

35TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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FEATURES 60+ EVENTS



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

Community continues pressure for cleanup

By Mary Stamp

The SHAWL Society continues to educate people as it holds Newmont Mining Company, owner of the Midnite Mine Superfund Clean-up Site, accountable to remediation agreements to clean up radioactive contamination and toxic wastes on the Spokane Indian Reservation by 2025.

The contamination resulted from uranium mining there from 1955 to 1965 and from 1968 to 1981.

Deb Abrahamson founded the SHAWL (Sovereignty, Health, Air, Water and Land) Society in 1994 to educate people and advocate for cleanup. Her daughter, Twa-le Abrahamson-Swan, helps lead the effort.

“It’s been a long journey for us,” said Deb at a community meeting on Feb. 26 at the Eastern Washington University Building at Riverpoint.

“We have been through changes, and borne the damage of the toxic environment ourselves,” she said. “I am thankful the tribe is taking a strong stance and the next generation is taking over. We will continue to fight this and educate people on health costs to miners and their families, and on the destruction of the air, water and land.”



Twa-le Abrahamson-Swan and Deb Abrahamson persevere to educate on mines.

In July 2018, two years after starting to clean up and stabilize contamination at the site, Newmont asked the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce the clean-up level approved in 2006, saying the site has naturally high levels of radium and lead, Twa-le said.

The SHAWL Society challenges the proposal, because relaxing levels continues health and safety risks.

The Midnite Mine, one of two mines on the reservation, is 45 minutes from Spokane. The Dawn Mill Site at Ford, also owned by Newmont, needs to be cleaned up, too. It is off the reservation so cleanup is under the Washington State Department of Health, said Twa-le.

The Sherwood Mine opened in 1978 when there were more regulations in place, including a requirement that the operator, Western Nuclear, Inc., have cleanup funds and a cleanup plan. It produced a lower grade of uranium and operated a shorter time. It closed in 1984 and reclamation was completed in 1996.

Newmont Mining, now the world’s largest mining company with its recent purchase of Goldcorp, seeks to lower the standards

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Rohingya refugee flees from violence in Myanmar and settles in Spokane

For the 2019 Holocaust Remembrance Service at 7 p.m., Sunday, April 28, at Temple Beth Shalom in Spokane, Noor Kamal, the survivor of a contemporary genocide, will light the seventh candle.

In April 2017, Noor, a Rohingya refugee from Myanmar, came to Spokane through the Lutheran Community Services’ Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Foster Care Program. When it was learned he was 19, not 16, World Relief sought to place him with a family so he could continue in the English Language Learners

program at Mt. Spokane High School, where he is now a junior.

Larry Andrews saw the email appeal. So did his wife, Bethanne. They felt moved and called by God to welcome him into their home in October 2017.

All but one of their four adult children are out of their home, plus they had lived six years in Singapore when Larry worked with Procter & Gamble, so they had some understanding of Southeast Asian culture. Larry is now CEO of Partners International, a global missions organization partnering with multi-cultural

organizations around the world. They moved to Spokane in 2012.

Noor had only a year of education before he was nine, when his father left Myanmar for Bangladesh, fearing for his safety. Funds he left covered food for three months, not tuition. As the oldest child with two younger sisters and a younger brother, he became a farm worker, earning about \$35 U.S. a year, caring for a company’s cows and rice paddies. They had a home and just needed money for food and clothes.

At 12, he began doing day labor in road and house construction, earning about \$1,000 a year.

Violence broke out in 2012. Boys and girls were killed. His family slept in the mountains, so soldiers wouldn’t find them.

“People with money fled to Malaysia. I didn’t have enough money to leave,” Noor said.

One day in 2014, he came home from work after the 9 p.m. curfew. Soldiers stopped him, beat him, took his money and lunch box. One soldier said, “He’s little. Let him go.”

Continued on page 6

Earth Day Vigil to call for healing of the earth

An Earth Day Vigil, “For the Healing of the Earth,” will be held from 5:15 to 7:30 p.m., Monday, April 22, at the Tribal Gathering Place next to Spokane City Hall.

The Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC) are planning a vigil then, followed by a vigil the first Sunday in October at the Cataldo Mission, Cataldo, Idaho.

“We plan to repeat these events every year,” said Gen Heywood, convener for the FLLC. “We hope by meeting every six months, different groups working on separate aspects to heal our Earth can gather, report to each other what they are doing and encourage others to join with them.

“The care of our planet crosses all cultures, class divisions, religions and non-religions. We are one people when we are united in the healing of our one planet,” said Gen, who is pastor at Veradale United Church of Christ.

The April 22 vigil will open with reading the statement American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead gave before the United Nations on March 1977. Bell ringing will be followed by opening words from Chairwoman Carol Evans of the Spokane Tribe of Indians, as well as other tribal leaders.

People affected by the Bunker Hill Mine in the Silver Valley and Midnite Mine on the Spokane Reservation will speak. There will also be presentations by people challenging the Newport Smelter and more.

Groups working to heal the Earth such as Spokane Riverkeepers, 350-Spokane and others will share information on how to join their work.

Organizations working to heal the Earth may contact Gen at

Continued on page 3

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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
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WCC publishes Freedom of Religion Guide

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has published "Freedom of Religion or Belief: A Guide to Biblical Insights," as part of online training offered through the Freedom of Religion or Belief Learning Platform. The guide offers reflections and questions on how the Bible speaks of human rights, human dignity, universalism and other subjects. It also explores the Bible and the concept of justice, as well as the importance of the freedom to have, choose, change or leave a religion. The Freedom of Religion or Belief Learning Platform is developing online training courses for trainers, community leaders and development of professionals working in contexts of gross violations of freedom of religion of belief.

Faith leaders meet at UN celebration of diversity

A diverse group of Christian and Muslim believers and international diplomats met at a side event at the United Nations in Geneva in a celebration of diversity with key speakers shunning extremism and committing to tolerance as a gateway to peace.

Ambassador Idriss Jazairy, executive director of the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue opened a March 21 panel on "Celebration of Diversity: Beyond Tolerance, the Path Towards Empathy." Speakers noted that the role religion can play for peace is distorted by those who steal it to promote extremism.

"Tolerance is not an end in itself, but it is the path that leads to empathy. The latter is the gateway to peace," he said, extolling the February meeting between Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Sheikh Ahmad Al-Tayyib.

It resulted in the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. "Our task of uprooting racism goes hand in hand with the task of planting. What are we called to plant? We are called to plant seeds of hospitality and empathy. The way beyond tolerance today might entail embracing the values of hospitality and empathy in a context of xenophobia," he said.

Churches call for aid after Cyclone Idai

Churches call for support amid devastation caused by Cyclone Idai. More than 100,000 people were still stranded March 21 from massive flooding caused by a devastating cyclone and heavy rainfall in Mozambique and neighboring southeastern African countries. As the numbers of victims and people displaced are still unfolding, churches in the region are calling everyone to join in prayers for the wellbeing and protection of those affected.

"We feel saddened by the news of so many people who have lost their lives in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe through this cyclone, and many more people have been displaced," said Isabel Apawo Phiri, WCC deputy general secretary, who was born in Malawi. She said the impact of this disaster is worse because of high levels of poverty in the region mean the majority of poor people are badly hit without governmental systems to assist them.

Religious leaders join UN Environmental Assembly

Bishop Arnold Temple, the President of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), spoke on March 11 during a faith leaders side event dubbed faith for earth at the U.N Environmental Assembly in Nairobi. Religious leaders and environmental experts underlined the role of faith communities in tackling climate change, a phenomenon that threatens to annihilate humanity.

Among those who died in the Ethiopian Airline plane crash were the Rev. Norman Tendis, a WCC consultant, traveling to Nairobi to participate in an event at the assembly, "Faith for Earth Dialogue."

Discussing innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production, leaders from world's religious traditions elaborated on the approaches they use to solve environmental challenges such as climate change.

Inger Anderson, a Danish economist and environmentalist who has been appointed the executive director of the UN Environmental Program, explained that when the different faiths come together, a stronger world and voice for the environment, the planet, sustainability, justice and love is created.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

The Fig Tree benefits raise \$31,890

With 220 attending The Fig Tree's Benefit Lunch on March 8 and about 170 coming, despite the snow, to the Benefit Breakfast on March 13, that was the most attending benefits in any year.

At the lunch and breakfast, The Fig Tree shared about its work with the newspaper, resource directory and legislative conference.

It also raised funds to help it do the work of informing, inspiring and involving people. The events so far have raised \$29,250, plus pledges of more than \$2,640—\$31,890. Expenses were \$6,500.

"Our 2019 goal is to raise \$30,000, plus another \$35,000 in other ways for our 35th to add staff and build for the future,"

said Mary Stamp, editor. "We are grateful to have reached the first goal. We also added 32 new sponsors and new volunteers."

More than 60 individuals and organizations hosted tables, inviting guests to come to learn and support.

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

Habitat-Spokane raises funds at luncheon

Habitat for Humanity-Spokane's annual Hope Builders Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursday, April 25, at the Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., features keynote speaker Mandy Manning, the 2018 National Teacher of the Year. The luncheon raises funds to provide safe, healthy and affordable housing.

"It's an opportunity to invest in our community," said Michelle Girardot, CEO of Habitat for Humanity-Spokane. "We help

families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives."

Spokane's housing market has limited inventory meaning rising rental and home costs. Many renters pay 50 percent or more of their income for rent. In 2017, the rental vacancy rate was 2.4 percent, nearly half the rate of 2005. Plus the monthly supply of homes for sale has significantly decreased every year since 2014.

Families and individuals in need of safe, affordable homes

partner with Habitat to do sweat equity to build their home and homes for neighbors, plus they take financial workshops.

Mandy, who teaches English at Ferris High School to refugee and immigrant students in the Newcomer Center, will share experience as an educator, highlighting negative effects of unstable housing on educational outcomes and positive impacts of stable housing.

For information, call 534-2552 or visit <https://habitat-spokane.org/hope-builders-luncheon/>.

Refugees share stories as 'Voices of Hope'

Refugee Connections Spokane is hosting a benefit, "Refugee Stories: Voices of Hope," from 5:30 to 7 p.m., Saturday, April 27, at St. Anne's Catholic Parish, 2120 E. 1st Ave. with a panel of refugee and immigrant speakers from Central America, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq and Sudan.

They will highlight issues they experience living in Spokane, sharing how they contribute to the community, increasing diversity and adding to education, service and other vocations, said Marijke Fasakiieiki, executive director of

Refugee Connections Spokane. Five refugees will speak.

- Kessahun Kebede, assistant professor in the department of anthropology and geography at Eastern Washington University, came from Ethiopia.

- Luisa Orellana-Westbrook, Spokane Community College ESL teacher, fled the civil war in El Salvador. For 25 years, she has taught English to refugees and immigrants.

- Bushra Alshalah, a mother and cross-cultural navigator from Baghdad, Iraq, works with refu-

gee elders to translate for Refugee Connections activities.

- Jeff Louissaint, who came to Spokane 2013 from Haiti, is majoring in sociology at Whitworth University, focusing on criminal justice and cultural studies.

- Abdella Abdella, from Sudan has been a fair housing intake specialist with Northwest Fair Housing Alliance for two years. He is studying at Spokane Community College.

For information, call 209-2384 or visit refugeeconnectionsspokane.org.

Family Promise names Joe Ader director

Family Promise of Spokane, which runs multiple programs and shelters for families experiencing homelessness, has hired Joe Ader as their new executive director. Steve Allen moved in January.

Joe Ader is not new to Family Promise. In December 2016, he created its largest shelter program called Open Doors, a 24/7 walk-in emergency shelter, serving up to 900 homeless families a year.

Joe is also chair for the Spokane Homeless Coalition and is on the Continuum of Care Board for Spokane and Spokane County.

Joe begins as Family Promise is redeveloping and moving into a new location at 2002 E. Mission Ave., formerly Cassano's Italian Grocery and Restaurant.

"It will permanently allow us to expand capacity from 50 to 120 children and parents a night, which should meet the demand for emergency shelter for families experiencing homelessness for years to come" Joe said.

Family Promise, which expects to open the building by late spring 2019, started in 1997 and is currently located in the South Perry District. It partners with local churches to house families through its Bridges program.

The organization provides emergency shelter, case management, and long-term mentoring to move families beyond homelessness.

For information, call 949-294-4510 or visit familypromiseofspokane.org.



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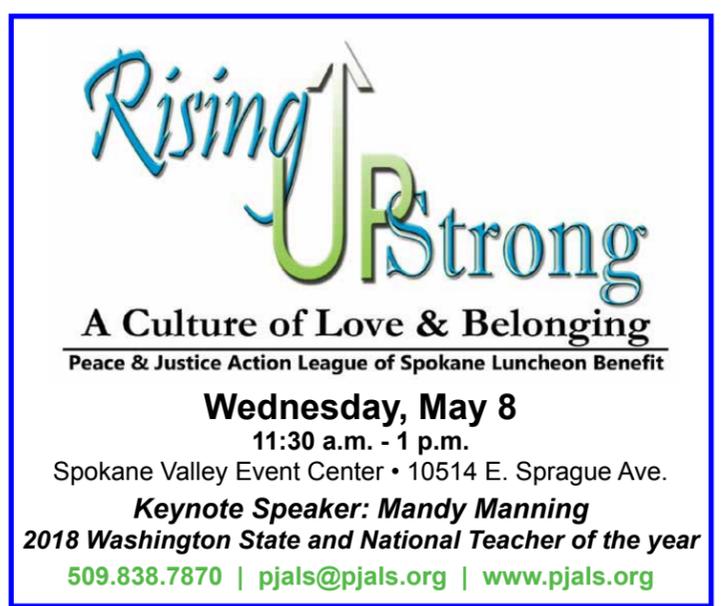
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Sravasti Abbey holds Sharing the Dharma Day

Sravasti Abbey, the Tibetan Buddhist monastery at 692 Country Lane in Newport, is open for Sharing the Dharma Day from 9:45 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday, April 7, for a guided meditation, vegetarian potluck lunch and discussion.

Venerable Sangye Khadro, American Buddhist nun and author of *How to Meditate*, will teach on "Being Responsible for Emotions," a topic drawn from *An Open-Hearted Life*, co-written by Sravasti Abbey founder and abbess, Venerable Thubten Chodron and Eastern Washington University psychologist Russell Kolts.

Sharing the Dharma Day is a monthly event for people of all faiths and backgrounds to learn about Buddhist teachings. Future dates are May 5, June 9, July 14 and August 4.

For information, call 509-447-5549 or email office.sravasti@gmail.com or visit Sravasti.org.

Immaculate Heart Retreat Center offers events

Immaculate Heart Retreat Center will host retreats and events at its center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., during April:

A Lenten Silent Day of Prayer on "Love Told in The Grave: The Meaning of Holy Saturday" will be on April 10.

Holy Week Retreats on "To Die with Him Is to Live with Him," led by Fr. Gregory Cleveland, OM, include a women's retreat April 15 to 17 and men's retreat April 18 to 20. The retreats draw on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius and the Song of Songs.

A Day of Reflection, "The Church's 401K: Investing in the Younger Generation" will be led by Jeremy Cassidy on April 24.

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

The Lands Council holds Auction and Dinner

The Lands Council's 24th Annual April Showers Auction and Dinner will be held at 5 p.m., Saturday, April 13 at the Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd. Funds support the Lands Council's work to restore and revitalize the Inland Northwest forests, water and wildlife for future generations.

For information, call 209-2407, cupdegrove@landscouncil.org or visit landscouncil.org.

Indian classical music concert is April 19

The South Asia Cultural Association offers an evening of Indian classical music, "Madhura Vani, Melodious Reverberations," from 6:30 to 9 p.m., Friday, April 19, at Unity Spiritual Center, 2900 S. Bernard. The ensemble includes one string instrument called Veena, and two percussion instruments, one is a Mridangam and the other is an earthen pot. Indian vegetarian food will be available for purchase from 5 p.m.

For information, call 467-5558 or email sacaspokane@gmail.com.

Holy Names Music Center plans Musical Festival

The Holy Names Music Center will present "A Musical Feast" from 5 to 7 p.m., Saturday, April 27, at the center, 3910 W. Custer Dr. It will feature a journey into an evening of music, food and drink from around the world. For information, call 326-9516.

Central America program focus of new book

Authors Lindy Scott and Kim Hernandez will present a book launch and presentation on their recent book, *Challenged and Changed: Living and Learning in Central America*, at 7 p.m., Tuesday, April 30, in Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth University.

Kim and Lindy's book is about Whitworth's Central America Study and Service Program (CASP). At the book launch, they will also honor the founders Ron and Marianne Frase, who began the program in 1975. For information, call 630-871-9750.

'Rise for Justice' breakfast is May 22

The Center for Justice will hold its annual "Rise for Justice" breakfast benefit to support its work from 7:30 to 8:50 a.m., Wednesday, May 22, at the Hemmingson Center at Gonzaga. The speaker is Riley Hewko, assistant ombuds on gender equity and vulnerable populations with the Washington State Office of Corrections Ombuds.

Riley's work as an attorney has centered on issues of gender, child welfare and incarceration. Riley is co-founder of the Incarcerated Parents Project at the Washington Defender Association and the Incarcerated Mothers Advocacy Project at the University of Washington. For information, email latisha@cforjustice.org or visit cforjustice.org.

Communities organize Earth Day events

Continued from page 1
genheywood@att.net about sharing information on their efforts.

The Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience of Eastern Washington and North Idaho works to overcome racism, militarism, poverty and ecological devastation. These are the principles set forth by the Poor Peoples Campaign: A National Call for a Moral Revival. All four barriers come together where there is ecological devastation.

In June 2018, the FLLC began working on a vigil to draw attention to the reality the Inland Northwest is the largest superfund site in the nation.

"A superfund site is one so polluted that it will take an enormous amount of money to clean and contain it," said Gen. "The hope is that these vigils become opportunities to build friendships, strengthen our resolve, and put our thoughts and prayers into actions 'For the Healing of the Earth.'"

For information, call 408-593-9556.

Spokane Valley - April 13

"Save the Species" is the theme for "Happy Earth Day 2019" from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday April 13, at Balfour Park Block across from the Spokane Valley City Hall, 105 N. Balfour Rd.

Sponsored by the City of Spokane Valley and Spokane County Library District, the event is a benefit for the natural environment surrounding Spokane Valley, Spokane and North Idaho.

After expenses, funds will be used to help restore ecosystems and habitats degraded, damaged or destroyed from human intervention, storms or wild fires; to donate vegetable seedlings and fruit trees to local community gardens, and to give attendees seed packets of native flowers and herbs that sustain pollinators like hummingbirds, butterflies and bees.

Habitat loss is the leading cause of species extinctions and planting one seed can make a difference, said organizer Charity Doyle of the Family Guide.

Volunteers and vendors providing educational and interactive displays are being recruited.

There will be a gardening section, an Art Walk with upcycled works of art, information on recycling, repurposing and reusing, food trucks and farmers markets, local growers and artisans, a petting zoo, children's arts and crafts, carnival games, raffles, a live auction and live performances

For information, call 928-9664, email charity@thefamilyguide.org or visit Facebook: EarthDay-Spokane.

Coeur d'Alene plans Virtual Race - April 22-30

Coeur d'Alene will hold its third annual Earth Day 5K & 10K Virtual Race to be completed between 1 p.m., Monday, April 22, and 2 p.m., Tuesday, April 30.

About 15 percent of every registration will go to Wild Earth Allies to protect vital areas of the natural world for the benefit of wildlife, habitats and people.

A virtual race means those who run, jog or walk may complete their race on their own course—a road, trail, treadmill or track—and submit their time. Then organizers will ship them a medal.

The \$20 entry includes the medal, an official bib and shipping.

For information, visit virtual-runevents.com/earth-day-5k-10k.

Moscow Mayor presents Earth Day Awards

The City of Moscow is seeking nominations for the 2019 Mayor's Earth Day Awards. Established in 2006, the awards recognize Moscow residents for sustainable practices that foster envi-

ronmental sustainability through conservation, recycling, reuse, construction/design and public education.

Refugee & Immigrant Stories: Voices of Hope
benefit for
Refugee Connections Spokane
Saturday, April 27
5:30 to 7 p.m., St. Ann's Catholic - 2120 E. 1st Ave.
Refreshments, music, door prizes
209-2384
rcs@refugeeconnectionsspokane.org

Sukiyaki Dinner 2019
Saturday, April 27
noon to 5 p.m.
\$15/meal
(Take Out available)
Highland Park United Methodist Church
611 S. Garfield St. - Spokane

2019 Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust



SPEAKING UP FOR 'THE OTHER'

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No Hate. No Fear. Immigrant Justice is Racial Justice.*

RSVP: ywcaspokane.org/sar2019 | 509-789-9312

Spokane Tribe reaches out so their voices are heard on cleanup

Continued from page 1
to reduce its costs, Twa-le said. The company is responsible for cleanup costs beyond \$42 million the U.S. Department of the Interior is paying because it failed to fulfill federal trust responsibilities to the Spokane Tribe by not providing oversight of the open-pit Midnite uranium mine.

The Midnite mine was dug so deep that it hit ground water, creating a problem with contaminated water in open pits containing radioactive materials and heavy metals—26 toxins.

The EPA's 2006 cleanup plan calls for filling those pits with waste rock and ore, and capping them with soil from nearby land.

Lawsuits and other delays stalled the work. It did not begin until 2016.

Water in the pits is currently treated and discharged into Blue Creek, which flows into the Spokane River. A new plant, planned to be built within a few years, will treat 50 million—not just 5 million—gallons a day. Sending treated water in pipes to Lake Roosevelt will reduce the impact on the creek, which the tribe seeks to re-establish for native redband trout, said Brian Crossley, the Tribe's natural resources water quality specialist.

Brian, who has worked 20 years on stream restoration, administering water quality standards for the tribe and EPA, showed aerial pictures of scars on the land from the Midnight Mine, Dawn Mill Site and Sherwood Mine.

"Dilution is the solution, rather than having water flow down Blue Creek. The treated water must meet tribal water quality standards, which are high," he said. "Piping does not go into effect until we build the new plant."

In a report prepared for the February meeting, Spokane Riverkeeper said the EPA set the cleanup level based on the "average background level of radium and undisturbed soil around the mine." The report says that:

- A public health assessment shows people using the mine-affected area for traditional and subsistence activities experience long-term exposure to contaminants that could have harmful effects. Those activities include drinking water from drainages and seeps; using that water in sweat lodge ceremonies; ingesting sediments, and eating plants, roots and fish.

- During mining years, employees were exposed to dust and brought it home to their families on their clothes.

- After the mine closed, there

was no fence around the area so people could walk through the site. Water from the mine and mill sites percolated into groundwater and flowed down Tshimakain Creek and Blue Creek to the Spokane River, which is used for recreation, fishing and farming.

Twa-le said workers and family members continue to die. About 1,200 of the tribe's 2,800 members live on the 159,000-acre reservation. The tribe experiences a high rate of cancers, kidney disease, heart disease and neurological disorders. Seven tribal members died in March.

"Deaths happen weekly— young mothers and two elders last week," said Deb, who is being treated for stage four uterine cancer. "It's important to address our health needs. By-products of radiation continue for years."

Twa-le said radium, which can't be seen or smelled, can be inhaled, lodge in the lungs and continue exposure. Radioactivity is in the rocks, soil and air. It is concentrated in water and fish.

Deb and Twa-le are gathering data on deaths in the community and hope to involve rural health students at WSU to help with documentation.

Newmont purchased land on the reservation near the site, clear cut it, but now say they need more soil because the footprint is bigger, said Twa-le, noting that the tribe was unhappy the company bought reservation land for fill soil.

"It saved costs of trucking soil from off the reservation, but now there is damage from clearcutting and mud slides," she said. "The soil on the land they bought is also radioactive, so when they dig, more radiation is released."

Other concerns are deregulation and decreased funding of the EPA, weakening it and giving it fewer resources for research and enforcement, providing opportunity for Newmont to stall, change the timeline and cleanup levels, she said.

SHAWL is also concerned that continuity and "institutional memory" about agreements may be lost because of turnover of both reservation leadership and EPA staff, making community education more critical.

Linda Meyer, EPA remedial project manager for the Midnite Mine cleanup, is not new to the EPA but started on this project two weeks before the meeting. Two predecessors retired.

"Our job is to evaluate the proposed changes. It took years of technical assessments to put levels in place. We require a formal

process with public input," she said. "My job is to be sure new technical assessment is sound. We seek to keep the mine on task."

Also new, Kay Morrison, EPA community involvement coordinator, is learning about the site and concerns as she works with tribal technical staff, tribal government and the mine.

Kay said the EPA plans a community meeting in April. The date and location will be announced at www.epa.gov/superfund/midnite-mine. The meeting will present the 2019 construction report, connect the community with an expert uranium advisor, report on outreach to the Center for Disease Control's Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Control, and provide an update on the community involvement plan.

Discussion at the February meeting raised some concerns:

- Cheryl Joseph Butterfly, who lives on the reservations, asked the EPA to provide bottled water free for residents.

- Brian Cleary, counsel to the tribe, said Newmont may want to revisit levels, but is legally bound to the timeline.

- Margo Hill, a tribal citizen who grew up in Wellpinit and teaches in EWU's urban and regional planning program, said court cases and delays over 25 years mean contamination remains and impedes the sweat-house, root gathering, berry picking and basket making. She also called for a medical study on the cancer rates.

- Spokane Riverkeeper Jerry White offered to publish updates on spokaneriverkeeper.org/riverjournal.

- **David Browneagle**, former Spokane Tribal Council member, said that at a meeting held a few years ago at the federal building, "tribal citizens spoke, but neighboring farmers and ranchers stayed on the sides. I reminded them the water goes downstream. Farmers use it to irrigate. Ranchers give water to their animals. Everyone eats wheat and animals. The contamination does not stay on the reservation."

"We Native Americans talk about how we are all connected. If it hits my back yard, it hits your front yard. Everyone is affected by what we eat. If more understand that, they may get involved," he said. "We need to stand together as concerned citizens. Things happen if we write letters, make phone calls and speak with one voice."

- Carol Evans, chairwoman of the Spokane Tribal Council, said, "Radiation goes downriver and

down wind. We need to come together to stand for what is right, to respect the land, air and water as gifts and to urge the EPA to have the company stick to the plan."

Closing the meeting, Twa-le called for public pressure "so our voices are heard and we can make a difference."

For information, call 701-5525,

or email intertribalbeat@gmail.com, meyer.linda@epa.gov or mhill86@ewu.edu.



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Community rallies to support local Muslims at several gatherings

At a Thursday midday gathering of 100 outside Hemmingson Center at Gonzaga University and at a Friday evening gathering of several hundred filling the Spokane Islamic Center, Mamdouh El-Aarag asked “all people of conscience and faith to reject hate, Islamophobia, racism and injustice” after the shooting that killed 51 people and injured 20 March 15 at Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Mamdouh is a member of the Spokane Islamic Center’s board.

Fr. Patrick Wanakuta Baraza, GU religious studies lecturer, said those there stood in solidarity with the people of New Zealand in face of the terrorist attack.

“We mourn with people in New Zealand and families who lost loved ones in the horrific violence that killed innocent people,” he said. “God calls us to welcome strangers and to love neighbors, however different they may be. We stand against hate.”

Speaking at Gonzaga and the Islamic center, Mamdouh said no one imagined such a massacre would happen in the small, peaceful town of Christchurch.

“The indiscriminate killing of innocent people praying has shocked the world,” he said, calling for sending “a message of solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters of Christchurch. It’s our religious and moral obligation to extend a helping hand to them in this time of need.

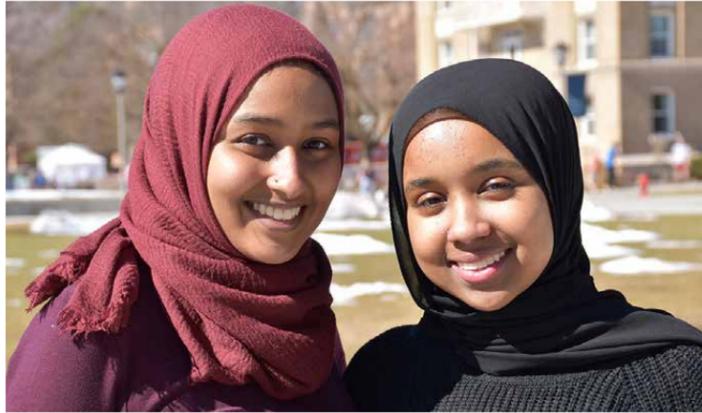
“They are us. We should no longer look at anyone else as ‘they,’ but rather look to all as ‘us.’ Every house of worship should be a safe place of worship, theological reflection, hope and healing,” he said.

“**When one faith community** is attacked, we are all attacked. None of us can truly worship God freely until we all can worship God freely,” said Mamdouh, who, in his 33 years in Spokane, he has not experienced any issues related to practicing his religion.

“I’m sure none of the brothers and sisters killed March 15 thought this would ever happen to them in Christchurch,” he said. “If it could happen in Christchurch, it can happen anywhere. I turn to my creator the Almighty for help. I submit my affairs to God.”

Since the shooting the Spokane community—neighbors, colleagues, interfaith partners and friends—has offered “overwhelming support and love.” Police and law enforcement expressed their commitment to the safety and security of the Muslim community, he said.

“We received many phone calls and emails. People showed up at our mosque with flowers and



Mamdouh Al-Aarag, Aisha Burka and Hawa Elias share reflections at Gonzaga gathering.

cards, but most of all with their love and support,” Mamdouh said. “We feel the community’s love. We appreciate all the support we have received.

“**We ask you to raise** your voices against all social ills that grip our communities and societies. Send a clear message that we oppose all forms of hate, bigotry, racism and Islamophobia,” he said. “Let everyone know that we value and invite inclusion, respect and decency for all people.”

Mamdouh quoted from the Quran: “O mankind! We created you from a single person, males and females, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. Truly, the most honored of you in God’s sight is the greatest of you in piety (righteousness). Allah is All-Knowing, All Aware.”

He also quoted a letter from a Chinese Muslim woman to the killer, observing that, contrary to his motives of division, the tragedy brought churches and communities together to stand with Muslims.

Two Gonzaga students, Hawa Elias, a senior in economics and international relations, and Aisha Burka, a sophomore in business and computers, shared reflections.

“From the time I was young,” said Hawa, “I was confused about how the religion that brought me serenity could cause such hate.”

Her parents didn’t need to warn her what she faced. She knew.

“The love in my heart is my way to resist hate,” she said.

Aisha is impressed with how the trauma inflicted out of racism and white supremacy that led to the attacks has led people to come

together as community. She hopes that the pain does not become normal, but that “we will move to action to be active allies.”

Rabbi Elizabeth Goldstein of the Gonzaga Religious Studies faculty and two members of the Jewish Bulldogs then read a prayer by Rabbi Naomi Levi for the victims of the massacre.

“All are loved in God’s eyes,” the rabbi said, praying for the safety and protection of brothers and sisters of all faiths, for the dead and those left behind. She read: “God help us join as people to put an end to hatred and gun violence.” The prayer also called for turning helplessness to action, because “innocent blood calls out.”

Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC) members read a statement, signed by 19 individuals and organizations at the Spokane Islamic Center. The Rev. Rick Matters of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Kennewick, the Rev. Joan Broeckling of One Peace Many Paths, and Rabbi Tamar Malino of Temple Beth Shalom and Congregation Emanu-el read the statement as the group stood with them.

“We stand in deepest sorrow

with you, our Muslim neighbors and friends. We weep and mourn the 51 Muslim children, women, and men who were killed in a horrific act of violence as they gathered peacefully for Friday prayers in Christchurch, New Zealand, on March 15, 2019. We share the global condemnation of this and all similar acts of violence. We join with our Muslim neighbors and friends in prayer.”

“**We call all people of faith** and conscience to join us in listening to those hurt and threatened by anti-Muslim bigotry. We stand in solidarity with the American Muslim Institution’s (AMI) recent statement, proclaiming that: “We join Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in condemning the worst terrorist attacks ever in one of the most peaceful and welcoming countries in the world. We join all peace-loving New Zealanders

in mourning with the families over the loss of the victims of this senseless and hate-filled attack. Islamophobia, hate, and xenophobia have no place in New Zealand nor any other country in the world.”

“**We stand together** in the compassion that is rooted in each of our different religious and moral traditions. We declare that all humans are neighbors and deserve love and respect. Love for every human being will triumph over hate. We offer comfort to our American Muslim neighbors and join them in sorrow and outrage. We love you and hold each of you as precious to the fullness of our country and our communities. You belong with us and we with you.

“**We will persist** in the higher way of compassion known in many practices and by many names. May we gain the needed strength, even while we grieve, to be transformed from fear to love, from division to unity, from desperation to hope. Let us recommit to shaping a world of respect, tolerance, safety, and peace for all. No exceptions,” the statement concluded.

Rabbi Tamar Malino added a word of deepest sympathy from the Jewish community as she presented a copy of the FLLC statement to Mamdouh.

For information, contact Brian Siebeking at GU at 313-6789 or email siebeking@gonzaga.edu, the Spokane Islamic Center at 482-2608 or spokaneislamiccenter.org, or FLLC at 408-593-9556.

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Young refugee is grateful to be in the U.S.

Continued from page 1

Noor ran home. Then he tried to find a way to escape. He heard fishing boats on the river at the border with Bangladesh were taking people from villages near the southwest coast of Myanmar and the river. Some friends from work went with him.

The boat captains from Thailand said they would take the people to different countries, but waited months to fill their boats, feeding the people a little rice and two cups of water daily.

When there were 500 on his boat, they left and went south along the Myanmar coast for 15 days.

Near Thailand, they were told they had to stay on the ocean. They continued south along Malaysia toward Singapore. After three months on the ocean, the “captains,” who were human traffickers, said they were not allowed in any country. They loaded people from other boats on Noor’s boat, which then had 960 people, and left them with no food, water, gas or compass.

“People died two to three hours after drinking ocean salt water,” Noor said. “Every day, it rained hard. My clothes got wet, I drank water from them.”

The boat drifted near Indonesia. A fishing boat found them, gave them some gas and a map. The Indonesian navy sent them to the Malaysian coast. The Malaysian navy sent them back.

“People were so hungry they began to eat the wood on the boat,” Noor said. “More than 100 died. The boat began sinking one day about 4:30 p.m. People jumped in the ocean. Some had the energy to swim, but many did not.”

More died in the ocean. Noor had something to hold onto and swam. At 10 p.m., they saw a fishing boat and began yelling. The captain called for other fishing boats. Fifty boats came and picked up 450 people.

“I had been in the boat three months and 16 days. Some had been in the boat nine months and were unable to move. I couldn’t walk. They took us to a hospital,” he said.

Noor spent a month in the hospital, exercising every day until he could walk. Then he went to a refugee camp in Indonesia, where United Nations organizations helped feed, clothe and give medical treatment to the refugees.

People from U.S., Australian, Canadian and British embassies asked those under 18 what they wanted to do and where they wanted to go.

“I said I wanted to go to a country where I could be educated and have a good future,” Noor said.

The camp provided a school with three teachers teaching different ages together from 10 a.m. to noon four days a week. Noor studied math and English for a year. He learned English quickly and began volunteering to translate for doctors and nurses.



Larry and Bethanne Andrews welcome Noor Kamal into their lives.

When he helped them, agencies gave him school tablets, books and clothing. Then they gave him an iPad, so he could call a doctor or ambulance.

After a year and a half, Noor was chosen to go to the U.S.

“I was happy. They said I could go to high school,” said Noor, who had learned to speak Indonesian, Hindi, Malaysian and Bangledesh.

He practiced English, but when he came to the U.S., people spoke fast. At first, he was quiet in school, but teachers and others helped him.

“Now I have friends,” he said.

Noor learned about his family, using a security guard’s phone to call his uncle’s cell phone.

Then in August 2017, he learned his mother, sisters and brother were in danger. Soldiers were shooting in his village of 2,000 people. They killed people and burned houses. People ran. His sisters, grandmother and uncle fled and arrived seven days later in Bangladesh. His brother, grandfather and mother went to the mountains.

“I prayed they would be alive. Returning to the village, they found only 95 villagers. More than 900 were killed,” he said.

Last year, Mark Finney, executive director of World Relief, went to the Bangladesh refugee camp with Rohingya and four other ethnic groups. He met Noor’s sisters, grandmother and uncle, and his father who remarried and had other children.

“Bangladesh wants to send the Rohingya back. Myanmar does

not want the Rohingya. We do not want to live in camps. We want justice, land, citizenship and freedom to work. Some have college degrees but can only work on farms.

Bethanne said Myanmar is predominantly Buddhist. There were also Christians, Muslims and Hindu groups living in small ethnic communities.

“By 2017, the government became intolerant and wanted the country to be one race and religion,” she said.

Because of prejudice some people have toward different religions, Noor does not talk about his religion.

“I don’t care if someone is Christian, Muslim or Buddhist. I don’t want to argue about it. I want to be friendly with everyone. I’m just happy and thankful to be in the U.S. and focus on school,” said Noor, who hopes to study to be a dental assistant.

Bethanne and Larry are grateful to have Noor in their home. When he moved in, he was “immediately part of our family,” she said.

“We knew people of different cultures while living in Singapore. While it was easy for us to travel in Southeast Asia, poverty and child labor we saw tore at my heart,” she said.

“My awareness of unaccompanied youth in the world—through Lutheran Community Services and World Relief—has increased my sensitivity to how vulnerable people are,” she said.

For information, call 808-2942 or email bethanne.andrews@gmail.com.

Annual Holocaust Observance is April 28 at Temple Beth Shalom

The 2019 Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust will be held at 7 p.m., Sunday, April 28, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave. The theme this year is “Speaking Up for The Other.”

The program, will feature high school and middle school students reading their first-place submissions to the 13th Annual Eva Lassman Memorial Creative Writing Contest. Art pieces submitted by Spokane-area students for the 5th Annual Art Contest will be on display.

The Lewis and Clark High School Chamber orchestra will perform music for the program.

There will also be a traditional Children’s Candle Processional and a Candle Lighting Ceremony, honoring Holocaust survivors, children of survivors, military

who freed the survivors, a representative of the righteous among the nations (Mary Stamp, editor, in recognition of The Fig Tree’s 35 years of speaking up), and the survivor of a contemporary genocide (Noor Kamal – see article).

For information, call 747-3304.

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April 9: ‘Population Health and Implicit Bias’ - Speaker: Fr. Michael Rozier, SJ PhD, Assistant Professor Health Management and Policy, Saint Louis University

Ethics Core IIA: Ethical Dilemmas in Difficult Discharges
TIME: 8 a.m. – 12 noon
DATES: April 11 (Spokane), April 15 (Colville), May 8 (Walla Walla)
Faculty: Andrea Chatburn, DO, MA, HEC-C

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Country Homes ESL School tutors refugees, immigrants for 40 years

Doors, eyes and hearts have opened for volunteer tutors and refugee/immigrant students for 40 years at Country Homes English as a Second Language (ESL) School.

Not only do they teach and learn English—and students’ languages and cultures—but also they form friendships.

A neighborhood woman in her 80s walked there Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings to “travel the world” as she interacted with students.

A Korean graduate student, who came to the school while studying interior design in Spokane, returned to Korea and started a similar school to teach Korean.

A man, who had cared for years for his wife while she was dying from cancer, emerged from his grief by tutoring.

Elizabeth Housley, who came as an intern three years ago and is now director, and Doni Walker, who tutored two years before volunteering the next 35 years as assistant director, co-director, director and now assistant director, said their involvement is a faith-based calling.

“We are to welcome the sojourner and the stranger,” said Elizabeth, who graduated from Moody Bible Institute in 2016 in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

From Illinois, she signed up at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, but because that campus is small, they directed her to go to Spokane or study online. She chose to go to Spokane. She met her husband, Ben, at Moody.

Doni, who grew up in Bremeron, studied bacteriology at the University of Idaho in Moscow, graduated in 1966 and came to Spokane as a medical technology intern at Deaconess. She met her husband, Lee, and stayed.

After years as a stay-at-home mother of four girls, she volunteered. Country Homes Christian Church is her church.

“Two women who volunteered at Barton School at First Presbyterian Church decided that with the influx of Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s and 1980s, there was need for a similar school in North Spokane, so the church offered space for them to start the Country Homes ESL School in 1979.

“The church also provides half the budget, which is now \$6,500,” she said. “The other half is covered by private donations.”

To celebrate the school’s 40th year, the church’s Annual Spring Tea with a six-course international menu is at 10:45 a.m., Saturday, April 27, at the church, 8415 N. Wall St.

Elizabeth said there are 21 stu-



Walter and Elizabeth Housley and Doni Walker coordinate program.

dents from 11 countries and 21 tutors. They find that’s about the right number to serve.

Many come two days a week, several come three, and some just one day. Some who come part-time also go to the Community Colleges of Spokane ESL program on North Monroe, where they are in a class with 30 students.

The first students were Vietnamese, Hmong and Laotian.

Current students are from Afghanistan, Brazil, China, El Salvador, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Syria and Taiwan.

Over the years, the school has had about 380 tutors helping nearly 600 students from about 60 countries.

Many students are aged 50 to 80, but there are also some young mothers with children, so there is childcare Mondays and Wednesdays. Elizabeth’s baby, Walter, is in the child care.

The adult literacy program serves foreign-born adults, assessing their individual needs and planning lessons to meet those needs so they can be self-reliant members of the community. Some students had no formal education. Some are college graduates.

With tutors volunteering, the one-to-one or small-group lessons from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from September through June are free for students.

Tutors also help with applications for drivers’ licenses, citizenship and jobs.

Doni’s first student was 21 when she escaped with her 16-year-

old sister over the mountains from Vietnam to a refugee camp in Thailand. They were there two years before coming to Spokane.

Learning English, finding a safe place and developing trust over a year with Doni, she was able to tell her story of trauma from being robbed and raped while fleeing.

“It’s a small program and it takes time to build trust, but students are able to share about their lives and culture,” said Doni, who one day took a shopping list from the Vietnamese woman and brought her the food, which she cooked all day to prepare a banquet to say thank you. After she married, she moved to Los Angeles, where there was a large population of Vietnamese.

Another early student was a Korean who went on to own a restaurant and run a gas station/mini mart with her husband. Their three daughters all completed university studies.

“Many immigrants dream for their children to have opportunities for education and jobs,” Doni said.

Elizabeth has a passion for people of other cultures. She brings new ideas with her background in TESOL. Paid part-time, she is evaluating the resources, program and people, before suggesting materials to help students learn at a faster pace.

Some workbooks have been copied and used over and over.

“Language is living. Grammar changes,” she said.

There’s no clear cut-off time. Many students come part of a year to two years. A Korean and a Taiwanese have been coming 10 years.

“We prioritize students who

want to learn English to find a job,” said Doni. “Tutors and students may develop friendships.”

Elizabeth said many of the tutors are retired men and women, about an equal number of each.

“Often men students appreciate having an American man teach and mentor them,” she said.

Doni said many of the early tutors were retired teachers who adjusted from lesson plans to flexibly tailoring teaching to individual students.

Often tutors learn words from their students’ languages. One struggled to learn some Chinese and in the process helped his student realize he understood it was hard for the student to learn English.

“When tutors learn about the students’ languages and cultures, students realize they care,” said Elizabeth. “Tutors find there’s more than the American way of doing things. It’s beautiful, hearing sounds of different languages, tasting the food they cook and learning about their rituals and ways of life.”

She not only appreciates learning about the cultures, but also likes the “universal language” of interacting with babies—such as her son, adding “laughter and smiles also spread understanding.”

Elizabeth, who goes to Faith Bible Church, said “people need to learn English to have a richer life with greater opportunities.”

It’s important that students feel safe and welcome.

“It’s what Christ does, com-

ing physically on earth to show his love. I’m called to help the sojourner and foreigner. We love people and build relationships,” she said.

Doni said it’s an outreach for the church and her.

“As Christians, we are Christ’s hands, hearts and mouths to the world. It’s a joy to help people feel welcome and make their lives easier by opening doors to opportunities. Many are afraid, thrown into a new world after traumatizing experiences,” she said.

Some college professors and doctors start over here with low-paying jobs that do not use their education or skills.

Once they have a driver’s license, their jobs are no longer limited by where they can go on a bus or when friends will take them, Doni said.

She is sad the government is cutting the number of refugees, but is glad to provide a setting for respecting those who come.

“Instead of fearing our neighbors, we are to love them,” said Elizabeth.

“Volunteer tutors are accepting, gracious, interested and curious,” Doni said. “Some have helped 20 years. We are wired to help people.”

“While many tutors are Christian, our philosophy is that we respect students and their faiths,” said Elizabeth.

For information, call 466-3414, Doni 939-2901 l-dwalker@comcast.net or 217-313-5590, derejj8@gmail.com for Elizabeth.

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Kalispel Tribe of Indians receive recognition for watershed stewardship

At the 12th annual Winter Waters event, the Upper Columbia River Group of the Sierra Club and the Center for Environmental Law and Policy honored the Kalispel Tribe as the 2019 Watershed Heroes for stewardship of the waters and aquifer of the region.

Before presenting their award, Tom Soeldner of the Sierra Club Group also recognized the Protect Mill Canyon Watershed Group as "Water Guardians" for challenging a permit to use bio-solids on agricultural land and successfully preventing application above Mill Canyon west of Spokane. The group is now working on a state moratorium to prevent such bio-solid application in other areas.

In honoring the Kalispel, Catholic Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad thanked the tribe for their stewardship of the Pend Oreille Basin.

"An honoring event helps us remember, be in contact with a remarkable tradition and history, and be a people of relationships, goodwill, survival and strong vision for the common good," he said.

He recounted that in 1870, the tribe was almost annihilated—dropping from 1,600 in the early 1800s to 100 in the early 1900s. They were told by the U.S. government to move from the Priest River-Pend Oreille area to a reservation in Montana. While the Upper Kalispels moved to the Jocko Reservation, the Lower Kalispels refused to move.

Their refusal resulted in 1914 in their 4,600-acre original reservation—one mile wide by eight miles long—along the Pend Oreille River, miniscule compared with the 200-mile long original land.

In 1965, the average tribal income was \$1,400. There was one phone on the reservation, and



Carolyn Leon, chair of Sierra Club's Upper Columbia River Group, presents historic photo for the Watershed Hero Award to Kalispel vice-chair Ray Pierre. The photo is of two young Kalispel men canoeing on the Pend Oreille River.

few had running water in homes.

"In 1996, the Kalispels' mission statement expressed a commitment to growth, preserving their tradition and culture, and education," Bill said. "Today, the tribe models resiliency, determination and commitment to community, overcoming difficulties to flourish and be regional leaders."

The bishop listed some accomplishments:

- Since 2000, the tribe has donated \$18 million through its Charitable Fund to help the poor, keep alive the Salish language, protect the environment and sponsor civic efforts for the common good.

- They have become a voice for the voiceless in the region, addressing issues of fish, wildlife and concerns for generations to come.

- They have advocated for the environment, deeply sensitive to how all are connected.

Ray Pierre, vice-chair of the Kalispel Tribe, spoke of their efforts to preserve natural resources, especially through their fisheries and training biologists.

In an interview with John Os-

born of the Sierra Club, Glen Nenema, chair of the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, said the Tribe's priorities are to care for the land they have been on for centuries, to address threats to their natural resources and to care for members' health.

Growing up in the 1950s on the reservation knowing his great grandparents, grandparents and mother, Glen not only found the simple, slow pace of life then "rich in many ways," but also experienced the Tribe's struggles with alcoholism, neglect and abuse that grew out of their losses.

Glen helped set up the Camas Institute for education and behavioral health to address spiritual, mental, physical and emotional needs, including the Salish language program and daycare.

John invited him to tell of the Kalispel Tribe's work for decades to protect the Pend Oreille River.

The Kalispel were fishermen, gatherers and hunters, Glen responded

"Fish were important for food. The river was our highway to Montana," he said, noting he fished as a

boy, but after the dams were built, fishing began disappearing.

"I always felt it was good medicine to walk along the river, to be there with the river and mountains," Glen said. "Sometimes we ask the river to take away what hurts us, to take it downriver."

At the end of his walks, his head would be clear, he said, because "the water is strong medicine."

The Albeni Falls dam, built on traditional land, and the Box Canyon dam both affect wildlife and fish. The tribe has worked to mitigate those impacts and restore native fisheries.

They worked many years with the Public Utility District (PUD) and filed a lawsuit over the Box Canyon dam, Glen said.

Beginning with the Northwest Power Planning Act, they have sought solutions for the negative impact of dams. They had no funds, technical people or biologists to explain options until they worked with Allan Scholz of Eastern Washington University's fisheries department. His students help the tribe understand the act, giving "us the technical ability to help protect our future," he said.

John asked about the cleanup from mining pollution and smelting wastes in the Coeur d'Alene Basin, cleanup from Tech Resources in Lake Roosevelt, uranium pits on the Spokane reservation and pollution flowing into the Spokane and Columbia Rivers.

Glen said people in the sparsely populated Upper Columbia Region have been vulnerable

because the government has not advocated for them and "has often abetted polluters."

Bearing the brunt of impacts from the past and present, tribes were motivated by tribal interest to advocate for the public interest and common good to protect the environment, he said.

The Kalispel Reservation, being in a Class 1 air quality area under the Clean Air act, is supporting the challenge to a proposed PacWest silicon smelter in Newport," he added.

About 20 years ago, there were hostile meetings and interactions with agencies. Now the Kalispel Tribe collaborates with utility partners, federal regulators and other entities in a comprehensive plan for the Pend Oreille Basin, particularly related to restoring fisheries with native trout, Glen said.

For information, contact John at 939-1290 or john@waterplanet.ws, or Tom at 270-6665 or waltsoe@gmail.com. The full interview is at celp.org/programs/voices-for-water/chairman-nenema/.

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Grocery Rescue is Second Harvest's main source

It takes a lot of food donated by businesses, organizations and individuals to feed 55,000 people in need in Eastern Washington and North Idaho each week, said Julie Humphreys, community relations manager at Second Harvest.

Through its Grocery Rescue program, Second Harvest captures millions of pounds of food that would otherwise go to waste. Since 2004, the program has become Second Harvest's primary source of donated food.

It partners with 26 retail chains with 184 stores—corner stores to

large supermarkets—and picks up food that didn't sell, is overstock or is no longer retail worthy but still good to eat.

"We receive fresh produce and other perishable foods near expiration but still nutritious, and get them on tables of people in need the next day," said Owen Esperas, director of agency relations.

Second Harvest drivers pick up food at Spokane retailers and transport it to the distribution center at 1234 E. Front, where partner agencies pick up groceries for their food banks and meal sites.

Partner agencies also pick up food directly from retailers in their communities throughout the Inland Northwest and give it directly to people, saving the cost of transportation and storage.

Julie said 12 million pounds of food rescued from local retail outlets last year went on the tables of hungry families and seniors.

Retailers serve the community by being stewards of product that would otherwise be wasted and save disposal costs, she said.

For information, call 534-6678 or visit 2-harvest.org



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The Hearth welcomes young adults returning from mission, service

Through the Krista Foundation, Linda and Jim Hunt welcome young adults, Krista colleagues, who have served in 60 countries and 52 U.S. cities to a “soul space” in their back yard.

In 2000, they replaced a run-down barn with a guest center that has Latin American, Asian, African, and Northwest-theme rooms, and is surrounded by a garden with an Asian water fall, Latin American patio, American fruit trees, a secret garden and a prayer garden.

Intended as a place of beauty and peace, it helped them heal from the death of their daughter Krista Hunt Ausland in a 1998 bus accident in Bolivia, where she was volunteering with her husband, Aaron.

To honor her spirit of service, the Hunts, family and friends launched the Krista Foundation for Global Citizenship, an ecumenical, Christian nonprofit with the vision of supporting other young adults who do a year or more of service.

The Hunts call their back yard “soul space” the Hearth. Krista colleagues build community there while coming for conferences and debriefing retreats when they return from service.

Linda captures that “soul space” in a book with 180 color photos, quotes from “wisdom voices,” and stories of some of the 300 young people who have come. The book is *Soul Space: Creating Places and Lives that Make a Difference*.

At 7 p.m., Wednesday, April 10, Linda will do a book signing at Auntie’s Bookstore on 402 W. Main for *Soul Space*, which is sold there, at Kizuri and through the Krista Foundation.

Linda hopes the book invites people to know how important it is in this time of divisiveness to find “hearths”—places of welcome, inclusion, encouragement and beauty.

After their daughter’s death, Jim, who taught history at Whitworth University and for 25 years took students on five-month service study programs in Central America, continued doing that.

Linda continued teaching at Whitworth, as director of the writing program and faculty leader of the service learning program, until resigning to be the foundation’s initial director and to write.

They also continued to travel



Linda Hunt sits by The Hearth’s Krista Foundation window.

and learn about cultures and faiths of people around the world.

With experiences in service learning in the U.S. and abroad, they knew the importance for returns to take time to debrief, but found that few programs offered debriefing to help young adults figure out what they learned and to reduce culture shock.

“We are not a sending agency,” Linda said, “but come alongside young adults serving with existing agencies that use volunteers, such as the Peace Corps, Jesuit Volunteers, Presbyterian Year in Mission or Americorps.

“Unfortunately, most provide little debriefing support, so recently we received a \$200,000 Murdock grant for consulting with agencies across America to encourage them to include pivotal debriefing and intercultural awareness,” said Linda.

Before building the guest center, they gathered with friends for a “Blessing of the Hearth.” Tiki lights marked the building’s footprint. Those gathered shared prayers that young people and guests who came would find comfort, counsel, challenge, conversation, contemplation, compassion, confidence and courage.

The book’s chapters follow those “c” themes as they share the narrative of Krista’s service, of starting the Krista Foundation, of creating the Hearth and Global

gardens, and of experiences of some of the young people—Krista colleagues—who have come there.

“Their stories and spirit of service give us hope in young adults and in our country,” Linda said.

Jim, Linda and other helpers design and tend the garden, keeping it a place growing beautiful flowers, fruits and vegetables.

The garden is healing for Linda, who is now being treated for her third bout with cancer.

“I find the extraordinary in the ordinary, in bees returning to the lilac bushes, a praying mantis on a red dahlia, and the peace around the pool and fountain,” she said.

She particularly enjoys Memorial Day weekends when a new Krista Foundation cohort meet for the first time. Within three hours, they relax, share in conversation and start friendships that are the basis of the long-term “colleague community” after they leave.

“It’s also a powerful time when they come back to the Hearth after their service and share with one another their profound learning their questions and discernment on their next steps,” she said. “It’s a privilege to share in this.

In addition to young adults, she said other community groups find the Hearth a creative place to gather on occasion, such as Whitworth and Gonzaga staff, the Interfaith Council, church groups, the NAACP Spokane, St.

George’s faculty, international groups and individuals.

Those who come are guests, but many donate to the Krista Foundation. The Hearth and gardens are a family commitment, said Linda, using no resources from foundation donations.

The Hunts two other children enjoy visiting and offering support. Their daughter, Susan, and her husband, Peter, live in Newton, Mass., with their children Quinlan and Hunter. The Hunt’s adopted Korean son, Jefferson and his wife, Kris, live in Hawaii with their daughter, Erin.

Their son-in-law, Aaron, married Gabriela from Bolivia. They have two children, Ava London and Thiago, whom Linda and Jim consider their heart grandchildren.

All three families come to the Hearth for family reunions.

The Krista Foundation also offers service leadership grants.

One recipient, Nathan Williams, a physics graduate who served in the Peace Corps in a poor village in Burkina Faso saw people struggling without basics like electricity. He used a \$1,000 Krista Foundation grant to attend an international conference on solar energy in South Africa. Then he studied at Nelson Mandela University, to learn about using solar panels to provide electricity

in villages like ones he served. He recently earned a doctoral degree from Carnegie Mellon University and is working with colleagues on energy needs in Africa.

Megan Menard, a biology major who volunteered a year in Portland, Ore., helping homeless men and women with acute needs after they were released from hospitals, used a \$1,000 Krista grant to attend a Housing First Conference in Washington D.C. and then went back to college for a nursing degree. She now works with low-income new mothers in Spokane.

Colleagues also share their awareness of barriers to women leaving the sex trade in Ethiopia, of experiences of immigrant children in Tacoma or of developing urban U.S. community gardens.

Linda, a history major at the University of Washington, was 21 when she went to the Middle East and Europe with the future president of Fuller Seminary. That travel opened her to the world.

For information, call 939-6597 or visit kristafoundation.org.

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Editor reflects on The Fig Tree's 35 years and years yet to come

People and their stories bring The Fig Tree to life. In these times with polarized news creating personal echo chambers, it's hard to believe that when truth and falsehood meet, truth will win.

In these times, we need hope and resilience, so we can persevere. That's why The Fig Tree informs people to inspire them to be involved. We do that through stories of caring people who make a difference, and through the resource guide that empowers people to improve their lives, communities and the world.

Resilience is having the strength, patience and wisdom to persevere in the struggle for social and environmental justice and peace. To be resilient, we need to be people of vision—vision through the eyes of people of diverse races, tongues, cultures and faiths, living together in community, in solidarity, in respect and in unity.

Adversity—personal, social, societal, economic, political—happens. When many are ready to give up, The Fig Tree seeks to keep hope alive.

The Fig Tree, rooted in Micah 4:4, envisions the hope that everyone shall live under their own vines and fig trees in peace and unafraid.

We have made a difference in lives through at least 2,500 feature stories over

35 years, reaching hundreds of thousands of people in print and millions through our website and social media.

The Fig Tree's stories share struggles, possibilities and solutions.

Over 35 years, The Fig Tree has given hope, not only through our stories, but also through our example of our having started from nothing with minimal income and giving back—reinvesting—to make it be.

We're also part of a wider economic system. The more we in the faith, nonprofit, human service, caring and justice-seeking communities share with each other—even when we feel pinched—the more wealth circulates among us, empowering each of us in our efforts.

When we added the Resource Directory in 2007, we saw it as a tool for pastors and service providers to be informed and guide clients to assistance.

Then we realized that if "clients"—people in times of struggle and emergencies who needed resources—had their own copies they could use them to move from crises to transition to stability with food, jobs, education and housing. Once stabilized, they could find cultural, recreational and community outlets to "give back," to seek justice, change policies and improve lives for others.

The Fig Tree is an entrepreneurial venture in community journalism and resource sharing.

Our team of nearly 100 multi-taskers—editors, staff and volunteers—do interviews, research, articles, editing, photos, layouts and web design; develop relationships to build a base of support; do deliveries, mailings, displays, event planning, and serve on the board.

We invite people of younger generations—any generation—to join us in this venture, sharing in any of the multiple tasks that make The Fig Tree and Resource Directory possible.

Let me be clear, I'm retirement age but editing The Fig Tree is my retirement.

Not only am I doing what I love, but I also want to mentor and partner with others to share in this work.

We seek a backup person or people to share in the multiple tasks. While the benefits raise funds for ongoing support, we also hope for an added boost to increase staffing. We are just over the basic goal of \$30,000 for our ongoing budget.

In 2019, we also budgeted an additional \$35,000 to help us fund new staffing and build our future capacity.

To help promote The Fig Tree and share our story, we are providing in print

in Sounding Board below comments of speakers for the Benefit Lunch. In May, we will include comments of speakers for the Benefit Breakfast. Our hope is that our supporters will share that information with others to draw new readers and supporters. Videos of their comments are also online through thefigtree.org or at our YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/thefigtree1323/videos.

In addition, the video Nathan Slabaugh created for the benefits with long-time Fig Tree partners—Raymond Reyes, Lonnie Mitchell, Sally Duffy, Deidre Jacobson, David Brookbank and Amber Waldref—is also available there, along with their full comments. These are tools to use to excite others about The Fig Tree.

Thanks to Cindy Hval for the article and to Dan Pelle for the Spokesman-Review article on our 35 years. It's at <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2019/mar/22/deep-roots-the-fig-tree-celebrates-35-years/>

The May and June issues will offer more reflection on our 35 years, as we look forward to the next 35 years—expanding our outreach to build hope, resilience and perseverance by informing, inspiring and involving people.

Mary Stamp
Editor



Lunch speakers value information, inclusion, inspiration, involvement

Sandy Williams - The Black Lens

There are few people for whom I will shift my schedule if they ask me to do something. Mary is one. I have immense respect for the work of communication The Fig Tree does.

While there is much competition in media, we share photos, stories, events. Mary supports what we do. It speaks of her character and The Fig Tree's character.

I'm a word geek. I love words and their meanings. I love using words. That's why I publish a newspaper.

The Black Lens is an African American focused newspaper that has been around for four years. I'm

a baby in comparison with 35 years.

I looked up the words of the theme, "Informing, Inspiring and Involving."

"Inform" is to impart information and knowledge. The Fig Tree has been imparting information and knowledge for 35 years. I can speak to how difficult it is to publish a newspaper. I wrote down all the stuff I do to get my paper out, which Mary does too.

We find stories, cover stories, photograph stories and edit stories. We do layouts, find ads and make sure the paper gets published and delivered. Then we bill for ads, do the finance and administrative work, and plan events to supplement the paper.

I've been doing it four years and I'm fairly exhausted. So 35 years of informing this community is no small task. The fact that this is a print, independent newspaper that has lasted for 35 years is amazing. I'm proud to stand here in support of you.

The second word is to "inspire"—to influence, move or guide by divine or supernatural inspiration. The Fig Tree does that by bringing understanding. It is not just covering the community but it creates community across barriers of race, culture, class and religion in a way no other publication

in this community does.

I support The Fig Tree's work of engaging the community and inspiring us to be better people than we would be or could be before reading this paper.

"Involving" is to engage as a participant. The Fig Tree is not just a distant observer but is a participant in the community. One reason I started the Black Lens was because there was an absence of positive images of people of color in the media in this community. The exception is The Fig Tree. The images in the slide show of 2018-19 articles present the amazing diversity of stories about different people. Aside from my paper, The Fig Tree is the most diverse newspaper in terms of whom it covers and how it covers by storytelling.

It lives up to the three words: informing, inspiring and involving.

It's critically important today for us to support independent community newspapers. They are going away, and it's vital to us to understand what is happening that doesn't make it into the mainstream media, because that's what builds our community and takes us to a place we wouldn't be otherwise.

So I celebrate you and the work you have done, and I hope to be like Mary when I grow up.

Jason Clark - Second Harvest

At Second Harvest, our work is about getting healthful food to people every day. The only way that happens is through the fabric of our community. We have 8,000 volunteers. Dozens of local organizations, neighborhood churches, food pantries and meal programs feed thousands of people every week. When we serve hungry people, we want to make sure it's not just feeding someone today, but helping them feed themselves tomorrow, so they are healthier,

happier and more prosperous. That involves community resources.

The Community Resource Guide is fundamental to that. It's an amazing source of information people can use. We are grateful for the work that goes into it, and we're proud to support and help distribute it. Our network of food banks get copies. If we forget to send it, they call and want to know where their copy is and when it's coming. It's helping us do our mission and it helps many people in our neighborhoods.

Sima Thorpe - The Arc of Spokane

I've been reading The Fig Tree and been a sponsor for 25 years. The theme, "Informing, Inspiring and Involving," connects to inclusion. As executive director of The Arc of Spokane, including and inclusion are on my mind. March is intellectual and physical disabilities month.

Many Arc constituents are not involved or included in our community. They often experience another "I"—invisibility. The Fig Tree makes

the invisible visible. Those on the margins of society, not included and the behind-the-scenes warriors for social justice are welcome in The Fig Tree's fold.

Disability is dehumanizing. The Arc sees its constituents as people with potential and part of the community.

Soon after I started at The Arc, Mary Stamp asked how we could partner. With jobs and job development needed for people with developmental disabilities, our constituents became part of the work force that delivers the Resource Directory—4,000 copies of them.

The Fig Tree is a force for involvement and inclusion. It lifts into light those in need to see. So, support The Fig Tree.

Theresa Hart - Newby-ginnings

I'm new to the Fig Tree family. Kaye

Hult recently wrote an article about Newby-ginnings, telling how we began because my son, Rick Newby, was killed while serving in Iraq in 2011. I left my job as a nurse. While I was wondering what I would do without my son, many of his friends began coming to me with problems. Newby-ginnings is a veterans' support program with a thrift store. We give away things veterans or families need, housewares, clothes, furniture, appliances, medical equipment and even cars.

We also provide information on resources. That is where The Fig Tree's Resource Directories comes in. I have copies on my desk. They look like my Bible, because there are sticky notes everywhere, and highlights and pencil markings in the margins. We get a case of them, so we can provide it to some of more than 2,800 families who come to us for guidance. Others have tried to pull together resource directories, but this one is unbelievable. It is the most comprehensive I've seen. Thank you for making my job easier.

Kimmy Meinicke, Fig Tree board member and pastor at St. David's Episcopal Church, appealed for donations.

The four speakers have shared eloquently their experience with The Fig Tree, and why it is important in the work they do in the community.

The Fig Tree has a long history of connecting people and building networks, weaving the tapestry together. It's important to the health and wellbeing of the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene region and the rural communities.

Consider how you might support The Fig Tree financially or with your time. I challenge you to support the stories that are told, the community building that happens and the resource directory that is so vital for our area.



Calendar of Events

ALSO SEE EVENTS ON PAGES 2 and 3

- Apr 1-4 • Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk**, author *Come Be My Light* writings of Mother Teresa, kfinch@whitworth.edu
- Apr 2-4 • "Building Peace through Kindness.** Dialogue and Forgiveness," International Conference on Hate Studies, Hemmingson, Gonzaga, gonzaga.edu/cohhs
- Apr 4 • Dialogue with the Muslim Community,** Conference on Hate Studies, Hemmingson, Gonzaga, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Gonzaga.edu/cohhs
- Apr 4, 18 • Peace & Justice Action Committee,** 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., pjals.org
- Apr 6 • "Agreeing to Disagree,"** Spokane FAVS Coffee Talk, Origin, 5115 S. Freya, 10 a.m., spokanefavs.com
- Vietnamese Heritage Day,** performances-food-exhibits, Genesis Event Center, 9315 N. Nevada, 1 to 4 p.m., vasa.spokane@yahoo.com
- "Declaring America's Real National Emergency: Truth and Poverty Tour."** student movements, WSU Riverpoint Health Sciences 110A, 4 p.m.
- Apr 7 • Teriyaki Fest,** Spokane Buddhist Temple, 927 S. Perry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., SpokaneBuddhistTemple.org
- Apr 9 • Circle of Security,** 10-week parent-child program for mothers, YWCA Spokane, 930 N. Monroe. 10:30 a.m. to noon, 789-9280, teresad@ywcawc.org
- Unity in the Community Planning** for Aug. 19, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct. Room 101, 5:30 p.m., www.nwunity.org
- "Next Generation Medicine: The Invisible Wounds of War,"** Christian MacDonald, Hemmingson Center, 702 E. Desmet, 6:30 p.m., 313-6095
- Apr 9-10 • "The Great Folk Scare: American Folk Musical Revival,"** '50s and '60s folk music, Tuesday: Cheney Library, 510 First, 6:30 p.m.; Wednesday, Spokane Valley Library, 12004 E. Main, 7:30 p.m., 893-8400
- Apr 10 • Hispanic Business/Professional Association,** Fiesta Mexicana, 1227 S. Grand, 6 p.m., hbpaspokane.net
- "Mary/Maryam: A Woman of Two Traditions,"** Kewkab Shishani (WSU nursing) and Fr. Patrick Baraza (GU), Gonzaga Law School Room 143, 7 p.m., dpschaida@ewu.edu
- Apr 11 • Union Gospel Mission Gatherings,** Conversation on Homelessness in Downtown Spokane, DoubleTree Hotel Spokane City Center, lunch at noon, dinner at 6:30 p.m., 532-3806, uniongospelmission.org/gathering
- Apr 11, 18, 25 • Diverse Voices Writing Group,** Spark Central, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy, 5:30 p.m., 279-0299, sparkwestcentral.org
- Apr 11, 25 • Showing Up for Racial Justice,** 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Apr 12 • Annual Kootenai County Task Force** on Human Relations Annual Banquet, Idaho State Senator Cherie Buckner-Webb, Best Western, 306 W. Appleway, Coeur d'Alene, 5 p.m. silent auction, 6 p.m. dinner, 208-765-3932, idahohumanrights.org
- Apr 12-14 • 2019 Indian Youth Leadership Camp** (grades 7 to 12), Medical Lake, nativeproject.org/leadership
- Apr 13 • YWCA Spring Fling Brunch and Silent Auction,** Anthony's at the Falls, 510 N. Lincoln St., 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 789-9312, ywcaspokane.org
- "Save the Species," Happy Earth Day 2019,** 105 N. Balfour Rd., 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (p. 3)
- Peace and Justice Action League** of Spokane Tax Day March & Rally, 35 W. Main, noon, pjals.org
- The Land's Council Annual April Showers** Spokane Convention Center, 5 p.m. (p. 3)
- Apr 15 • NAACP Spokane Membership Meeting,** Spokane NAACP's 100th Anniversary, Calvary Baptist, 203 E. 3rd Ave., 6 p.m., facebook.com/Spokane.naacp
- Apr 16 • David Barsamian,** author with Noam Chomsky of *Global Discontents: Conversations on the Rising Threats to Democracy*, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright, 7 p.m., 747-3012, kyrs.org
- Apr 18 • Bahá'í Fireside Discussions,** Spokane Valley Library, 12004 E. Main, 7 p.m., scl.d.org
- Apr 19 • Good Friday Experience,** The Gathering House, 733 W. Garland, 5 to 7 p.m., foresportsbar@comcast.net
- "Madhura Vani, Melodious Reverberations,"** South Asia Cultural Association Concert, Unity Spiritual Center, 2900 S. Bernard, 6:30 to 9 p.m., 467-5558, sacaspokane@gmail.com (p. 3)
- Apr 20 • Treasure Hunt Book Fair (K-3),** East Central Community Center, 500 S. Stone, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Kalispel Tribal Winter/Spring Pow Wow,** Northern Quest Resort & Casino, 100 N. Hayford, noon
- Annual Spring Tea,** Women and Children's Free

- Restaurant and Community Kitchen, four-course tea and silent auction, The Davenport Grand, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., 324-1995
- April 21 • Easter Sunrise Service,** Greenwood Memorial Terrace, 211 N. Government Way, 6:30 a.m., 994-2759
- Apr 22 • "For the Healing of the Earth,"** Earth Day Vigil, Tribal Gathering Place by Spokane City Hall, 5:15 p.m., (p. 1)
- Apr 22-29 • Annual Get Lit!** Celebrating reading and writing, numerous events, various venues, getlitfestival.org
- Apr 22-30 • Coeur d'Alene Earth Day 5K and 10K Virtual Race,** virtualrunevents.com/earthday-5k-10k/
- Apr 24 • Tommy Orange-EWU Get Lit Programs,** author of *There, There*, on lives or urban Native Americans, SCC Lair Auditorium, 1810 N. Greene, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
- Apr 25 • Habitat for Humanity Hope Builders Luncheon,** Spokane Convention Center, 11:30 a.m. (p. 2)
- "Refugees: Myths and Realities, Dilemmas and Contributions,"** Kassahun Kebede and Fred Strange, EWU anthropology, Spokane North Library, 44 E. Hawthorne Rd., 6:30 p.m., scl.d.org
- Apr 25-28 • "A New Season,"** Grand Opening Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 E. DeSmet, 25-7:30 p.m., 26-10 a.m., 27 & 28-2 p.m., 323-2787
- Apr 26 • YWCA's Stand Against Racism Day,** "No Hate, No Fear, Immigrant Justice Is Racial Justice," Empire Health Foundation Philanthropy Center, 1020 W. Riverside, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., standagainstracism.org
- Native American Graduation,** Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga, 6:30 p.m., facebook.com/SpokaneNativeGraduation/
- Apr 27 • Washington State NOW Conference,** "Power of Persistence," Elisa Law, Women's Suffrage Centennial coordinator, Spokane Downtown Library, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., spokanenow.org
- Daughters of Norway,** Freya Lodge #50, Central Lutheran, 512 S. Bernard, 10 a.m., 926-8090, daughtersofnorwayfreya.org
- Annual Spring Tea,** Six-Course International Menu, celebrating 40 years, ESL School, Country Homes Christian 8415 N. Wall, 10:45 a.m., 466-3414 (p. 7)
- Compost Fair & Arbor Day,** Finch Arboretum (p. 12)
- African American Graduation,** Hemmingson at Gonzaga, 2 to 4 p.m., aagradspokane@gmail.com
- Sukiyaki Dinner,** Highland Park United Methodist, 611 S. Garfield, noon to 5 p.m.,
- Spokane Feminist Art Festival – FEM+FEST,** Downtown Library, 6 to 9 p.m., spokanenow.org
- "A Musical Festival,"** Holy Names Music Center, 3910 W. Custer Dr., 5 to 7 p.m., 326-9516
- Celebrating Transformation Luncheon,** L'Arche Spokane, St. Peter Catholic, 3520 E. 18th, noon to 1:15 p.m., 483-0438, info@larcheofspokane.org
- "Refugee Stories: Voices of Hope,"** Refugee Connections, St. Ann's, 5:30 p.m., (p. 2)
- Apr 28 • Spokane Observance of the Holocaust,** Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th, 7 p.m. (p. 6)
- Apr 29 • Earth Week Service Project,** One Peace Many Paths, Drumheller Springs Park, N. Ash Pl. and Euclid, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 536-2811
- Apr 29-May 4 • EWU Pride Week,** EWU Cheney, sites.ewu.edu/pridecenter/
- Apr 30 • "Challenged and Changed: Living and Learning in Central America,"** Book Launch with authors Lindy Scott and Kim Hernandez, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m., (p. 3)
- May 1 • The Fig Tree mailing and delivery,** St. Mark's Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9:15 a.m., 535-1813
- Spokane Human Rights Commission,** Spokane City Hall Council Chambers, 5:30 p.m., 625-6966
- Citizen Hall of Fame,** Spokane Public Library Foundation, Community Impact Award to Jerrelene Williamson for preserving Spokane's history, Downtown Library, spokanelibraryfoundation.org/
- May 2 • The Fig Tree Development and Board,** Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon - Development, 1 to 3 p.m., Board, 535-1813
- May 3-5 • Alternatives to Violence Workshop,** Spokane Friends Church, 1612 W. Dalke, Friday 6 to 9 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sunday 12:30 - 6:30 p.m., spokanefriends@gmail.com, 327-7852
- May 4 • Birth Mothers' Luncheon,** 1960 N. Holy Names Ct., 11 a.m., 455-4970
- May 4, 5 • Classics 10: Eckart Preu's Farewell Concerts** as music director, Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 3 p.m., 624-1200, spokanesymphony.org

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The Alternatives to Violence Project Basic Workshop

May 3-5

Spokane Friends Church
 1612 W. Dalke Ave., Spokane

Intensive 18-hour workshop meets Friday 6-9 pm, Saturday 8 am-6 pm and Sunday 12:30-6 pm. Teaches interpersonal conflict resolution through small group and one-to-one interactions.

Limited to 20 participants • \$30 includes Saturday lunch
 Register at spokanefriends.com or 509-327-7852

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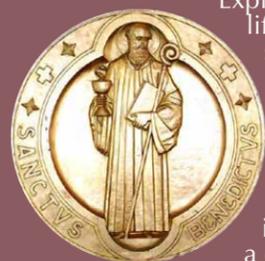
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A Benedictine Spirituality Cohort with Sr. Teresa Jackson, August 19-25, 2019 — initial retreat



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

Church merges three congregations and African refugees for ministry

The 112-year-old Fowler United Methodist Church (UMC) has stepped into a future of growing in multi-ethnic understanding with 25 percent of its congregation being African refugees.

Their culture and music are now part of the Sunday morning worship service. The church also offers a Sunday evening worship in Swahili, led by Maria Mwange, who studied ministry and became a Methodist lay pastor while in a refugee camp in Uganda.

Her gratitude to God in all life helps infuse the ministry of others.

While many older members no longer live in the neighborhood, the congregation sees its future as offering a multi-cultural witness of worship and service in a low-income, transient neighborhood in the Garland District of Spokane.

In 2016, Fowler welcomed Maria's family and members of two other UMC churches.

In April 2016, Marie, her husband, Myani-Tito Mugombela, and five of their children from Congo came to Spokane after living 10 years in a refugee camp in Uganda.

In July 2016, Central United Methodist in downtown Spokane announced it would close in November. So a group from Burundi, who had been worshipping there for nine years, joined Fowler because many lived nearby.

Also in July, Trinity United Methodist in Northeast Spokane arranged to sell its building, closed and merged with Fowler.

"Now there are 246 on the rolls, and the average worship attendance is 85," said Glenn Kennedy, who is a three-quarter-time pastor.

Serving with him is Sue Robinson, quarter-time certified lay minister, assigned there three years ago to serve in the neighborhood where she grew up.

Pastor Marie leads Sunday evening services in Swahili for about 15, but many in her family and the other Africans also attend Sunday morning worship in English.

Also, Etienne LeRoux and Sarah Briggs, an English-speaking couple from South Africa, are on staff to lead the youth. They came to Fowler because a church member met Sarah's parents when she was working with the U.S. State Department in South Africa.



Sue Robinson, Marcelline and Marie Mwange, and Glenn Kennedy.

The African children make up two-thirds of the younger children in Sunday School and half of the teens. Five teens are in the confirmation class.

"Neighborhood youth are also drawn to the church," said Glenn, pastor there since 2007, after 11 years at Covenant United Methodist, nine each at Greenbluff-Mead and Cashmere-Monitor, and three in Nez Perce, Idaho.

"We are blending our cultures," he said. "We are getting used to new customs."

For example, the African members have an Injili Gospel Choir. They sing every week.

The other Africans include an extended family with three married brothers, a mother, father and two teen boys, plus 12 children from Burundi. The grandfather as a child had seen his family slaughtered and ran through the night into the jungle, crossing a crocodile infested river into Congo.

Marie told of her path ministry, with her daughter, Marcelline, translating for her. She grew up in a family of nine in Congolu in North Congo. Her father had a good job at a hospital until he died in 1984, leaving the family in poverty. She was 17. She had gone to primary school and high school and was near earning a certificate to teach, but had no money to finish school after her father died. So she moved to Goma in 1985 and married My-

ani. She did not see her mother or siblings again. Her mother died in 1996 when war started.

When Marie and Myani fled war, killing, rape and theft in Congo to go to Uganda, they took their children, Rebecca, Grace, Patrick and Margaret. Christelle, Mary, Marcelline and Sampson were born in Uganda. Patrick came to Spokane in 2015 to work. Grace and Rebecca stayed in Uganda.

In Congo, they lived in fear, Marie said. If she went to the market, she might be raped or killed "God helped me. I prayed every day. One day I went to church with three of my children and saw many soldiers. Several surrounded me. I had no money, just bed sheets and diapers. They put a gun on my head. I felt the world would end. I asked God to help me, worried what would happen to my children if I died."

When a soldier started to pull the trigger, Marie said, "You are a parent like me. You have children." He let her go to the church,

saying "Today you can live."

She praised Jesus and the Holy Spirit for taking her out of trouble.

The Mwange family stayed in the church overnight and went home in the morning. The pastor gave them money to take a bus to the Ugandan border. Knowing someone at the border, they were able to walk into Uganda. The pastor and other church members also went. That was in 2005.

In Uganda, the family went to church often. She and Myani grew up Catholic. At 10, she helped poor and elderly people and felt God was calling her.

The camp in Uganda had food—but not enough—and housing was in insect-infested tents. There was no school and no water to bathe.

Christelle needed treatment and went to a Christian hospital. Marie visited and prayed for people in the hospital. She also made and sold jewelry to pay for the hospital. People from the church also gave money, sugar and salt. She said God taught her to trust.

In 2006, Marie became a pastor in the Shekinnah Church. She did studies, began to be a pastor and preach, and was licensed.

She did more training from 2008 to 2012 in Kampala. U.S. and South African pastors came to teach. She and Myani-Tito both earned diplomas to be Methodist pastors. In 2008, she was assistant pastor of a church there.

In 2015, Christelle needed more treatment than she could get in Uganda. World Relief arranged for them to come to Spokane. A doctor flew with them because Christelle was on oxygen. She had open heart surgery to repair her heart valve last year and is healthy and active today, said Marie.

"God changed our situation with coming here," she said.

Marie works at the Queen of Sheba Ethiopian Restaurant. Myani works in the laundry at the

Kalispel Resort and Casino.

Every year since coming, she has been adamant about holding a service and preaching on March 8 for International Women's Day.

"It gives me hope," said Marie. "Women help, and God encourages us through difficult situations."

After 25 years as a hospital chaplain, Sue wants to give back to the neighborhood where she grew up. She does outreach through a day camp and summer carnivals.

The church has a food closet and assists families at Willard Elementary School with Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets.

"It's not easy to connect with neighbors. Many work, are older, rent and are transient," Sue said.

Glenn, who lives at Deer Park, grew up on his family's ranch in Fruitland Valley near Lake Roosevelt. He left at 18, attending three colleges and graduating in psychology in 1968 from Seattle Pacific College. After four years of church youth work he went to seminary, completing his degree at Princeton Seminary in 1975. He plans to retire in June.

He sees the African and Anglo members growing together in a shared ministry.

"We are moving beyond a we-and-them mindset, especially the children and youth," he said.

"The African members' lives are full. Parents work multiple, low-paying jobs but make time for their children. They have little time to socialize, but are faithful about church life," he said.

Glenn said he has learned from Marie and her family about praise and gratitude.

"Marie is grateful to God for all of life. Being associated with her and her family has deepened my sense of gratitude for God's everyday gifts of life," he said.

For information, call 325-3242 or 434-6285, or email fowl-erumc@yahoo.com.

Spring Compost Fair & Arbor Day Celebration

Saturday, April 27, 2019
11 am-2 pm
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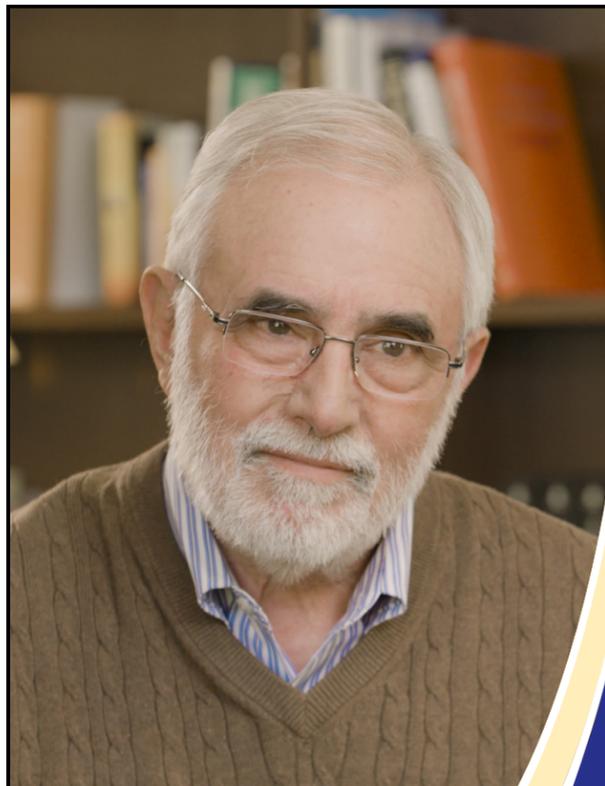
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Please arrive no later than 1:30 pm and bring proof of residency.




For more information call 625-6580 or go to www.spokanecountysolidwaste.org

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