Methodist Church

I have been thinking about the votes I cast from Kazakhstan. In the fall of 2008, I was in training in the Peace Corps. I got my Washington state ballot on time and I voted in the presidential election. I was surprised and concerned that volunteers from other states, swing states like Michigan and Ohio, hadn’t received their ballots.

The Peace Corps staff organized a write-in ballot for any volunteer who hadn’t received a ballot from their state and made the effort to send those ballots back to the U.S. in the diplomatic pouch, so that those votes would be received and counted. That’s democracy. That’s going the extra mile to ensure that someone else’s participation in the governance and direction of our country is not impeded.

In 2010, I was still in Kazakhstan and I got my state ballot again on time, in my remote village where I was pretty much the only person who ever got any mail. I took it home to my host family to show them because I thought they’d be curious. They were. They had never seen a ballot before. They had never voted before. Kazakhstan is a “democracy” where no one ever actually votes and the same man has been “re-elected” with 90+% of the “vote” since

Kazakhstan was part of the Soviet Union.

Our democracy is only as real as our participation in it. If you want to access your right to vote and aren’t sure how, talk to me. If you want to talk through your frustrations with the ticket and a framework for making choices as a voter, talk to me. If you want to get involved in community organizing work here in Spokane for affordable housing, good jobs, childcare access or meaningful healthcare, talk to me. If you want to learn about the hows and whys of protesting, talk to me.

Being a democratic citizen, like being a disciple of Christ, is an endless journey of learning and becoming, showing up, navigating loss, and recommitting to the work. It takes all of us. I’d be honored to be on the journey with you.

The Rev. Katy Fitz Shedlock  
West Central Abbey  
Highland Park United Methodist  
Church

### August 15 should have been

the day we were gathered together in Riverfront Park for the 26th year of Unity in the Community. It’s hard not to have held it. We look forward to connecting our beautiful community every year.

It isn’t about the free school supplies or even goodies and giveaways that our vendors provide. That draws much of the crowd—by design.

The roots of Unity in the Community run deep in bridging the divide between people in Spokane. It is the time we spend to learn something new about our neighbors. It is that curiosity and education that draws us closer. When we better understand each other our hearts and minds form a connection to each other.

Join us in uniting our community every day. Be curious about another person’s background and perspective before you share your own. Be open to sharing yours with the intent to give kindness and love to one another. Above all, help our youth in this journey. They are already forging the future for us all.

Next year it will be Aug. 21, 2021!

Love and light from your Unity in  
the Community organizers  
April Anderson, Maresa Henderson

In the past few months, we have all awakened in a strange new world, a world full of terms like shelter in place, social distancing, PPE and essential workers. While it is easy to see and feel all the parts of daily life that are missing and harder than we could have imagined, a closer look shows us some clear ways in which the Spirit has been present, lurking where we might least expect.

The Spirit is there, for example, in the profound and unprecedented sense of community and solidarity we are witnessing, a greater awareness of the inequality of safety and health in poorer groups and racial minorities, especially the wake of killings, like that of George Floyd.

What does the Spirit have to say and teach us here? One way we can easily see the Spirit at work in our midst is in a Spirit of energy and unpredictability and creativity. All around us we are witnessing an unprecedented blossoming of creativity and inventiveness in response to the limitations that the pandemic has imposed.

It started with a flurry of home stitchers and others making masks and other protective equipment needed and has spread to ways to use internet connectivity for education, meetings, even parties across the country and across the world. We’ve seen birthdays and graduations with caravans of cars and in drive-in theaters, telemedicine professional appointments, countless musicians and entertainers sharing their gifts with us online, not to mention those who lean out their windows to sing together or cheer the first responders at an appointed time. There is even a group of RV owners sharing their “rigs” with doctors and others trying to respond to the medical needs of this time. “See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19)

As we live through this time of dying to the way things have been, not knowing yet what the future will hold, we do know that we are held gently in God’s hands and that the Spirit is at work in our midst, stirring the embers of our world.

Kathy Finley – author of eight books  
including *Savoring God: Praying with  
Our Senses*

# Calendar of Events

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Sept 3</b> • <b>Poor People's Campaign:</b> A National Call for Moral Revival, "Environmental Injustice, Race, Class and Climate Change, Zoom, 7 p.m.</p> <p><b>Sept 4</b> • <b>Blessing of the Outdoor Labyrinth</b> in memory of Polly McMahon, Cathedral of St. John, 4 p.m., Online Event</p> <p><b>Sept 5</b> • <b>Asian Pacific Islander Coalition</b> and Refugee Connections Census Outreach Event with school supplies and food boxes, Hmong Alliance Church, 425 E Olympic Ave., 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.</p> <p><b>Sept 8</b> • <b>350 Spokane</b> meeting, 6:30 p.m., 350spokane.org</p> <p><b>Sept 10</b> • <b>"Virtual Wild and Scenic Film Festival:</b> Where Activism Gets Inspired," Spokane Riverkeeper, Live Stream, 7 to 9 p.m., spokaneriverkeeper.org</p> <p><b>Sept 13-26</b> • <b>111th NAACP National Convention,</b> Virtual Convention, <a href="https://www.naacpconvention.org">https://www.naacpconvention.org</a></p> <p><b>Sept 15</b> • <b>Mennonite Country Auction</b> bidding starts, 2020mennonitecountryauction.org</p> <p><b>Sept 16</b> • <b>"Believing in the Yet to Be:</b> This Is the Moment, Building a Movement," Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane Virtual Benefit, noon to 12:45 p.m., on Zoom, <a href="https://pajals.org/2020virtualbenefit">pajals.org/2020virtualbenefit</a></p> <p><b>Sept 17, 18</b> • <b>At the Intersections:</b> Oppression, Identity and Resilience," hosted by Community Resilience Initiative and Spectrum Center of Spokane, 1 to 4 p.m., Zoom, <a href="https://creresilient.org">https://creresilient.org</a></p> <p><b>Sept 18-19</b> • <b>"Over the Edge,"</b> Habitat for Humanity-Spokane fundraiser, 534-2552, <a href="https://habitat-spokane.org/over-the-edge">habitat-spokane.org/over-the-edge</a></p> <p><b>Sept 21</b> • <b>"Oneness of Humanity</b> and Racial Harmony," International Day of Peace, Gonzaga University and One Peace Many Paths will host events on Zoom and/or in person, 313-3831, <a href="mailto:hoover@gonzaga.edu">hoover@gonzaga.edu</a></p> <p><b>Sept 22</b> • <b>"Change Agents:</b> Conversation on NAACP Mission and Organization," General Membership Meeting NAACP Spokane, Virtual Meeting on Zoom, 7 p.m., 209-2425, <a href="https://naacpspokane.org">naacpspokane.org</a></p> <p><b>Sept 25</b> • <b>"Beyond Words,"</b> four months after George Floyd's murder, participants will make a yearlong commitment to building</p> | <p><b>Sept 26</b> • <b>Virtual Valleyfest</b> with virtual booths for vendors, streaming entertainment and a mini parade, noon to 4 p.m.. Virtual booths are active 30 days, <a href="https://eventhub.shop/valleyfest2020?preview,922-3299,pat@valleyfest.org">https://eventhub.shop/valleyfest2020?preview,922-3299,pat@valleyfest.org</a></p> <p>relationships, practicing reparations, understanding racism, proclaiming the Gospel of anti-racism and organizing for change, 6 p.m., Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church/Emmanuel Family life center, <a href="mailto:katy@audubonparkumc.org">katy@audubonparkumc.org</a></p> <p><b>Sept 27</b> • <b>Negative Split Half Marathon,</b> Run a half marathon, 10k or 5k on Centennial Trail with virtual options, hosted by Negative Split, Second Harvest Inland Northwest and Union Gospel Mission, 1335 W Summit Pkwy, 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. with staggered starting times, <a href="https://nsplit.com/negative-split/">https://nsplit.com/negative-split/</a>. Funds shared by Second Harvest and UGM</p> <p><b>Sept 28-Oct 2</b> • <b>Partnering for Progress</b> "Out of Africa" Auction, virtual at <a href="https://partneringforprogress.org/virtual-into-africa-auction,720-8408">https://partneringforprogress.org/virtual-into-africa-auction,720-8408</a></p> <p><b>Sept 29</b> • <b>"Finding Common Ground:</b> Survival of the Most Cooperative," Thubton Chodron, Sravasti Abbey, a virtual event, 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Sept 30</b> • <b>The Fig Tree mailing/delivery,</b> call 535-1813 for details</p> <p>• <b>"We Are Not Okay: A Space for Black Healing,"</b> Zoom Virtual space, <a href="https://qqq.eventbrite.com/e/we-are-not-okay-a-space-for-black-healing-tickets-118221045329">qqq.eventbrite.com/e/we-are-not-okay-a-space-for-black-healing-tickets-118221045329</a></p> <p><b>Oct 1</b> • <b>"Respect for Human Dignity,"</b> People Who Care, Transitions' Digital Fundraiser, noon, <a href="http://www.help4women.org/people-who-care">www.help4women.org/people-who-care</a></p> <p>• <b>YWCA Women of Achievement</b> virtual fundraising event, 6 p.m., <a href="https://ywcaspokane.org">ywcaspokane.org</a></p> <p><b>Oct 2</b> • <b>The Fig Tree Benefit and Board meetings,</b> Zoom, noon for Benefit and 1 p.m. for Board, 535-1813</p> |
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## YWCA's luncheon is a virtual event Oct. 1

YWCA Spokane named eight women its 2020 Women of Achievement Award Honorees. They will be honored throughout September and at the new Women of Achievement Spotlight virtual fundraising event, at 6 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 1, in place of YWCA's annual awards luncheon.

Over 38 years, YWCA Spokane has celebrated 255 women in the community for their achievements and contributions in making Spokane a better place to live.

Women are recognized for embodying the YWCA Spokane's mission of eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

The 2020 Women of Achievement Awards are: Karli Ingersoll, Arts & Culture Award; Latisha Hill, Business & Industry Award; Nicole Jenkins-Rosenkrantz, Carl Maxey Racial & Social Justice Award; Bonnie Bush, Community Enhancement Award; Jan Swanson, Education Award; Maria Cullooyah, Government and Public Service Award; Debbie Brinker, Science, Technology & Environment Award, and Gabby Dansereau, Young Woman of Achievement Award

Information on the award-ees is at [ywcaspokane.org/woa2020honorees](http://ywcaspokane.org/woa2020honorees).

Proceeds will support YWCA Spokane's services for domestic violence victims and their children, including emergency shelter, counseling, legal services, job readiness, child care, and Pre-K programs for low income children.

For information, visit [ywcaspokane.org](http://ywcaspokane.org).

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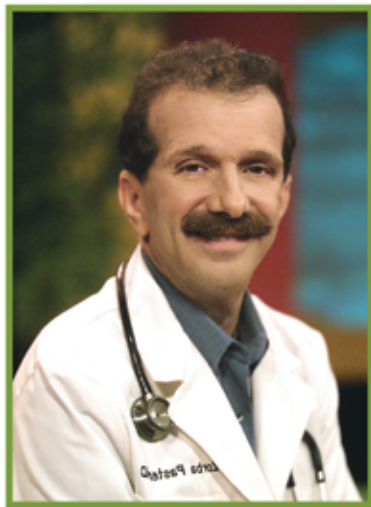
[thefigtree.org/donate.html](http://thefigtree.org/donate.html)  
 MAIL TO:  
 1323 S. Perry, Spokane 99202

## Covid -19 Estate Sale Fundraiser for Southside Community Center

**Open house each Saturday**  
**10 a.m. to 2 p.m. starting Sept 12**  
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 RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

# Holy Trinity Orthodox priest, retiring after 32 years, reflects on changes

The end of September would be the 85th year of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church's Greek Festival. For 32 of those years, Fr. Stephen Supica has been the presiding priest.

When he came in 1988, Holy Trinity was the only Orthodox church between Yakima and Butte.

He has seen Orthodoxy grow by nine parishes in Eastern Washington and North Idaho—Christ the Savior and the Holy Lady of Kazan Russian Orthodox in Spokane Valley; St. Gregorios Malankara Syrian Orthodox and St. Nicholas Antiochian in North Spokane; St. Luke in Chatteroy; St. Katherine in Pullman; St. Silouan of Mt. Athos Russian in Walla Walla; Holy Myrrhbearers Antiochian in Bonners Ferry, and St. John the Baptist in Post Falls.

"It's also been a joy to watch the parish welcome new people—babies, converts, immigrants, refugees and people moving into the area," he said.

In those years, Fr. Stephen summarized that he has done 283 baptisms and chrismations (confirmations), 99 weddings, 186 funerals and at least 3000 liturgies.

COVID-19 has changed the way the church operates. He has followed the strict guidelines in a 12-page directive from his bishop.

"I don't make the decisions. I do what my bishop tells me," said Fr. Stephen, who for the weeks until the end of June did the liturgy by video.

Now a maximum of 40 people can come to the church and he continues to provide the service



Presvytera Irene and Father Stephen Supica at Pascha.

by video for those who are older and consider it too risky to join those who are gathering. Before COVID an average of more than 100 attended Sunday liturgy.

"We have also done meetings by Zoom, including parish council and adult classes," he said.

Because the adult classes have drawn people from Malden, North Spokane and even Yakima, he said the church may continue to do Zoom classes.

COVID has not brought the only changes in his years there. When he came, the Sunday matins service, attended mostly by older Greek women was all in Greek. Now it is 100 percent in English. The main liturgy is 80 to 90 percent English. Services are sung in Greek, English and Slavonic.

"Only a handful of members now speak Greek proficiently," he said.

One reason is there is no continuing immigration from Greece, and only about 20 families trace to Greek ancestry. Each generation becomes more assimilated.

Another reason is that the church has become multi-ethnic. It welcomed some Russians, until they formed a Russian Orthodox Church. They welcomed Bosnian and Croatian in the 1990s, helping them settle in the community.

Parishioners come from the United States, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Eritrea, Greece, Lebanon, Romania, Russia, Serbia, and Ukraine, among other places.

Holy Trinity is a parish of the Metropolis of San Francisco of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, which is under the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. In 1932, it was established out of coffee

houses and social gatherings that celebrated Greek heritage.

While some families have left to help with the formation of new churches nearer to where they live, many come back each year to help prepare the Greek dishes and baked goods for the annual Greek Festival, and to join in the music and dance, Fr. Stephen said.

"It has been an opportunity for members to work side-by-side and build community," he said.

"Our church has also relied on the financial support.

While the health department is not issuing permits for such events, he expects they may do a drive up baklava and baked goods sale.

He expects the church will consider options, because unlike 20 years ago, more women work outside the home and have had less flexible schedules for volunteering, he said, but they still like doing it.

That, however, will be in the hands of the new priest.

Fr. Stephen retired at the end of August and Fr. Daniel Triant, who has served six years as assistant priest at St. Demetrios in Seattle, was appointed by the bishop and assumed the new role as Proistamenos on Sept. 1.

Fr. Daniel spent his first 20 years at Holy Trinity in Grand Rapids, Mich. He earned a master's degree in computer science from DePaul University in 1998, and then developed web and mobile phone applications at several start-up companies.

In 2014, Fr. Daniel graduated from Holy Cross Seminary in

Brookline, Ma., with a masters of divinity degree, and began at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Seattle with his wife, Presvytera Michelle, and his two daughters, Penelope and Mia.

"I never could have guessed I would begin my ministry hindered by the pandemic, but I am inspired by conversations with Holy Trinity members about how they have been responding in this time.

"Through our struggles, our faith in Jesus Christ is honed," said Fr. Daniel, whose emphases in ministry have been on worship, education, communication, administration and youth/young adult ministry.

He seeks to challenge young people with thought-provoking questions and topics to encourage them to become active participants in their faith.

The parish expects his expertise in the tech industry will help them revamp operations in the office for more efficient, transparent communication.

In addition to this, Fr. Daniel was responsible for the monthly newsletter and eCommunications at St. Demetrios.

Fr. Stephen said he has been ready to retire because neuropathy has made it hard to be steady on his feet

His wife, Presvytera Irene Pascha, will likely continue as cantor and they will continue to live in Spokane where their two daughters also live.

For information, call 328-9310, email [frdaniel@holyltrinityspokane.org](mailto:frdaniel@holyltrinityspokane.org) or visit [www.holytrinityspokane.org](http://www.holytrinityspokane.org).

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