

38TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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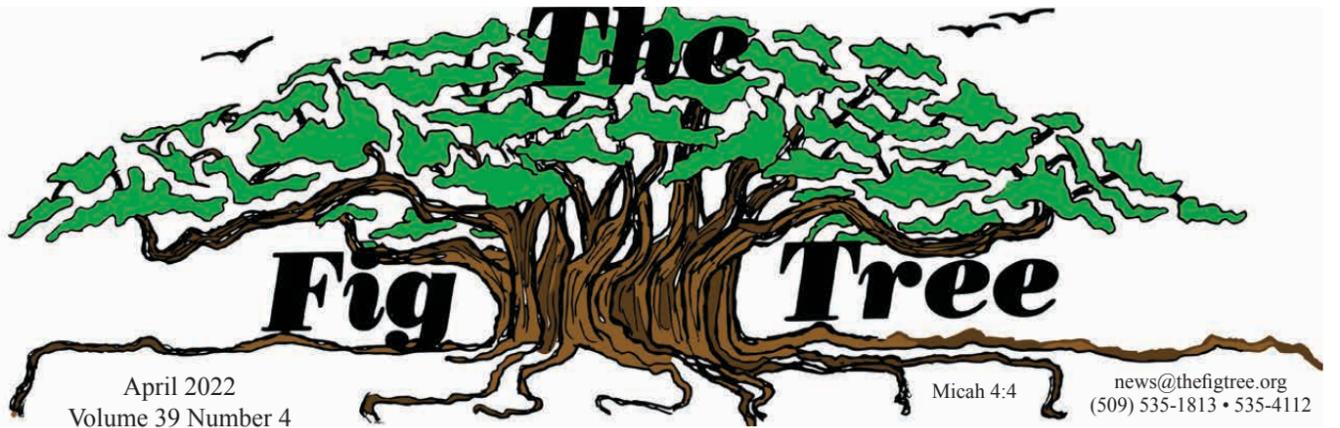
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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest online at www.thefigtree.org • check The Fig Tree Facebook page daily for news and links

'Family' support is key to aftercare

By Mary Stamp

With roots in a small community and a supportive family, Susan Heitstuman knows the importance of community and family in her own life.

Bringing that background to her work as aftercare coordinator at Family Promise, she encourages families as they move from homelessness to shelters to housing.

Susan officially supports families for two years after they are in permanent housing. Even when they call after that time, she listens and invites them to consider the pros and cons of options and points them to resources—as her mother did for her.

“We want families to feel cared for, loved and not judged,” she pointed out.

Susan, one of the longest serving staff members, was a volunteer since Family Promise/Interfaith Hospitality Network started.

When Susan was administrative staff at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church (UMC) in 1996, she received a call from organizers wanting to start a branch of the national Interfaith Hospitality Network, which was founded in 1986.



Susan Heitstuman has been a volunteer and employee for 25 years.

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), the original name for Family Promise, officially started in March 1997 in Spokane with 11 churches.

The program has grown so in 2021 it served 4,000 people in 700 families, including helping 3,500 with rental assistance to prevent homelessness.

Twenty-five years ago, host churches first opened their buildings to shelter four homeless families for a week at a time. Volunteers from support churches would bring meals and converse with families at the host churches.

Spokane Valley UMC served as a support church for St. Mary's Catholic Church, which was a host church.

Susan also volunteered with her church, St. Anthony's Catholic, a support church, which helped St. Joseph's Catholic Church on Dean, a host church.

Families would arrive at a host church at 5 p.m., after spending their day at the day center, connecting with case workers to look for jobs, gain skills, do laundry and find resources to secure permanent housing.

As a volunteer until 2008, Continued on page 4

History professor tells of Expo '74's impact on environment then and now

At the April 22 to 23 Hope for Creation Conference at the Cathedral of St. John, Eastern Washington University history professor Bill Youngs will speak on “Expo '74: The Environment Then and Now.”

He will review how the environment, the focus of Expo '74, was viewed 48 years ago and explore lessons for today.

Because that World Fair was the first to focus on the environment, the 2020 World Fair in Shanghai, China, included Spokane's fair in a video on World Fairs.

“In the history of World Fairs, they credited Spokane as the first with an environmental theme,” Bill said. “Ours was the smallest World Fair but future fairs looked to Spokane as a trend setter in the way we explored the environment.”

For its 25th anniversary, Bill wrote a 500-page history of the World Fair, *The Fair and the Falls: Spokane's Expo '74, Transforming an American Environment*.

His book will be reprinted next year in preparation for the 50th anniversary of Expo '74 in 2024.

“One thing about the World's Fair in Spokane was the centrality of the Spokane River,” he said. “People were drawn to the river before there was the town.”

Once people settled here, they set up mills at the falls. Railroad tracks covered the river downtown for many years.

“With Expo, people removed urban clutter and restored the falls,” Bill said. “The city did the impossible once in restoring it, so I believe we can do the impossible now to restore the environment. We can clean the air and clean the water.”

“Expo was a major player in environmental consciousness. As we go forward we need to value the environment,” he said. “Native Americans were managers at Expo '74. No previous World Fair had involved Indians in administering their own exhibit.”

The story of improving the river is an ongoing one. Before the World Fair, Spokane dumped raw sewage in the river. Now groups are concerned about

Continued on page 6

Fig Tree coordinates events to recognize spring holy days

For the first time in more than 30 years, the celebrations of spring holy days of Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha'is and local tribes overlap.

In recognition of the holy days of eight faiths, The Fig Tree is collaborating with the Hope for Creation Conference April 22 and 23, inviting local leaders of those faiths to participate in three events. Those events are a panel discussion from 3 to 4 p.m., Friday, the Healing the Earth Vigil from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., also on Friday, and booths from noon to 3:30 p.m. during an outdoor festival on Saturday.

From the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Spokane, Shahn Sangsar Khalili will participate on the panel. Tiara Pschaida will offer a blessing at the vigil, and Tiara and her husband Daniel will have a booth Saturday.

Representing the Spokane Buddhist Temple on the panel will be Melissa Opel. Gloria Chien, assistant professor of religious studies at Gonzaga University, will give the blessing.

From the Christian community, Lauri Clark-Strait, Fig Tree Board member and Disciples of Christ pastor serving Rockford United Methodist Church, will be on the panel, and Ikani Fakasiieiki of Liberty Park United Methodist Church will give a blessing.

Sreedharani and Mallur Nandagopal will join the panel and vigil on behalf of the Hindu community. They are now retired. She taught 27 years for Community Colleges of Spokane, and he worked 38 years as an engineer with the City of Spokane.

From the Jewish community, Tamar Malino, rabbi of Temple Beth Shalom and Congregation Emanu-El, will speak during the panel and Pam Silverstein, a member of the Jewish community, will offer a reading for the vigil.

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The Fig Tree 1323 S. Perry St. Spokane, WA 99202-3571

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 calls, prays, acts for peace in Ukraine

In a response to a letter from First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska, World Council of Churches (WCC) acting general secretary Ioan Sauca expressed his appreciation for her reflections, and told of his pain at the ongoing grave humanitarian consequences of the conflict. She wrote of weeping of mothers who lost children, families who lost dear ones, the despair of those in the ruins of bombed houses, those dehydrated and starving without hope of escape because there are few secure humanitarian corridors.

During mounting tensions over Ukraine and since the outbreak of conflict on Feb. 24, WCC leaders were intensively engaged in addressing the situation. Ioan noted that "most of those efforts were not possible to share in any public or semi-public domain."

He said the WCC is in close contact with ACT Alliance on church-based humanitarian responses in Ukraine and neighboring countries. Ioan urged Russian and Ukrainian forces and political leaders to establish humanitarian corridors. He appealed to those mounting attacks "that threaten civilians to remember their moral and legal responsibility to protect civilians, and their accountability before God for all innocent lives lost."

Ioan contacted the presidents of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, asking them to come to the table of dialogue and stop the bloodshed and destruction: "I pray that before the feast of Easter, peace will prevail, war will stop and I can come to Kyiv to celebrate Easter and proclaim together Christ's Resurrection in a free, renewed and resurrected Ukraine," he said.

A delegation from ACT Alliance and WCC visited Hungary, Ukraine and Romania March 14 to 18. With Hungarian Inter-Church Aid, they visited refugee centers in Budapest and at the border, and held a roundtable with ecumenical partners.

His Eminence Father Iustin, bishop of Maramuresh and Sarmar of the Romanian Orthodox Church, said the church is taking Christian care of those crossing into Romania, whether they stay or go on to western countries. They provide refugees medicines, food, clothes, accommodation or guidance to destinations. Part of the care at crossing points is from priests and volunteers who show love, warmth and generosity, he said, adding that Petrova Monastery is hosting more than 50 mothers with children. Children are attending school and learning in Ukrainian. "Our church joins Christians across the world in praying for peace, Father Iustin added.

WCC deputy general secretary Isabel Apawo Phiri said refugees from hospitals, schools, kindergartens and residential areas have stories of trauma. Peter Prove, director of the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, said, as international humanitarian law continues to be disregarded, civilians bear the brunt."

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate reported March 11 that it is helping all in need—the military, hospitals and refugees in Ukraine. Monasteries provide humanitarian aid to refugees, internally displaced persons and those affected by the war. Retired doctors among parishioners are helping. Churches are offering basements for shelter from shelling and bombing, and ringing church bells to alert people of impending attacks.

ACT Alliance members are providing humanitarian support. Churches are raising funds and collecting clothes, food and hygiene items. On April 1, African church leaders and agencies expressed their uncertainty as food prices rise and stable food shortages are reported because Africa's food needs are met through imports impeded by the armed conflict. Ukraine exports 40 percent of its wheat and maize to the Middle East and Africa.

On March 2, Ioan, as WCC acting general secretary, wrote Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia, urging him to raise his voice on behalf of the suffering brothers and sisters, most of whom are also "faithful members of our Orthodox Church." Ioan asked him "intervene with the authorities to stop this war, the bloodshed and suffering, and to make efforts to bring peace through dialogue and negotiations." On March 10, Patriarch Kirill wrote: "I pray unceasingly that by His power the Lord will help establish lasting and justice-based peace as soon as possible" and expressed his hope the WCC remains a platform for unbiased dialogue.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Benefits and directory move toward goals

By press time, The Fig Tree has raised nearly \$31,500 of its goal of \$42,000 for its annual Spring Benefits held March 4 and 9, with donations those days as well as before and after, said editor Mary Stamp.

"It's a budget goal, so we will continue the appeal until the goal is met," she said. "We are grateful not only for all the generous gifts, but for the kind words of support that accompanied gifts."

The Fig Tree worked with Hamilton Studio, which pre-

pared videos for the presentations on the event days, for ongoing appeals online, for those who did not attend to view and for use as mission moments in congregations.

"Part of our goal with the benefits is to raise funds and part is to share the story of The Fig Tree's ministry and work in communication and connecting people," Mary said.

During March and April, The Fig Tree is also securing advertising and community partners

to support publication of the 2022-23 Resource Directory. As of press time, The Fig Tree was halfway toward its goal of \$48,000 from advertising to cover increased printing and distribution costs, said Malcolm Haworth, directory editor.

The directory connects people with resources they need to move from crises to stability and then to give back as volunteers.

For information, call 535-1813, email mary@thefigtree.org or visit thefigtree.org/donate.html.

Lutheran Fund gives grant to Fig Tree

The Fig Tree recently received a \$1,000 grant from the Advent Lutheran Endowment Fund.

Advent Lutheran Church's endowment supports local ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Northwest Intermountain Synod.

Darrel Lundby, a retired Lu-

theran pastor and synod leader, applied for the funds.

The endowment provides income to benefit outreach by local, synod, national and global ELCA missions and capital projects for the church.

The church begins to receive requests in October with a dead-

line of Dec. 31 and distributes \$250 to \$1,000.

The endowment is maintained by ongoing gifts of cash, memorials, bequests, life insurance and securities.

For information, call 535-1813 or visit adventlutheranspokane.org.

Faith leaders group holds photo contest

Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience of Eastern Washington and North Idaho (FLLC) have created a Photojournalistic Story Contest.

For the contest, photographers are to use digital cameras to tell a story with five to ten images and written text on "It's Time to Do Something About"

June 30 is the deadline to sub-

mit works for the contest, which is for middle and high school students.

The top prize is \$150. One runner up in each age group will receive \$100.

The event will be judged over the summer. The winners' stories will be displayed in the fall.

This is the third contest that FLLC has offered to provide a

chance for the people in Eastern Washington and North Idaho to share their diverse gifts and visions. The first was an art contest, "Celebrate Curiosity." The second was a short story contest, "Brilliant Blunders that Left a Mark."

For information, email FLL-Conscience@gmail.com.ent Fund.

Art exhibition will run through June 11

The "Our Stories Our Visions" art exhibition will be on display April 9 to June 11 at the Carl Maxey Center, 3114 E. 5th Ave.

The images include a textured quilt displaying the culture and stories of marginalized peoples through the textures, colors and shapes of their visions.

"This show is to be inspiring and give hope to our com-

munities," said photographer Bob Lloyd. "It is also so youth may be inspired and see the creative possibilities of expressing themselves through the arts."

The artists' names are in a guest book at the Carl Maxey Center, with information on how to purchase the pieces. Shotgun Studios will handle the purchase of work during the show.

Information about the artists and their art is at Our Stories Our Visions at 4comculture.com.

Organizers are Sandy Williams at The Carl Maxey Center, the BIPOC community of Spokane, Shotgun Studios, Eva Silverstone and the HIVE cohorts.

For information, visit spokanelibrary.org/hive.

Episcopal Presiding Bishop visits Spokane

Episcopal Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will visit the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane Friday to Sunday, April 29 to May 1, at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 127 E. 12th Ave.

Other guest speakers for the worship, fellowship and learning gathering are two Virginia Theological Seminary faculty members who serve on the Episcopal Church USA's Way of Love evangelism team.

They are Lisa Kimball, associate dean of lifelong learning and professor of lifelong Christian formation, and Patricia Lyons, an affiliated faculty member and senior advisor to the

dean for evangelism initiatives.

There is a worship service at 5:30 p.m., Friday. On Saturday, there will be a morning prayer, a plenary and workshops on evangelism and discipleship with Lisa and Patricia. Bishop Curry speaks at 5 p.m., Saturday, and joins in the Eucharist celebration at 9:30 a.m. Sunday.

For information, visit spokanediocese.org/the-presiding-bishops-visit.html.

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invite you to join us on

Earth Day, April 22, 2022

4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

at St. John's Cathedral South Patio - 127 E 12th

A Vigil for the Healing of the Earth

Listen to those affected by ecological devastation & connect with others who are active in healing the Earth.

Partners: Hope for Creation Conference, Veradale UCC, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Silver Valley Community Resource Center, Responsible Growth NE WA, Solar Acres Farms, Spokane Riverkeeper, Sustainability Action Plan Spokane, The Fig Tree, St. Paul's & Liberty Park UMC, Congregation Emanu-El, Temple Beth Shalom, Spokane Jewish Coalition for Social Justice, Tools for Change, NEW STORY/Spokane, Faith Action Network, WA Partners for Social Change and more

Camp Gifford seeks stories for its 100th year

To mark the 100th anniversary of Camp Gifford in 2022, The Salvation Army is seeking stories, quotes and photos from campers who have attended Camp Gifford during the past 100 years. Individuals are asked to send stories, quotes and photos by early April, and to provide their names and the years they attended Camp Gifford.

Camp Gifford is the oldest Salvation Army camp operating in the same location in the U.S., said Brian Pickering, development and communications director.

For information, call 325-6810 or email brian.pickering@usw.salvationarmy.org.

Get Lit! holds multiple events April 21 to 24

The annual Get Lit! festival celebrates the written word and writers from the Inland Northwest and beyond in multiple locations and online from Thursday to Saturday, April 21 to 24.

Thursday's event hub is The Hive, 2904 E. Sprague Ave. Friday events are at the Catalyst, 601 E. Riverside, the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 2316 W. 1st Ave., North Idaho College and Spokane Falls Community College.

The Saturday and Sunday hub is the Montvale Event Center, 1019 W. 1st Ave. On Saturday, there are also two events at Wishing Tree Books, 1410 E. 11th, and evening readings at the Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague Ave. Among more than 60 authors participating are Chen Chen, the 2018 to 2020 Jacob Ziskind Poet-in-Residence at Brandeis University; Brandon Hobson, whose novel *Where the Dead Sit Talking* was a finalist for the National Book Award, and Lesley Nneka Arimah, author of *What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky*. Get Lit! events also feature Spokane writers like Nance Van Winckel, Sharma Shields, Emma Noyes and Polly Buckingham.

For information, visit <https://inside.ewu.edu/getlit>.

Riverkeeper and River Forum set clean ups

Earth Day weekend, Spokane Riverkeeper begins public Spokane River clean-up events. The kickoff event is at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 23 at People's Park and Mission Park.

Other Public River Clean Up dates are June 25 at University District, Downtown and Mission Park, and Sept. 17 is the Spokane River Valley Clean Up.

People can also gather groups and request a private or DIY litter clean-up event.

Spokane Riverkeeper and Spokane River Forum cooperate to clean up the Spokane River with program sponsor, Northwest Renewables.

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

Colfax artist exhibits works on pandemic

Colfax artist Nancy Rothwell is exhibiting her art in "Echos of a Pandemic," an acrylic collage exhibit that shares a virtual story about the impact of the COVID pandemic on women.

The exhibit is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, and 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturdays in the Libey Gallery of the Bettie Steiger Center beside the Colfax Library.

Focusing on women's courage to "remain strong" in the face of the flu epidemic of 1918 and the COVID pandemic, Nancy uses visual symbols, such as road maps, to communicate the importance of these events.

She shares the bravery of women in health care and home settings. One piece, for example, represents a nurse standing beside a tattered health care symbol.

For information, call 397-4366 or visit nancyrothwell.com.

El Mercado opens its monthly marketplace

El Mercado, a marketplace that brings together Spokane's Latino and diverse communities, began its season of last Saturday markets on March 26. The next market is 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., April 30, at AM Cannon Park, 1511 N. Elm St.

Fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, dairy and dry goods will be distributed for free along with cleaning products.

Aid for immigration is on site, along with local vendors, Zumba and music.

Free COVID 19 vaccines will also be available.

Latinos En Spokane, which sponsors the market, is expanding their 1502 N. Monroe office to add space next door, so they can host larger events and help more clients.

For information, email info@latinosenspokane.org

Faith reps to speak of holy days, earth care

Continued from page 1

Karen Stromgren Munawar of Muslims for Community Action and Support will speak on the panel and set up a booth. There will also be a Muslim blessing.

At press time, The Fig Tree was still recruiting Native American and Sikh participants.

Ramadan, Passover, Easter and Vaisakhi coincide for the first time since 1991. Purim, Naw Ruz, Ridvan, Vesak Day, Hanamatsuri, Holi and the season of Lent all fall within the three-month span of March through May.

For Baha'is, Naw Ruz, the New Year festival, falls on March 21, the spring equinox. It is a day for prayer, celebration and music. Then for 12 days from late April to early May, the Baha'i festival of Ridvan, celebrates Baha'u'llah's 1863 stay in Ridvan, a garden on the Tigris River. There, he proclaimed the foundational spiritual principles that the evolution of humanity be characterized by peace and the end of violence, said Tiara.

Two holidays commemorate the Buddha's birthday, depending on the sect: Mahayana East-

Asian cultures celebrate Hanamatsuri on April 8, and South-East Asian cultures celebrate Vesak Day on May 6, marking milestones of Buddha's life and spiritual journey—his birth, Enlightenment, death and passing into parinirvana. During Vesak Day, observers focus on values of giving, virtue and cultivation.

For western Christians, Easter is Sunday, April 17, following Lent from March 2 to April 16, a 40-day observance of sacrifice and reflection before Jesus' resurrection. Eastern Orthodox Christians observe Lent from March 7 to April 23, and Easter on Sunday, April 24.

The Jewish holy day Purim was March 16 and 17. It celebrates the rescue of the Jewish people from the Persian Emperor Haman's plot to kill all Jews.

The Jewish Passover, from April 15 to 23, celebrates the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt. During Passover, many abstain from leavened foods, keep strict kosher, observe days of rest and retell the story of the exodus from Egypt. The traditional Passover Seder meal is held after nightfall on the first and second nights of Passover.

March 18 is the Hindu spring festival of Holi. Started in northern India, it celebrates spring and Krishna. Its focus is on harmony, new beginnings and renewing social bonds. It includes throwing colorful powders and setting aside social hierarchies.

The holy month of Ramadan for Muslims is April 2 to May 1, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It ends with Eid al-Fitr, the festival of the breaking of the fast. People fast from dawn to sunset. Muslims ask forgiveness for past sins, pray for guidance, and recenter on their faith.

For Sikhs, Vaisakhi on April 13 commemorates the creation of the Khalsa Panth, an order of initiated Sikhs devoted to serving the One Creator and humanity established by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 CE. Before then, Vaisakhi was the beginning of the harvest festival in the Punjab region in India.

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

Chorale Coeur d'Alene gives three performances

Chorale Coeur d'Alene presents "America Sings of Faith and Liberty"—patriotic and spiritual anthems, ballads and a barn dance—on Friday and Saturday, April 22 and 23, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Coeur d'Alene and Saturday, April 30, at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Spokane.

The Chorale is accompanied by David Brewster on piano with washboard and spoons "thrown in," said Keith Whitlock, the chorale's new artistic director.

Keith, the director of choirs at Gonzaga Preparatory School since 2015, has been an adjunct professor at Gonzaga University and Eastern Washington University.

He earned a bachelor's in music theory in 1989 at Point Loma Nazarene University, a master's in choral conducting in 1992 at San Diego State University and a doctoral degree in choral conducting in 2002 at the University of Southern California.

From 2007 to 2014, he was director of music and arts at First Presbyterian Church of San Diego; assistant professor and director of choral activities from

1999 to 2006 at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, and high school vocal music director from 1997 to 1999 at two Southern California high schools.

For information, call 208-446-2333, email choralecda@gmail.com or visit choralecda.com.

STAND AGAINST RACISM

Join Us For This Courageous Conversation!

Join YWCA Spokane to discuss housing and income inequality and what we can do to work toward racial equity and justice.

April 28th, 5:30pm - 7pm

Register for this free event at ywcaspokane.org/sar2022

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HOPE FOR CREATION CONFERENCE

APRIL 22-23, 2022

The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist

Envision hope for creation with local caretakers of land and renew Spokane's leadership on environmental care. Co-sponsors: Whitworth Office of Church Engagement, Gonzaga Center for Climate Society & the Environment, Terrain and The Fig Tree.

PRESENTATIONS ON

- Expo '74 The Environment Then & Now
- Spokane's Sustainability Action Plan
- Creation Care Bridging Science & Faith

\$20 general admission, \$10 students/online

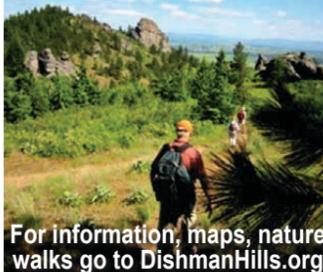
REGISTRATION DETAILS at

whitworth.edu/hope-for-creation

Contact jwallingford@gmail.com for more info



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For information, maps, nature walks go to DishmanHills.org

Time to do Something about...

A photojournalistic contest to tell a story in 5 to 10 images with written text demonstrating what needs to change.

Middle School, High School, and Adult categories

Send in entries before December 31, 2022

Top prize \$150

One Runner Up prize of \$100

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Contact Rev. Gen Heywood at

FLConscience@gmail.com for more information

Family Promise shelter, programs open doors to permanent housing

Continued from page 1

Susan slept in churches, made dinners, conversed with families and drove vans.

Before COVID, IHN had grown to 31 churches—12 host and 19 support congregations—with 50 volunteers a week.

Madelyn Bafus, whom Susan knew from Spokane Valley UMC, began working as a case-worker with Interfaith Hospitality in 2006. When she became executive director in 2008, she hired Susan as office manager.

Steve Allen became executive director in 2013.

Joe Ader came on in 2016 as program director and became executive director in March 2019.

Over the years, IHN offices and day centers for people sheltered in churches moved from E. Second Ave. to E. Indiana, E. Sprague and then to Richard Allen Apartments.

In 2003, the national organization renamed itself Family Promise. Spokane adopted that name in 2012. The program in churches, which served 15 families a year, is still called the Interfaith Hospitality Network.

In 2014, Family Promise purchased a building at 904 E. Hartson for the administrative offices and day center.

In 2016, the City of Spokane asked Family Promise to open a 24/7 walk-in emergency shelter for families. Open Doors opened in Emmanuel Family Life Center with meals, showers, kitchen access and case management.

As its capacity to serve homeless families tripled, Family Promise began its Neighbors Prevention program and the Village aftercare program, hiring staff and looking to buy a building for Open Doors.

In 2019, they bought the former Cassano's Italian Grocery

Store at 2002 E. Mission, renovating it for the Open Doors emergency shelter and opening that September with 20 families.

Now Family Promise programs operate in six locations, named by their function—Emergency Family Shelter, Infant House, Healing House, Special Needs House, Cheney Center, and Housing Assistance and Administrative Center. The church shelter program, or Bridges, that temporarily closed in COVID is now the Rotational Shelter. It is set to reopen in 2023.

Family Promise now has 50 employees who raise funds, oversee the buildings and programs, and do the case management.

Since September 2019, 420 families have moved to permanent housing. Each of the 50 families in aftercare is different, so Susan's work is never the same. Some families need more help than others.

Growing up in a family of six on a farm in the Walla Walla Valley town of Lowden, Susan told of support from her large extended family. Her father was German Catholic and her mother was Irish-Scottish Catholic. Eventually, her parents sold their farm and moved closer to Walla Walla.

Susan came to Spokane in 1982 and studied three years at Gonzaga. She was a health club receptionist before finishing her degree in education in 1991 at Eastern Washington University. After teaching for a year, she decided that wasn't for her, so she began at Spokane Valley UMC and then was full-time administrative staff with IHN.

As the one who answered the phone, it was a good day if she did not have to turn people away. She knew homeless families were undercounted.

"We have not had to turn a family away since Dec. 4, 2021, the longest time we have gone without doing that," Joe said. "Our preventative work and rental assistance are slowing the flow of families needing the shelter."

When the low-barrier 24/7 emergency shelter opened at Emmanuel Family Life Center, it was at capacity right away.

"The church rotational program is high barrier. We have to be selective to retain churches that relied on volunteers, so families staying in churches had to be cooperative," Susan said.

"There was a big change in 2019, when we purchased our own building before COVID hit," she said.

Susan then shifted from overseeing the rotational program in churches to being aftercare program manager.

"Aftercare is where my heart is, because I kept in contact with families after they found permanent housing," Susan said.

"After leaving the shelter, many struggle again or face challenges," she said. "Moving into permanent housing does not solve all of their issues. They still need support."

"We tell families we are their family. They can always call us to talk or find resources," she said. "When they are stuck, I'm here to help them problem-solve so they don't lose their housing if their car breaks down or they are between jobs. I can suggest resources. The fix may be simple."

"We support them as church members support each other in times of crisis," said Susan, who some clients call "Mom."

"Like my Mom, I say, 'Ok, here are the pros and cons. What are the best resources? You have to keep trying.' Families need hope. My biggest job is to be

a cheerleader and encourage them," she said.

She doesn't tell them what to do. She offers options and lets them decide as adults.

"We are family. Family helps family," she said, "but I want them to have power to move from fear and walk on to reduce their chance of being homeless again."

"Always and never are not in my vocabulary," Susan said. "Life can happen, but the resources and connections they gain as they become part of the community increase their chance of succeeding."

In Susan's hometown, if someone was struggling, neighbors helped. They would paint the

church, bring casseroles and raise money. In a small town, there's no hiding. One neighbor tells another, and people help.

In an extended family, too, everyone helps each other.

When families move into a house, Family Promise provides furniture, household goods, toilet paper and paper towels that have been donated and are now stored at the new administrative offices.

"We are not just responsible for ourselves but also need to give back to our community. Family Promise for me is being part of a big extended family," she said.

For information, call 723-4663 or visit familypromiseofspokane.org.

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New locations serve homeless families

Joe Ader, in listing the locations and programs of Family Promise of Spokane, pointed out that the focus on homeless people downtown overlooks the reality that the largest and growing group of homeless people are children and families.

He came to Spokane in 2016 to implement ideas on ending poverty. Through Family Promise, he has seen results.

The locations are:

- In January 2022, Family Promise rented a mobile home in Cheney so children in three families can attend school there.

- In October 2021, they opened the Housing Assistance Center and Administrative Offices at 2322 E. Sprague, where they offer aftercare and provide rental and utility assistance.

- In September 2019, they opened the Emergency Family Shelter at 2002 E. Mission to

shelter 79 people a night on mats on the floor and serve as the day center, too. By June, basement renovations will be done, adding case management offices and space for 20 more people. Families stay an average of 67 days.

- They bought the house next door on Mission to use as the Special Needs House for three families who have a child or an adult with a disability.

- Hartson was named the Healing House in 2020, when it became the COVID isolation center, along with three RVs loaned for that purpose. When it's no longer needed for isolation, it will house up to 20 people in five families who have a member just out of the hospital or with a medical condition.

- In July 2021, the Family Infant House at 227 E. Mission opened for five families with newborns to six months. Joe said

infants under one are the largest single age group they serve.

- Along with rental assistance, Family Promise is increasing case management, identifying families qualified for subsidized housing and engaging in "diversion-guided conversations to help families identify resources to prevent them from needing emergency shelter," Joe said.

For information, email jader@familypromiseofspokane.org.

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While facts may push people away, curiosity and stories build relationships

Curiosity can be a key tool for building bridges with people who have different opinions, said Rachele Strawther, an advisory board member for the Gonzaga Center for the Study of Hate.

She spoke on “Connection, Curiosity and Stories: Tools for Understanding and Opening Hearts and Minds” at the International Conference for Hate Studies in November.

As Rachele pointed out, political divisions in the United States are now so extreme that they can lead to conflict within families and regularly result in combative exchanges on social media.

“Our country has never been more divided,” she said, citing a 2020 survey by the National Bureau of Economic Research that says political polarization among Americans grew more rapidly in the last 40 years than it did in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia or Germany.

A 2019 Pew Research Center study said division and animosity between opposing political parties has deepened since 2016, with more people seeing those in the other party as “immoral.” “With each party seeing the other as immoral, the idea of uniting to solve the nation’s problems can seem hopeless. That’s why many of us spend our time, energy and money campaigning for political candidates and proposed laws that align with our values,” she said. “It feels like the only way we can enact real change.”

The challenge, Rachele pointed out, is that laws, policies and structures can easily be dismantled. For example, beginning in January 2017, Trump made sweeping changes to en-



Rachele Strawther

vironmental and human rights policies, some of which had been in place for decades.

While some believe that enacting laws is the best way to bring resolution, Rachele, who frequently speaks on this and other topics in the region, suggests that we must also work on the underlying problems.

“We can’t shy away from that critical work that will determine whether those laws and policies remain for years to come or will be swept away the moment a new leader comes to power,” she said. “That’s why I think the critical work is this: opening hearts and minds, including our own.”

Rachele, who serves as the director of the Center for Lifelong Learning at Gonzaga University, is passionate about this work.

After graduating from Western Washington University in 2004 with a degree in anthropology and social studies, Rachele worked eight years in Kisumu, Kenya, coordinating community programs for women and children affected by HIV/AIDS

and leading a youth organization.

“Sometimes we in the Western world move quickly to forming judgments and trying to solve problems,” she said. “In Kenya, I was guilty of that. It took me years to learn to set my assumptions aside and look at things with a more open mind.”

After returning to the U.S. in 2013, Rachele earned a master’s in communication and leadership at Gonzaga in 2016 and a doctorate in educational leadership in 2020. She was director of Leadership Training and Development in Gonzaga’s School of Leadership Studies from 2018 to 2021.

She described the challenge of discussing political issues with her parents, whose viewpoints are significantly different from hers.

“In the past, those conversations never went well,” she said. “We were both trying to prove that we were right, and we would usually become argumentative. I got to the point where I avoided political and religious conversations with them completely. It wasn’t worth the energy.”

As Rachele began learning how to have compassionate, yet courageous conversations, she realized that she had been going about discussions the wrong way. Like many people, she had used facts, figures and statistics to debate with others, thinking that information is the best way to change minds.

It became evident—both through research and experience—that logic and facts can actually push people away and make them more defensive.

Instead, Rachele has been learning to start with curiosity as a means of building rapport and

setting assumptions aside.

For example, she said People’s Action uses a highly relational approach to discuss controversial political issues with people. A 2020 article in *The Atlantic* said members of the organization go door-to-door and make phone calls to people in rural, low-income communities to influence their voting. They have real conversations that focus on building rapport through authentic listening. This approach leads to heart-felt conversations on issues that can be the start of a shift in opinion. According to People’s Action, this approach is 102 times more effective than traditional campaign efforts.

Rachele also gave the example of Christian Picciolini, a former neo-Nazi and founder of the Free Radicals Project, a global network of people working to prevent extremism and helping people disengage from hate groups. He said: “The return journey is never accomplished through heated ideological debate or argument.” Instead of using shame or judgment to change people’s minds, he works hard to earn their trust and listen with empathy.

From her own life, Rachele described a conversation with a family member around their differing opinions about comprehensive K-12 sex education. In the past, she would likely have attempted to change the person’s mind with facts and data. This time, she started by seeking to understand the other person’s perspectives.

“Rather than refuting what they said, as I used to do, I asked, ‘Can you say more about that?’ Their response helped me better

understand where their viewpoints came from. It prompted me to listen rather than just argue my side of the issue,” she said.

This approach allowed them to have a respectful discussion in which the person admitted being unaware of things. Then they found a stance they agreed on.

To open hearts and minds, Rachele suggests demonstrating curiosity without judgment, instilling empathy by sharing personal stories, showing vulnerability through the openness to being wrong and seeking points of commonality.

“I believe that we can bridge divides through conversation, one by one. What if, instead of firing off a comment on Facebook filled with facts and figures, we start by asking open-ended questions to understand why the person holds that belief? Every time we replace shame, blame and judgment with curiosity, we model a different way of behaving, a true civil discourse,” she said.

Does Rachele think this type of approach will change everyone’s minds?

“Absolutely not,” she said. “If someone is not willing to engage in a respectful manner, it’s not worth the energy to try.”

She believes, however, that conversations rooted in curiosity and empathy can be “the beginning of an imperceptible shift for many individuals, when the heart becomes open to the possibility of looking at something in a different light.

“We never know what can come from that kind of conversation,” Rachele said, “and that gives me hope.”

For information, email rachelestrawther81@gmail.com.

Seth Holmes produces film with farm workers and indigenous teens’ families

“The First Time Home,” a film directed and shot by indigenous Triqui teenagers to tell their story as they wish to tell it, will be shown at 7 p.m., Friday, April 22, at the Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main Ave.

Seth Holmes, who graduated from Lewis and Clark in 1993, produced this award-winning film with second-generation indigenous Mexican immigrant youth Noemi Librado Sanchez, Esmirna Librado, Esmeralda Ventura and Heriberto Ventura.

A medical doctor and anthropology professor at the University of Southern California, Seth is sharing the film in Spokane so people can understand how farm workers’ work in fields, picking the fruit and vegetables that keep people in society healthy, impacts their own health.

When the four cousins learned their grandfather in Mexico was gravely ill, they traveled for the first time from their communities in Washington and California to their family’s ancestral village

in Oaxaca. In 2016, they began recording video letters to share with their parents and relatives of U.S. farm workers who had not seen their relatives in Mexico in more than 15 years.

“Through a mix of Spanish, Triqui and English, they visited with their grandparents, aunts and uncles,” Seth said. “In the midst of border politics and violence, the cousins forged a link across thousands of miles, developing a newfound pride in their indigenous immigrant identity and a new understanding of the meaning of family.”

“The First Time Home” tells about the youths’ farm worker families who live in Washington and California and care for family members in Mexico, despite being separated by a border.

Seth, who earned an ecology degree in 1997 at the University of Washington, applied for a grant so the teens could learn to use equipment, capture the footage and do interviews with their parents and grandparents.

“We hope our film introduces people to the lives and realities of immigrants, farm workers and indigenous families like ours. We hope the film shows us how we are connected, including across borders,” said the teens.

Sisters Esmirna and Noemi are from California but live in Washington. Esmirna, the mother of a two-year-old, received the San Martin Indigenous Immigrant Scholarship to attend Skagit Valley College and study to be a nurse to provide health care for farm workers. Noemi, a high

school senior, wants to write films and short stories. She is writing a children’s book while applying to universities.

Esmeralda and Heriberto live in California, but come to Washington every summer to help their families with harvests.

“It’s more than their family’s story. It’s the story of farm workers who feed us,” said Seth, who often visits his parents, Carolyn

and Ed Holmes, in Spokane.

Making the film was in part inspired by his book, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*, which examines the everyday lives and health of Mexican migrants and indigenous people working in today’s food system.

For information, visit firsttimehomefilm.com or magiclanternonmain.com.

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Commercial studio finds a philanthropic niche: nonprofit benefits

When Don Hamilton first came to Spokane, he was a commercial photographer working with film. Now, doing still and motion photography in digital media, he said he is able “to do more than ever before.”

Philanthropy for Don and partner Lorna St. John means offering their time, tools and skills to provide quality video and photographic communication for nonprofits like the Spokane Symphony, YWCA and The Fig Tree.

When COVID shut down fundraising banquets, Don and Lorna found a niche presenting 40-minute professional digital livestream fundraising events with interactions. They also make videos that show what the nonprofits do and share stories of their impact.

The programs are presented on YouTube Live.

Don, who grew up in Burbank, Calif., studied theater at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts in Santa Maria from 1970 to 1972. He then studied theater and lighting design at the University of California Irvine, and color printing at Art Center.

“I’m a DIY guy who went to college for five years and benefited but earned no degree,” said Don, who wanted to combine his love of theater and photography to make movies.

In 1974, his mother, Mildred, who he said was “always the smartest in the room,” entered contests and solved puzzles. She won six expense-paid trips to Expo ’74 for family members. They liked what they saw and experienced in Spokane. First, his sisters moved here. Don followed, arriving Christmas Eve in 1979 with his then wife. His parents moved to Spokane some years later.

Renting a house from his sister, he set up a commercial still photography studio on 29th Ave. He added motion picture production, originally shooting film, not video.

In 1985, he purchased and moved his commercial photography and filmmaking business into the former gym and auditorium of St. Joseph School, at 1427 W. Dean across Walnut St. from the church.

Lorna, the producer, grew up in Spokane in the fashion business at the Crescent Department Store, which was later Fredrick and Nelson. She and Don met in 1983. After Fredrick and Nelson closed in 1988, she began working with him.

“When I came to town we had to shoot film to make a photograph. When I started making commercials, I shot film. Today the cell phone has democratized



Lorna St. John and Don Hamilton use their skills and tools to create quality video for nonprofits.

photography and filmmaking,” said Don, who once had 14 staff members to manage the equipment, film and its processing. Now he has three full-time staff and that’s plenty to do all he wants to do.

“Now we have the technology to do everything we did on film with digital original image acquisition. With post production processing, we can make digital video and photographs look like they were shot on film,” Don said.

“We are grateful to be of use to nonprofits. Professional photography and filmmaking are expensive even in the Spokane market,” he said.

“Don is a skilled communicator, knowing what people need to communicate and how to communicate it,” Lorna said. “We do not have money to give, but it’s a gift to us to be able to provide our services.”

Hamilton Studio is now a mission partner with the YWCA. “It’s gratifying, because we believe strongly in their mission of empowering women and eliminating racism,” she said. “We help them inform people about domestic violence.

“Domestic violence is at the root of all violence. If people did not grow up in violence, they would not be violent in the world,” she said. “Jails are filled with people who were abused. Abuse begets hate.”

Don has done free photography and marketing with other nonprofits, like the Spokane Symphony, Spokane Public Radio, United Way and Spark Central. With Interplayers, he also did lighting and sound. He has also done some documentaries with KSPS.

“He has been lucky in life, so he is able to pass his luck on,” Lorna said. “Spokane is a philanthropic community. We have something to offer that others

can’t do. We offer our skill set and ability to use it to do something good for others.”

Over the years, Don has taken photographs of Spokane Symphony musicians for their marketing programs and the Musicians Gallery in the Fox Lobby.

During COVID, he “filmed” and recorded livestream performances of symphony ensembles in his studio and symphony performances at the Fox Theater. The shutdown became a catalyst for converting the technology in his studio to become a TV station and movie studio.

Since 2020, Don and Lorna have produced benefits for the YWCA, Vanessa Behan, the Spokane Symphony, Domestic Violence Coalition, Spokane Riverkeeper and Spokane Public Schools Foundation. They also produced ads for the Spokane Regional Health District pro bono.

During the pandemic, Hamilton Studio helped nonprofits raise more than \$1 million.

The studio has also facilitated virtual public meetings for the Inland Northwest Lands Conservancy, Spokane County Democrats, New Priorities Spokane, Innovia Foundation and the One Heart Film Festival pro bono or at cost.

“The pandemic forced us to do new things with what we had,” Don said. “We have followed protocols to become a COVID-safe livestream studio with masks and distancing, offering livestream and recording programs for distribution online any time.

“We blundered into doing something new that people needed,” he said. “We have become experts in the virtual fundraiser.

“I could retire and lease the space, but now I’m able to make motion pictures,” said Don, who has recently produced a feature-length motion picture, “A Good Enough Day.”

scenes and situations.

“Now we are looking to do other improvisational features to market on streaming services,” Lorna said.

“I like doing feature productions, especially if family helps,” said Don.

Beyond the work with nonprofits, Hamilton Studio does photography, corporate and web video production, TV commercials, documentary and theatrical films for art directors, designers, marketing directors, corporate managers and producers.

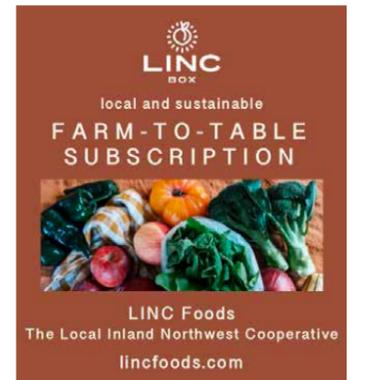
“Our aim is to help clients communicate by doing what we love doing,” said Don, who learns what a client wants to say and helps them communicate it.

“Production is collaborative,” said Lorna, noting that with people visually literate today, clients help create the product.

Others on the team are Matt Vielle, director and photographer; Hannah Sander, editor and post production supervisor, and Nick Palmieri, sound designer, audio engineer and drone pilot. The most recent hire is Shalyn Hall, an editor and shooter.

“Everyone at Hamilton Studio has to multi-task,” said Don.

For information, call 327-9501 or email info@hamiltonstudio.com.



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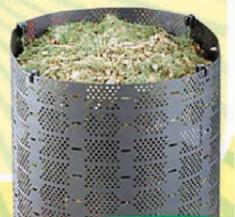
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Our Sister's Closet gives clients access to clothing for jobs, esteem

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

Our Sister's Closet, the clothing outlet through YWCA Spokane at 930 N. Monroe, invites clients to access services.

As businesses open for in-person staff and as women need clothing because of domestic violence or homelessness, YWCA Spokane offers help "shopping" for casual and professional clothes so women can restore self-esteem for job interviews, pay raises and surviving trauma.

"We want people to know this resource is available," said Teresa Dixon, YWCA Spokane women's opportunity center services coordinator.

Our Sister's Closet schedules appointments from 9 a.m. and 3

p.m. Fridays for people to come in the next Monday to Thursday. Face masks are required and child care provided on request.

Appointments entail an hour and a half to shop with a volunteer personal shopper.

"For women who need support, it's nice having someone who can guide the way," she said.

Women don't need to be homeless or in dire straits to access the service.

"Some own homes but find it hard to make ends meet with taking care of a family," Teresa said. "It's here to support people through a growth process. Some are beginning their journey. Others need help once in a while.

"We love to hear the resource

advanced someone's career. Some use it to find a job. Some use it once they are in a job. After building skills and experience, some use it to advance their career. They need different clothes for that purpose," Teresa said.

"Sometimes that first job is a step letting a woman know she can do something," she said. "Sometimes we want more for our lives than the first job."

Information on what to donate and how is at ywcaspokane.org. There are also donation drives. Donations are accepted from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays at 930 N. Monroe. Organizations can host clothing and necessity drives.

Our Sister's Closet seeks professional wear and every

day casual wear, because of the diverse women they serve.

"Not everyone needs clothes for work. A domestic violence survivor who has fled with just the clothes on her back, might need everyday clothes—jeans, leggings and tennis shoes are popular items," said Teresa.

Volunteers assemble care packages for clothing and hygiene needs requested by advocates or social service professionals.

The YWCA has drives for specific needs. January is for deodorant and shaving supplies; March, packaged socks; May, panties; July, shampoo and conditioner sets; September, new and gently used leggings; November, new and gently used coats.

Volunteer opportunities are limited because they are at capacity, but there will be some openings later in the year.

For information, call 326-1190, email oursisterscloset@ywcaspokane.org or visit ywcaspokane.org.

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Conferences raise ethics, voices for renegotiations of river treaty

More than 600 people in the U.S., Canada and around the world participated online last fall in the eighth “One River Ethics Matter” Conference on the renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty.

Chief Chris Derickson of the Westbank First Nation began by recognizing “all life is precious.”

“To rescue people and animals, we need to rethink the relationship and inextricable link of the natural world, Columbia River, the tribes and everyone,” he said.

At the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, he teaches metallurgists, engineers and miners about indigenous connections to the natural world and environmental ethics.

“People are hungry for knowledge of the natural world,” said Chris.

He invites people to rethink how they relate to ecosystems and see that indigenous and non-indigenous people have responsibility for fish, air and water, so they will do less environmental harm.

Dialogue over the years has led to better relationships of all people living along the Columbia River, he said.

Lesley Cormack, deputy vice chancellor and principal of the University of British Columbia-Okanagan campus in Kelowna, B.C., since 2020, said the combined impact of

colonization and climate change calls for thoughtful decisions for ecology and indigenous people.

“The focus on social and environmental justice brings indigenous and academic voices together to revitalize indigenous efforts to restore salmon for the full length of the river,” she said. “It’s important for the Syilx nation to rectify mistakes by promoting indigenous perspectives so the river can sustain life.”

John Osborn, coordinator of the Ethics and Treaty project, is a physician who works to improve the quality of ethical decision-making in caring for both pa-

tients and sick river systems. He spoke of the importance of restoring ntytyix (salmon) to the Okanagan and Upper Columbia Rivers.

He said eight conferences have focused on the Columbia River Treaty ratified in 1964, and the treaty review process that is underway until 2024. He urges a framework that emphasizes social and environmental justice, collaboration towards the common good, and truth and reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

John said the 1964 treaty was an engineering agreement with two purposes: hydropower and flood management. River ethics consultations since 2014 in Spokane have supported indigenous peoples, explored the ethical dimensions of the treaty, and called for a third purpose: river health or “ecosystem-based function.”

“Our work brings together three ethics processes: 1) a consultative process used in clinical ethics, 2) a transformative process from the Catholic Bishops’ Columbia River Pastoral Letter and 3) South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation process,” John said.

The pastoral letter’s sections set the agenda: “Rivers of our Moment,” “Rivers through our Memory,” “Rivers of our Vision” and “Rivers as our Responsibility.”

In 2021, the “Rivers of our Moment” panel looked at their relationship to water and to the river.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), said the Columbia River began with glacial floods up to 15,000 years ago and has a special place for indigenous people.

“Stories, teachings, ceremonies and prayers are tied to the river and water,” he said. “Integrated into our culture is respect for water’s healing powers, respect for the river, responsibility to be caretakers and our laws,” he said.

“For millennia, indigenous

people were on the forefront of water issues and now appreciate joining many voices,” he said. “Historically, the river is a metaphor for the relationship of people. The river’s health is a barometer for how we have done.

“We have fallen short as salmon no longer migrate. Policy makers have different economic priorities—electricity, agriculture and navigation. In the climate crisis, challenges will intensify as erosion, heat, drought and glaciers impact crops, factories and fish,” said Stewart.

He is concerned his 15 grandchildren may not know about B.C.’s robust rivers, abundant fish and pristine forests, because extractive industries, clearcutting and wildfires have devastated many areas.

The conference gives him hope as people share in the sacred purpose of being stewards of the river.

Syilx scholar Jeanette Armstrong, who wrote *Syilx Cultural Perspectives*, said the Syilx ethic goes back thousands of years. The Syilx are a Salish tribe also known as the Okanagan. Their territory spans the U.S.-Canada boundary in Washington and British Columbia.

“Salish were one people, evolving into different language groups but retaining ethics for the river,” said Jeannette, whose mother and grandmother were born at Kettle Falls. Her great-grand uncle was Salmon Chief there. Her uncle told of tears shed as the waterfalls were flooded in June 1940 by the

Grand Coulee Dam.

“I accompanied my mother to Kettle Falls since I was 14 to call the salmon home, because after the dam was built there were no salmon,” she said.

Now her grandsons gaff for sockeye salmon near the McIntyre Dam on the Okanagan River, a tributary of the Columbia River.

“We are connected to the river and responsible for the salmon. Ceremonies go on all over the river system and spiritually unify our people over thousands of years. Salmon chiefs assured equal distribution. People worked together as they moved north and south,” she said, challenging “colonial constructs of reserves and the border to exclude our people from decision making.”

Jeannette is glad that common spiritual ethics bring the Syilx together with allies in faith communities and academics.

“We need to work together,” she said. “The river is for all to come together.”

Catholic Bishop Greg Bittman of the Diocese of Nelson, B.C., said the Columbia River unites people on two sides of the border. Rather than being a river that divides territories, it crosses the border.

“We need to unite in our caring for and our concern about the river. Ethics matter,” he said, explaining that the Greek word, “ethos” is about the way people live.

“Our way of living is important beyond our own lives. No

one is alone. All have impact on everyone else,” he said. “We do not live to ourselves. Ethics govern our behavior as part of society. Medical ethics, bioethics and business ethics are about our way of living because they affect all around us.

“Christian ethics are bound to the purpose of God. The Old Testament is our moral guide and gives us a strong sense of the community of Israel and human relationships,” he said.

“In the New Testament, Jesus teaches values that are to guide our way of life,” Bishop Greg said. “Ethics are about right relationships with earth and the world we live in, loving God and loving neighbors.

Ethics call for people to examine their relationship with water,” he said. “Biblically God moved the waters to create the world. Water is a symbol of spiritual good from God to cleanse and sustain. It’s associated with life, baptism, health, hygiene and power.”

With climate change, Bishop Greg said water may be less abundant and must not be taken for granted.

Recognizing that, the United Nations declared in 2010 that access to clean drinking water is a human right.

“We are called to use resources responsibly and to care for creation rather than exploiting it,” he said.

Pope Francis urges stewardship that includes protecting each other’s cultural heritage, Bishop Greg added, urging people to put aside their craving for dominance and control.

For information, email john@waterplanet.ws or visit riverethics.org. The entire conference can be viewed at www.riverethics.org/2021-orem-agencia-okanagan.



Chief Chris Derickson

Photos courtesy of One River Ethics Matter Conference



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EWU Food Pantry responds to food insecurity on its two campuses

By Anna Crigger

William Tadlock, Eastern Washington University (EWU) graduate student, uses the EWU Food Pantry Program regularly.

He appreciates the charitable contributions made and recognizes that this program finds “what people need the most and meets those needs.”

As a child, William and his family could count on their church community to meet their needs. Now, he can count on the EWU community and the Newman Center to assist him.

The EWU Food Pantry provides access to nutritious food for members of the EWU campus so that community members help each other be successful.

“Building a healthier community is the priority,” said Lindsey McEwen, EWU Food Pantry Program basic needs coordinator, who works with the EWU and Cheney communities to keep food supplied.

“What’s the purpose of us

living together as a community if we don’t help each other succeed and become better people?” Lindsey asked.

“If we understand struggles people face, maybe we can understand them,” she said. “Empathy and sympathy are crucial to the success of efforts in a community.”

Because the pantry was closed last year as COVID spread, the program has been “in a process of reopening, reintroducing ourselves to everyone and re-engaging the community to let people know we are open,” she said.

Lindsey, a graduate student working on master’s degrees in social work and public administration, was excited to work at the Food Pantry Program because of her passion about addressing food insecurity.

“When I needed a practicum for my degree, it seemed natural to expand what I was already doing,” said Lindsey.

As part of her practicum with

the food pantry, she is responsible for budgeting and administrative work, planning workshops and working with volunteers and employees.

Valuing justice influences her involvement, too.

As a child, Lindsey moved often because her father was in the Army. Wherever she lived, she spoke of justice when she noticed that things were “not fair.”

It has always been important to her that people receive equal treatment.

“We all have opportunities,” she said. “Everyone has the capacity to succeed. They just may not realize it.”

Lindsey said that while everyone can succeed, they “may need a nudge” to actually succeed.

She is planning workshops with the food pantry to help give people a nudge to success. The workshops will educate the community on self-care and food stamp registration.

Lindsey said the EWU Food

Pantry Program recently won a grant from Swipe Out Hunger.

“We are using it to buy cheese, milk and perishable items that we don’t typically receive from food rescue,” she said.

Donations can be dropped off at the central food pantry in Tawanka 129E, or the counseling and wellness office in URC room 201.

The most needed donations are hearty soups, canned tuna, grains, cooking oils, breakfast foods, spices, condiments, snacks and hygiene products.

The program works with community partners and direct sponsors including Feed Cheney, Yokes, Grocery Outlet, Dairy Farmers, CHAS Health, Second Harvest, EWU Dining and Catering Services and Associated Students of Eastern Washington University.

They contribute to a central food pantry and seven food cabinets on EWU’s Cheney campus and in the Catalyst building in

Spokane. In Tawanka Hall in Cheney, the central food pantry is open from 1 to 4 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Lindsey encourages those using the service to bring reusable bags.

The food cabinets are available to the EWU community during normal hours when the buildings are open.

Each cabinet is sponsored by an EWU club or organization. The club members are responsible for restocking their assigned cabinet each week.

Students, faculty, clubs and organizations contribute to the needs of the EWU community, building reliability.

There is no maximum number of times a guest can visit the central food pantry or cabinets.

Guests are encouraged to take as much food as they will use, keeping in mind that other guests need to be served too, Lindsey said.

For information, email foodpantry@ewu.edu or visit <https://inside.ewu.edu/bewell/ewu-food-pantries>.

‘Why learn about the Holocaust?’ is art, essay contest prompt

“Why is it important for students to learn about the Holocaust?” is the prompt for the Sixth Annual Art Contest and the 16th Annual Eva Lassman Memorial Writing Contest Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust Committee.

Middle school and high school students submit art and essays for these contests.

Art was due March 27, and winners will be selected by

Monday, April 11.

Essays are due Sunday, May 1, and the winners will be announced Tuesday, June 7.

The six winning art pieces and a selection from other submissions will be on display in the new Liberty Park branch of the Spokane Public Library during May, said Mary Noble, one of the organizers.

Temple Beth Shalom and the Yom Hashoah Observance Com-

mittee have been working with KSPS on a documentary, “Voices of the Holocaust.” It features Spokane Holocaust survivors, Carla Peperzak, 98, who was in the Dutch resistance, and the late Eva Lassman and the late Cora der Kooranian.

A 30-minute version of the video will be shown at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 28, on KSPS. A 45-minute version will be available online for anyone to view.

The Yom Hashoah Commemoration will be held at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 27, at Temple Beth Shalom 1322 E. 30th Ave. Anyone interested in attending in person must pre-register, be masked and show proof of vaccination.

The service will also be on Zoom, said Iris Bernstein, education director.

For information, call 747-3044 or visit spokanetbs.org.

Climate Coalition organizes Earth Day events

The Spokane Climate Coalition will hold an Earth Day Climate March at 2 p.m., Friday, April 22, at the Riverfront Park Pavilion with speakers, performers and information on organizations in which people can be involved.

A Gathering of the Species will be part of the event at 3 p.m. through downtown Spokane. Participants use art to celebrate the natural world, reusing mate-

rials to make costumes, masks, props or floats to represent an animal, plant, insect or organism.

This is the second Earth Day the Spokane Climate Coalition has organized.

The first Earth Day Live in 2020, led District 81 to create the Student Advisory Council on Climate Change.

This year, the focus is endangered species affected by climate change and the county’s lack of a

plan to address climate change.

The August 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report said human activity is a cause of the rise in carbon emissions. It called for immediate action to prevent further warming of global temperatures. At 1.5C higher, the report said, it will be “nearly impossible” for humans and other species to adapt.”

For information, visit bit.ly/spokane-climate-march.

PJALS begins BOLD Project to engage people

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) began the BOLD Project—Building, Organizing, Leadership Development—in March, using Ian Haney Lopez’s Race-Class Academy’s education for action.

Liz Moore, PJALS director, said Spokane County is “contested territory” over who belongs, who’s a threat and who deserves to be safe related to race and class.

BOLD invites people into com-

munity and action to re-imagine public safety and housing policy.

BOLD Part I builds understanding of race and class—how to beat racist “dog whistle politics” by building cross-racial and cross-class solidarity.

Sessions from 6 to 7:30 p.m., Wednesdays, began March 23 and 30, and continue April 6 and 13 on Zoom.

BOLD Part II on “Organizing Together for Shared Solutions”

moves activists to transform the community, first by engaging people on the street or phone in two-minute conversations and then in 15-minute conversations to build connection.

“Through conversations and online engagement, the goal is to engage 20,000 people to reshape the narrative around racial and economic justice in Spokane County,” said Liz.

For information, visit pjals.org.

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School board and district staff member discuss new Equity Policy

Nikki Lockwood of the Spokane School Board and Oscar Harris of Spokane Public Schools (SPS) recently led workshops on the district's Equity Policy during the recent Eastern Washington Legislative Conference.

As the parent of two children, one who is disabled, Nikki sees a range of experiences and options for students. She also brings to the Spokane School Board her background as a Mexican American working to empower people and provide opportunities with love for the common good.

Oscar, who has been in Spokane 27 years, is passionate about education and sees schools as a microcosm of the community. He spearheads work on resources and policy.

Nikki said the Equity Policy adopted by the school board in January 2020 developed out of years of talk, frustration and trauma, especially experienced by students of color and others who have been underserved.

"There was an opportunity gap," she said. "Advocates also asked us to deal with the gap in school discipline because of the inordinate number of students of color facing discipline.

"We gathered data and listened to stories of parents and students. Many parents of color did not want any child to experience what their child experienced," Nikki said.

There were meetings with the Diversity Advisory Council and Citizens Advisory Council. There was concern about the impact of the pandemic and the police murders of George Floyd and others.

"The community was ready for more than talk," Nikki said.

The board received hundreds of emails from staff, students and parents. All but five favored such a policy. Of the 60 testimonies, few were opposed, she said.

Oscar discussed specifics of the Equity Policy, which establishes policies to guide the budget process, as well as students' experiences.

The policies require a new emphasis on anti-racism and multicultural training to ensure schools are responsive, increase students voices and collect input on issues of racial equality, he said.

"Advancing equity among students centers on learning cultural contexts, introducing wellness and anti-racism as key factors for student and staff success, and caring for the whole student from intelligence quotient (IQ) to emotional quotient (EQ), and prioritizing the inclusion of students," he said.

SPS has established goals, enhanced the processes for receiving family concerns and invested in developing multicultural



Nikki Lockwood, Spokane School Board member, and Oscar Harris, family and community engagement officer for Spokane Public Schools, describe issues they meet.



clubs—including students from European cultures.

"We adopted a new school safety model," Oscar said, "and formed programs to promote student agency on a project-based model for learning competency, centered on structures for grading, course completion and advancement."

Oscar encouraged the use of terminology to "foster cultural responsiveness and operate from cultural humility that encourages connecting with cultural brokers."

High school students, who started a Pacific Islander Club and had slow response, decided to form a Multicultural Club.

Nikki said there is a lot of diversity in the district—with the largest language group being Marshallese.

She also discussed questions about equity and new boundaries.

"Every school has unique needs and we are doing an ongoing assessment of the boundaries," she said. "Some areas are higher needs and more poverty."

Rogers High School, which is in a neighborhood with many social and economic challenges, now has improved its rate of graduation, she said.

"Equity is about providing students with what they need to succeed," Nikki affirmed.

Oscar said equity is also about recruiting and retaining teachers. Like companies recruiting people from diverse backgrounds, he said the schools need to be set up to connect and network with society so they can engage people and protect them.

"There is an increase in diversity in Spokane, so Spokane Public Schools need to diversify staff to make Spokane schools welcoming to individuals of different faiths and cultures," he said. "We need to have conversations so we can diversify."

Nikki said the Equity Policy adopted a new safety model, so staff do not arrest students. It's a change for the school community to wrestle with the model in which staff members were commissioned by the police department rather than contracting with police. The use of campus resource officers (CROs) grew with concern about school shootings.

"We know that students in the criminal justice system are more likely to be adults in the criminal justice system," she said. "The new model is not

to arrest children but to assure personal safety, guard the school perimeters and lock doors so no one can enter.

"Safety is a comprehensive issue involving social-emotional learning and inclusion to make a positive learning environment in the school," she said.

"The more students feel valued, seen and heard the less need there is for criminalizing them," Nikki said. "Safety is not just the responsibility of CROs but everyone in the school."

She cautioned against criminalizing behaviors and actions that are part of growing up and adolescence, so response does not traumatize students. In the past, SPS even arrested fourth, fifth and sixth graders.

"We need to address behaviors to help all feel safe," she said. "In the pandemic, we have seen more strategies to foster safety."

Oscar's philosophy is that safety is everybody's concern.

"We need to respect the role of law enforcement so our schools are safe places for learning," he said. "We also need to do the work beyond the policy shift, so all students feel safe. We want to be partners and have families and the community feel supported."

Nikki said the Equity Policy was a year in the making before the national rhetoric on critical race theory (CRT) at the college-level and in law schools.

"It's important not to connect Equity Policy with CRT. Our policy grew out of community input on drafts and several readings before we adopted it," she said.

"The night of the final reading, there were many voices in support. Some members in the auditorium were not wearing masks, so we had to move online," Nikki said. "Adopting it was a proud moment.

"This year, we have dealt with

many high-profile issues like boundaries, masking and school mascots, as well as the equity policy," she said.

"We were near adopting the Equity Policy when push back on CRT began arising," she explained. "It's not in our school curriculum, but we acknowledge systemic racism exists in the school system.

The Equity Policy talks about every student being seen and valued, said Nikki.

Oscar affirmed that the goal is to raise the achievements of all students by identifying and changing policies that perpetuate systemic racism.

"Our objectives are access and outcomes to assure learning and growth, community and family engagement, and a safe employee working environment," he said. "Government is responsible for student success shared by staff and administration, community and families.

"Democracy is messy. We need discourse," he continued. "We engage the community as stakeholders and partners in the effort to address achievement and opportunity gaps."

Nikki and Oscar added that the schools are considering having a multicultural ombudsperson, reviewing their hiring processes, looking at social and emotional impacts of policies, and learning the history of indigenous trainings.

"This is just the beginning. We appreciate partnerships," Nikki said.

"We are working to diversify our curriculum, but it takes time. It includes being more culturally responsive in math and science, as well as history to offer a more honest portrayal of how we got to the point we are," she said.

For information, visit spokane-schools.org.

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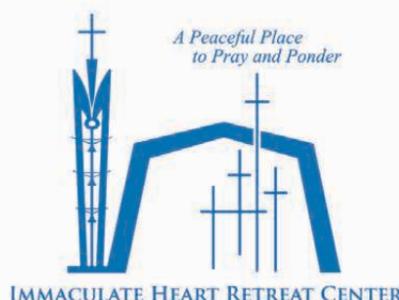
Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, after a two-year hiatus, will again be celebrating Mother's Day with a Champagne Brunch May 8, 2022, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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5K Walks in Moscow, Post Falls launch mental health awareness

By Kaye Hult

The Mental Health 5K Walk, “Open Heart, Mind and Sole,” from 9:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, April 9, at the PCEI Pavilion in Moscow, kicks off events through May, which is Mental Health Awareness Month.

“Mental illness is a disease, not a decision. We hope to end the stigma,” said Sharlisa Davis, a facilitator of the Latah Alliance on Mental Illness (LAMI) in Moscow, one of the walk sponsors.

“Mental illness affects 16 million adults in the U.S. Many fear

seeking services because of the stigma attached to it,” she said.

The in-person event includes presentations, resources, speakers, water and snacks, but participants can help stamp out the stigma of mental illness virtually by completing 5K any time between April 9 and May 31.

The planning group is creating a montage of videos participants send to [instagram.com/lami-palouse](https://www.instagram.com/lami-palouse) to share their passion for community inclusion, mental health awareness and de-stigmatization of mental illness.

Other sponsors are Latah

Recovery Center (LAMI), Disability Action Center NW (DAC) and 3Forks Bike Shop.

LAMI works to destigmatize mental illness and promote equitable communities by providing inclusive, nurturing living and learning environments based on respect, trust and compassion.

The center’s certified recovery coaches, peer support specialists and recovery peer volunteers provide life skills coaching and support services for people dealing with addictions and mental health issues.

DAC uses the collective pow-

er of participants to provide independent living services while fostering attitudes, policies and environments of equality and freedom.

As a compassionate, accessible place for people with disabilities, DAC encourages people with disabilities to take control of their lives and to live life to the fullest.

3Forks Bike Shop spreads the love of biking with education classes, bike repairs and bike storage. They believe in the power of DIY.

For the first time, DAC in

Post Falls will join the event, said Vicki Leeper, outreach coordinator.

The Post Falls contingent will meet at 9:30 a.m. at Falls Park and walk to the Post Falls Chamber of Commerce, where they will see the Moscow activities live streamed, said Sherri Boelter, independent living advocate in the Post Falls DAC office. They will use the same registration link.

For information, call 208-883-0523, email vicki@dacnw.org or register at lamiadvocacy.org/5k-for-mental-health.

Library Fines for Food drive supplies Food Pantry

Whitman County Library reports it collected more than \$3,100 in non-perishable food, household items and cash gifts in its 24th annual Food for Fines drive.

Only 5 percent of donations from 72 people came with requests to waive library fines. In Colfax, the library received \$2,515 for Colfax’s Food Pantry.

Food for Fines is held each February when area pantries have more people struggling with high heat bills and difficulty feeding their families. The generosity of library patrons helps.

For information, call 397-4377 or email catalina@whitcolib.org.



These donations for Food For Fines came from Tekoa.

SNAP moves offices to serve

SNAP Homeless Services has moved from 212 S. Wall to 212 W. Second, where the SNAP Housing Improvements Program is located. SNAP Rental Assistance has moved from 505 W. Second Ave. to SNAP offices at the Martin Luther King Community Center at 500 S. Stone.

“We are making sure we can serve clients by consistently offering in-person services,” said Nicole Bishop, SNAP marketing and communications specialist. “We also offer services by phone, depending on clients’ comfort and transportation.”

SNAP’s women’s business and financial opportunity programs are both at 500 S. Stone. They include home or business loans, and funding to prevent foreclosure to keep clients in their housing.

For information, call 456-SNAP, or visit snapwa.org.

‘Jesus and John Wayne’ is topic of lecture

Kristin Kobes Du Mez will speak on “Jesus and John Wayne” at 7 p.m., Monday, April 11, at the Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth University.

She is the author of *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation*, a book that transforms understanding of white evangelicalism in America.

It is a revisionist history of the last 75 years of white evangelicalism, revealing how some evangelicals have replaced the Jesus of the Gospels with an idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism.

Kristin calls people to see the centrality of popular culture in contemporary American evangelical books, films, music, clothing and merchandise and how they shape the beliefs of

millions of people.

Chief among these evangelical legends, she said, is John Wayne, an icon of a lost time when men were uncowed by political correctness, unafraid to tell it like it was and did what they thought needed to be done.

For information, call 777-3707 or email kdawson@whitworth.edu.

Four partners open Gonzaga Family Haven

On March 30, Catholic Charities Eastern Washington (CCEW), Gonzaga University, Gonzaga Preparatory School and St. Aloysius Parish opened Gonzaga Family Haven, Catholic Charities’ newest affordable, permanent supportive housing community for 73 families.

“Families and children need a roof over their heads before they can think about anything else,” said Rob McCann, president & CEO of Catholic Charities. “Gonzaga Family Haven will help families stabilize their lives and give them options for a brighter future.”

It includes on-site wraparound services like case management, neighborhood medical resources, substance abuse counseling, Head

Start and ECAP, after-school tutor lab, adult education, academic programs, health classes, employment readiness, food preparation and nutrition courses.

Located at 975 E. North Foot-hills Dr., it is the 17th tax-credit property CCEW has built since 2012.

“Gonzaga believes in the power of community,” said Thayne McCulloh, GU president. “We will offer our community engagement and service-learning programs, integral to the Jesuit educational model. We believe the partnership will establish a national model of community-driven change.”

He said Gonzaga Family Haven will change the lives of families who have experienced trauma from homelessness,

intergenerational poverty and family separation.

Michael Dougherty, president of Gonzaga Preparatory School said that “students, faculty and families are eager to serve our newest neighbors by building long-term relationships.”

St. Aloysius Parish has provided donations and volunteers since the project began.

“Gonzaga Family Haven will help families as they work for stability and togetherness,” said Tom Lamanna, SJ, pastor. “We are glad to partner to put into action the words of Jesus’ call in the Gospels to be loving neighbors to one another.”

For information, call 358-4250 or visit www.cceasternwa.org/gfh.

Affordable housing providers merged in December

When Catholic Housing Services of Eastern Washington—the housing arm of Catholic Charities Eastern Washington (CCEW)—merged with Spokane Housing Ventures (SHV) in December 2021, the number of affordable housing units CCEW operates increased from 1,300 to more than 2,500.

“The merger increases operating efficiencies,” said Rob McCann, CEO of CCEW. “Thousands will have access to affordable, safe homes.”

Leroy Eadie, SHV executive

director, said the merger benefits residents.

The two began merger talks in October 2020. While the organizations operated independently for decades, they shared the mission of supporting human dignity through quality, affordable housing and wraparound services.

With a staggering number of

homeless people, Rob said the need for more permanent housing is increasing exponentially.

“The pandemic brought challenges for many related to affordable housing,” said Jonathan Mallahan, vice president for housing for CCEW.

For information, call 358-7250 or visit ccewashington.org.

EWU auditorium shines lights on curtains in solidarity with Ukraine

Because the crisis in Ukraine has impacted people across the world, including people at Eastern Washington University (EWU) and in Cheney, Nick Palmieri, manager of EWU's University Productions, created a light display at Showalter Auditorium.



Colors of Ukrainian flag are projected on curtains in auditorium.

He decided to create the display to honor the Ukrainian people and create a safe place for the community to talk, pray and have a moment of silence.

Seeing venues all over the world broadcasting blue and

yellow lights—the colors of the Ukrainian flag—to show symbolic support influenced Nick to create this display at EWU in

late February. "Showalter Auditorium being our flagship venue on campus and the only space that can

project such a display, I thought it'd be a great way to keep in the hearts and minds of the community that we are thinking of the Ukrainian people and the crisis that's happening," Nick said.

The display has had much foot traffic during the hours the auditorium is open. Some people come in to take a quick photo. Others stay longer to gather their thoughts on the crisis.

Commenting on the Ukrainian crisis, Nick said, "I don't think our generation has ever even thought that we would experi-

ence this sort of conflict, like open warfare, in this day in age.

"It's scary for everyone in the region even though we're not close to Ukraine. People around the world are feeling the trauma from it," he said.

The display will continue to be available to the public daily when Nick is in the office or there is no event in the auditorium.

For information, email npalmieri@ewu.edu or visit <https://inside.ewu.edu/news/announcements/showalter-lights-reflect-ukraine-solidarity>.

Slavic churches, community form Ukrainian Relief Coalition

In the greater Spokane region, there have been many tears shed and many prayers said for the people of Ukraine since war began there in February.

Much material and financial aid has been collected and now a coalition has formed to help resettle refugees from Ukraine.

About 10 percent—50,000—of the area's population of about 500,000 are Slavic and half of them are Ukrainian, said Alexander Kaprian, pastor of Pilgrim Slavic Baptist Church in downtown Spokane.

People in Spokane's 15 Slavic churches—from Ukraine, Russia and countries once in the former Soviet Union—have personal ties, family and friends in Ukraine, many in areas like Mariupol that have been turned to rubble.

They are in pain with worry. Some have not heard from family, except where cell phone service continues.

"Our members have families and connections in many towns," said Alexander. "They were sending cash."

He is among the pastors and members of Ukrainian/Russian/Slavic and other local churches and organizations in Spokane that formed the Ukraine Relief Coalition (URC).

They have two goals.

First they are collecting humanitarian aid and supplies to ship to Ukrainian partners on the ground in hot zones and areas that may be overlooked.

Second, they are establishing a network of local churches, business owners and government representatives to support incoming refugee families with housing, schooling and more.

Eight Ukrainian families have come and more are on the way, said Alexander.

The coalition asks church partners to designate a representative to communicate with the URC and to consider adopting a family.

Church representatives are asked to delegate tasks of finding housing, doing city tours, taking families grocery shopping, filling out forms and other services



This team gathered in early March to ship items, but donations are paused until items collected have been shipped.

Photo courtesy of Ukrainian Relief Coalition

to help families acclimate to their new home. Church representatives are to be aware of needs of families and find church members to meet them.

"We are grateful for the support and generosity we have received from church partners, local organizations and individuals desiring to send aid and support Ukrainian families," said Boris Borisov on behalf of the URC board.

"We ask for your continued prayers and for the restoration of peace and an end to war, as well as wisdom for our team," he said. "We look forward to partnering with you."

The Adopt a Family program started because there is a grant of "humanitarian parole" for foreign residents to travel to the U.S. without a visa in case of an emergency or for public interest reasons. Some will come as part of family reunification. The U.S. will accept 100,000 Ukrainian refugees.

Over the years, Pilgrim Slavic Baptist welcomed refugees and families from Ukraine, Slavic countries and Africa, through World Relief.

Alexander, who came to Spokane in 1997 with 3,000 Slavic people, said they knew there was conflict for eight years in Eastern Ukraine, but there was not war.

"No one could believe that such a horrible war would happen. We are shocked," he said. "My home town is destroyed and relatives have disappeared. The area of town where they lived was destroyed."

"Many, especially those who

ing pain and sorrow. We're doing all we can do to help," said Nikolay Grishk, pastor of that church for 25 years. He comes from Kyiv.

"We appreciate that Spokane is open and has a good heart. Many express their love," Nikolay said.

Alexander commented that "people in our churches may have different opinions, but we do not want people to be divided. We are Christians and Americans now.

"We are one body of Christ. We can pray together and help together. We are all Americans with different backgrounds," he said.

"Leaders of Ukraine and Russia must meet and compromise. I pray God gives them wisdom to stop the war," Alexander added.

While people can give through the Ukraine Relief Coalition, Alexander said they can also give through their own churches.

He appreciates that other clergy, local leaders and government officials have been supportive.

For information, call 919-7889 or email akap11@comcast.net.



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Benefit speakers value ways The Fig Tree spreads seeds of hope for all

The following are excerpts from eight speakers at The Fig Tree Spring Benefits March 4 and 9.

Benjamin Watson - Pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church



The Fig Tree is a blessing to the community and to the city. They are a staple at the Emmanuel Family Life Center because they share our core values of investing in people. The Fig Tree's mission is "to

break through divisions among people of faith to build understanding and promote action for the common good."

The newspaper and resource directory are tools to spread seeds of hope. As we share experiences and tell stories, we bring life to The Fig Tree spreading seeds of hope, building bridges between the hopeless and the hopeful.

Mark Finney Refugee resettlement leader

When I worked at World Relief, our purpose was to empower our community—especially faith communities—to serve and stand with refugees. The Fig Tree is a valuable partner in our mission. As crisis after crisis swept over our newest neighbors from around the world, The Fig Tree stood by us to share stories of hope and resilience from our refugee neighbors. As challenges made our work difficult, it amplified our calls for community support. Over and over I heard from donors, volunteers and faith leaders that they knew about our work and care about refugees and immigrants because of what they've read in The Fig Tree.



Cam Zorroza and Virla Spencer Co-founders of The Way to Justice

As a community law firm created and led by women of color, we address barriers facing individuals negatively impacted by our justice system. For many clients and their loved ones, justice is a journey that can feel endless, tiresome and impossible to navigate. It can be easy



to give up hope. The Fig Tree stands as an outpost of hope and beacon of justice. They have helped clients find The Way to Justice.

By connecting our community to information and resources, The Fig Tree helps readers become aware of issues that affect them and their community, and then connects them with local organizations. It has been spreading seeds of hope with every article since 1984.

We both offer a platform for under-represented communities to lift their voices. We plant seeds of hope in times of uncertainty. We ensure our community blooms with justice, equity and inclusion.

Gen Heywood - convener of Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience and pastor of Veradale United Church of Christ

Both The Fig Tree newspaper and directory help us "spread seeds of hope."

When FLLC began in 2018 to support the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, The Fig Tree directory was a source for connecting with people of faith and non-faith. We invited them to join us to be a moral voice on racism, poverty, militarism and ecology.

The Fig Tree publishes our letters on superfund sites, the separation of children at the border and white supremacy in our society. In February 2021, as we grieved the violence against Temple Beth Shalom, murders of Asian women in Georgia and shoppers in Colorado, we felt the need to do more than hold vigils and write statements.

We have now developed a plan to lift up our common humanity and break through apathy and helplessness by launching multiple contests to find a way, through the arts, to cross the divisions in our community. The Fig Tree helps inform people of our work.

Ginger Ewing - director of Terrain

When I think about hope, I think about optimism, a mindset that despite life's difficulties, there is potential for positive things to come our way. Hope improves



our social, mental and physical well-being. Hope makes us feel more connected to the world and people around us.

When I hear spreading seeds of hope, I think of fostering a sense of belonging—a community that sees each other and values each other's stories.

When we started Terrain 14 years ago, we understood the transformational power of art and creativity, and wanted to celebrate Spokane's vibrancy. We also wanted to emphasize contributions of people who have been overlooked, marginalized, devalued or silenced.

In The Fig Tree's values, we see phrases like connecting people, sharing stories, building understanding, stirring compassion, exploring issues, offering reflection, opening dialogue and inspiring people.

The Fig Tree goes beyond talking points. They build relationships. Their stories create an atmosphere of belonging, and building a robust, compassionate and empathetic community along the way.

When The Fig Tree did a story about Terrain in May 2021, it gave me a window into the dynamic, diverse group of people the Fig Tree represents.

David Gortner - Pastor St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Coeur d'Alene



Ours is to offer seeds of hope, seeds of good news. Whether there is a change of heart or conversion in life, that's God's work. Ours is to tell the stories.

I'm glad The Fig Tree shared the story of ways St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Coeur d'Alene sows seeds of hope, even in our region's challenging climate. We seek as a church to sow seeds of hope and love in words and actions on our own and in partnerships with groups across North Idaho

Being featured in the article paved the way for our community and clergy to agree on a shared vision and mission to offer space for powerful conversations and to offer a different voice for faith.

In the Resource Directory, I find potential allies in ministry and mission, to build partnerships in Coeur d'Alene and

North Idaho. We also rely on the directory to help people connect with organizations that can assist them along the next steps in new health, strength and wholeness.

Jeanette Hauck CEO of the YWCA Spokane

I feel honored and humbled that The Fig Tree featured the YWCA in a recent issue. It gave me the opportunity to share the mission of the YWCA—to eliminate racism and to empower women. In that article, the Fig Tree reported on our domestic violence survivor support services and early childhood education program. Sharing this allowed me to spread seeds



of hope that survivors can receive services they need to secure their safety and heal from trauma, and hope that preschool children and families will thrive in our kindergarten and their homes.

Every issue of The Fig Tree features information about the life-affirming work of so many individuals and organizations. From the front page to the final, the written words give us news and stories that brighten our day and shine the light on the people of Spokane. Each volume spreads seeds of hope.

Walter Kendrick - Pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church and Fig Tree Board moderator

The Fig Tree intersects with, and promotes work being done in this region pertaining to the spreading of seeds of hope.

One of the missions of The Fig Tree is to be a light and spread hope throughout a community filled with constant streams of negativity.

I have been involved with the Fig Tree for four years. I'm now the moderator. The Fig Tree promotes tolerance, diversity, inclusion and most importantly love, a love for one another, a love for community, a love displayed by action.

By its display of love for all humanity, The Fig Tree plants then waters seeds of hope. We now await the harvest, whose fruit reveals a bounty of love.

[Donate at thefigtree.org/donate.html](https://thefigtree.org/donate.html).



Reflections

Sounding Board

Commentaries

Conference minister reflects on ways to live in this time of pandemic uncertainty

By Mike Denton

Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ Conference Minister

Isaiah 55 includes a message of courage, compassion, grace and persistence. It's a message to those on the edge of losing hope that also invites a rootedness in faithfulness.

The idea of listening is central to this text's invitation to pay attention and discern what we hear with an open mind and heart. It's an invitation to connect earthly realities to the promise of holy possibilities. It is not a text in denial of the current situation but one that points toward our current vocation.

It meets us in this moment. We hear drum beats of war, sirens of our changing climate, calls for justice and equity. We hear these things, and we are called to listen to God's voice speaking to us throughout and outside the things we hear. We are called to listen.

God speaks through truth, and this reality will be essential in the coming days. Even though there's been a political decision to begin to live into endemic practices, we're still in a pandemic. I don't minimize the decisions or the new policies, nor do I criticize them, but I can't

celebrate them, either.

Previous policies were an attempt to "flatten the curve." The new policies are resigned to the idea that, based on our behavior, local politics and the longevity of this virus, flattening the curve is unlikely. Politically, the decision has been made that living with flattening the curve policies no longer outweighs the economic, social and mental health risks.

The decision has been made that the increased number of deaths is a price worth paying for a different definition of societal health.

Because we have many folks in our congregations who will face increased risk, we have to pay attention beyond the policies. We need to root ourselves in what we've learned and listen differently to warning signs.

After two years, we've gained some tools and advanced practices. One thing we've learned is that the pandemic seems to have a two-month-cycle. The pandemic rages for two months and then recedes for two months. In October, this cycle predicted—pre-Omicron—that there would be a winter surge in the U.S. followed by another surge sometime in the spring. Right on time, it looks as though we will

have a new wave starting sometime at the end of March and beginning of April.

One indicator is that Europe is already into beginnings of its next surge. The U.S. surge has usually been two weeks behind the European surge.

Backing this up is new U.S. data from wastewater testing, which finds signs of COVID ahead of individuals testing. Individuals tend to be tested when feeling symptoms or after potential exposures. Wastewater testing tends to be accurate because it's essentially an entire population being tested. These numbers indicate that COVID numbers are rising.

If the next wave comes in April, it is likely there will be need for caution during Holy Week and Easter. Vaccinations and masking make a difference but—even based on the CDC's new guidelines—we'll be moving into a time when increased caution will again be merited simply because of the number of those in congregations considered high risk.

Part of me hopes the data is wrong. I miss the intimacy of Holy Week and the celebration of Easter. I want this two-year Lenten season to be over. Part of me hopes I'll send an email soon saying, "Woohoo! Please ignore my comments in March!"

That said, there is some good news buried in the patterns of predictability. There is truth there, so I believe the voice of God is there.

We have some ideas about what to listen to now. We are practiced at mitigation strategies.

We have raincoats for when it rains and know it's sometimes safer to stay home when it's icy. Similarly, we have masks for when the viral count is going up and know that sometimes the safest thing to do is stay home.

New variants will teach us new practices and new timing in the future, but the next wave needn't be a surprise. The receding of this wave may point to a nice June and July. We shall see.

We've come a long way and we still have a ways to go. In the same way that we are learning the predictability of this pandemic season, there is a predictability in our faith life, too.

At the risk of rushing this Lenten season, it's important to recognize we know the story. There is suffering and death, and then a surprisingly empty tomb. There's a resurrection and life bigger than life. In the same way, waves of the pandemic have become predictable.

Photo by Lauri Clark-Strait

Calendar of Events

PHONE NUMBERS with no area code are (509)

- Apr 1-12 • **National Farmworker Awareness Week Display**, Eastern Washington University, JFK Library Lobby, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., rrangel8@ewu.edu
- Apr 6 • **SCC Hagan Center Diversity Series: Rais Bhuiyan** of World Without Hate, virtual, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. scc.spokane.edu - type "Hagan" in search bar
- **Mental Health 5 K**, Latah Alliance on Mental Illness, Post Falls and Moscow, 10 a.m facebook.com/LatahAlliance/?ref=page_internal
- Apr 6, 13, 20, 27 • **Riverfront Market**, Pavilion at Riverfront, 12 p.m., riverfrontspokane.org/market
- Apr 7 • **The Fig Tree Development and Board Meeting**, 12 to 3 p.m. 535-4112, mary@thefigtree.org
- **Taize Prayer Service**, Zoom, 4:15 p.m., 313-5765, bartletts@gonzaga.edu
- **Spokane Human Rights Commission**, hybrid, 5:30 p.m., 625-6258, mysokanecity.org/bcc/commissions.spokane-human-rights-commission
- Apr 7-9 • **Book Sale**, Friends of the Spokane Public Library, Shadle Park Library, spokanelibrary.org/friends
- Apr 7, 14, 21 • **Tools for Running an Effective Nonprofit**, Washington Nonprofits, 4 to 6 p.m. washingtonnonprofits.org, see calendar
- Apr 8 • **"Children's Rights in a Changing World,"** Gonzaga Law School, Barbieri Courtroom or on Zoom, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., ebare@lawschool.gonzaga.edu
- **Fund the Future Million**, Global Neighborhood Thrift, auction, 919 E. Trent Ave. 7 to 9 p.m. give.ministrylinq.com
- Apr 9 • **Mental Health 5K Walk**, PCEI Pavilion, Moscow, 9:30 a.m. to noon, 208-883-0523
- **Behold Jesus: an Easter Drama**, First Interstate Center for the Arts, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 1 and 6:30 p.m., 279-7000
- **Spokane Pride 30th Anniversary Gala & Fundraiser**, Pavilion at Riverfront, 7 p.m., www.axs.com - type event name in search bar
- Apr 10 • **Annual Ramen Fest Food Fundraiser**, Spokane Buddhist Temple, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 534-7954, spokanebuddhisttemple.org
- Apr 11 • **"A Matter of Balance,"** ALTCEW training, 458-2509
- **"Jesus and John Wayne,"** Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4433
- Apr 11-13 • **Women's Silent Holy Week Retreat**, Jeff Putthoff, SJ, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), ihrc.net
- Apr 12 • **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, PJALS, 5:30 p.m. jarcher@pjals.org
- **The Continuing Case of Spokane Garry Lecture**, David Beine, College of Global Engagement, Great Northern University, 6 to 8 p.m., 284-7100, greatnorthernu.org
- **Climate Action Meeting**, 350 Spokane, 6:30 to 8 p.m., 350spokane.org/get-involved/events/
- Apr 13 • **NEWA Combined Nonprofit Network Meeting**, Washington Nonprofits, 2 to 3 p.m. washingtonnonprofits.org, see calendar
- **Monastic Panel Q&A** with Veneral Thubten Chodron, Sravasti Abbey and Empty Cloud Monastery 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., emptycloud.org/
- **Sabes Que? Speaker Series and Monthly Meetings**, Hispanic Business Professional Assn., 6 p.m., asociacion.hispanaspokane@gmail.com
- April 14, 28, **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, PJALS, 5:30 p.m., slichty@pjals.org
- April 14-16 • **Men's Silent Holy Week Retreat**, Fr. Jeff Putthoff, SJ, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr, ihrc.net
- Apr 15 • **Amplify Us: Spark Salon 2022, Featuring Jess Walter**, Knitting Factory, 919 W. Sprague, 279-0299, 6 to 10 p.m.
- April 15, 16, 17 • **Journey to the Cross**, Spokane Valley Adventist Church, 1601 S. Sullivan, 926-5866
- Apr 16 • **Family Spring Market**, Northeast Youth and Family Services, 5122 N. Division, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 218-6416, www.neyfs.org
- **Saturday with the Symphony: A Children's Program**, Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 E. Front, 11 a.m., 208-769-2315
- **April Showers Auction**, The Lands Council, Arbor Crest Wine Cellars, 5 to 8 p.m., landscouncil.org
- **Celebrating Live on Holy Saturday**, Ukrainian Fundraiser Concert, Music Conservatory of Coeur d'Alene Concert 627 N. Government Way, 7 p.m., 208-901-8190, info@cdaconservatory.org
- Apr 17 • **Easter Sunrise Service**, Spokane Minister's Alliance, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 645 S. Richard Allen Ct., 6:30 a.m., 534-3007
- **Easter Sunrise Service**, Greenwood Memorial Terrace, Fairmount Memorial Association, 211 N. Government Wy, 6:30 a.m., fairmountmemorial.com
- **Egg Your Yard**, The Arc of Spokane, ready to go Easter Egg Hunt, kparkins@arc-spokane.org, 281-935-2160, thearcspokane.salsalabs.org
- Apr 18 • **NAACP General Membership Meeting**, zoom, 7 p.m., spokanenaacp@gmail.com
- Apr 20 • **Day of Reflection on the Modern Generations Living the Little Way as Missionary Disciples**, Jeremy Cassidy, IRHC, 691 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- **Executive Director Coffee Hour**, Washington Nonprofits, 9 a.m. washingtonnonprofits.org, see calendar
- **Diamonds in the Rough: The Gentrification of Rural Washington**, 1 p.m., online, humanities.org/events/2022-04-20/
- **Waikiki Springs Nature Hike**, Inland Northwest Land Conservancy, Waikiki Springs Nature Preserve, 2 to 5 p.m., bit.ly/Waikiki-springs-signup
- **SCC Hagan Center Diversity Series: Azar Hafisi**, virtual, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., jennifer.puttuck@ccs.spokane.edu, scc.spokane.edu, type "Hagan"
- **Stephen Nash: Why We Repatriate: 15 Years on the Arc of Restorative Justice** at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, 2316 W. 1st, 6:30 to 8 p.m. 313-6691, goldman@gonzaga.edu, archaeological.org/societies/spokane
- Apr 21 • **Lawyers and Diapers**, Vanessa Behan and Spokane Volunteer Lawyers Program, Free Family Law and Eviction Law Assistance, 2230 E. Sprague, 6 to 8 p.m., 598-7490
- Apr 21-24 • **Get Lit! Festival**, getlitfestival2022.sched.com
- Apr 22 • **A Gathering of the Species** at Spokane Earth Day Climate March, Pavilion at Riverfront Park, 1:30 p.m.
- **Spokane Earth Day Climate March**, Pavilion at Riverfront Park, 1:45 to 4 p.m., 625-6000, info@350spokane.org
- **Hope for Creation - Cathedral of St. John**, 127 E 12th: **Interfaith Panel on Holy Days and Creation Care**, Fig Tree, 3 p.m., and **Healing the Earth Vigil**, Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience, 4:30 p.m., FLLConscience@gmail.com, 919-3768
- Apr 22 & 23 • **Hope for Creation Conference** and Street Fair, Interfaith Earth Care Event, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E 12th, 719-464-555
- **America Sings of Faith and Liberty**, Chorale Coeur d'Alene, Trinity Lutheran, 812 N. 5th, 22nd - 7 p.m., 23rd - 2:30 p.m. 208-446-2333
- Apr 23 • **Helping Boys Thrive Summit**, Summit Church, 1801 E. 29th, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 389-0685, erickson4418@hotmail.com
- **Spring Litter Cleanup**, Spokane River Forum and Spokane Riverkeeper, People's and Mission Parks, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., hello@spokaneriverkeeper.org, spokaneriverkeeper.org/
- **Active Living Expo**, MultiCare Health System and Spokesman Review, Davenport Grand, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 459-5095
- **Earth Day Celebration**, Coeur d'Alene Library, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., cdalibrary.org/library-events/earth-day-celebration-event/
- **Methow Recycles Earth Day Fundraiser Festival**, Doran Ranch, 20088 State Rt. 20, Twisp, 3 to 8 p.m. 997-0520, methowrecycles.org
- **The Community Connection Expo, Spokane Mama**, Wonder Market Building, 4 to 8 p.m., info@spokanemama.org, spokanemama.org
- **2022 MAC Gala**, Historic Davenport Hotel, 10 Post, 6 p.m. 456-3931
- **Spark Salon 2022 the Telethon**, Jess Walter and Ginger Ewing, online, 279-0299, 7 p.m., sparktelethon.org
- Apr 23, 24 • **Spokane Symphony Masterworks 7: 1001 Nights**, Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 8 p.m. and 3 p.m., 624-1200
- Apr 24 • **Spring Tea Online Auction**, Women and Children's Free Restaurant, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., spr00ingtea.org
- **Steps for Autism**, Northwest Autism Center, 5k Walk, Riverfront Park Pavilion, 11 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., 328-1582, info@nwautism.org, nwautism.org
- Apr 26 • **Women's Grief Support**, Hospice of North Idaho, 10:30 a.m. to noon, griefsupport@honi.org
- **"Why Virtuous People Won't Save the Earth,"** Lindaman Lecture, Jonathan Moo, Whitworth, Weyerhaeuser Hall, 7 p.m., 777-3391
- Apr 27 • **Atomic Washington: Our Nuclear Past, Present and Future**, 1 p.m., online, humanities.org/events/2022-04-27/
- **Yom Hashoah Commemoration**, Temple Beth Shalom, 5:30 p.m., pre-register, 747-3004
- Apr 28 • **Hope Builders**, Annual Habitat for Humanity Spokane Benefit Luncheon, Davenport Grand Hotel, 11:30 a.m., habitat-spokane.org
- **Stand Against Racism**, YWCA Spokane's Annual Courageous Conversation, 5:30 to 7 p.m. virtual, ericas@ywcaspokane.org
- Apr 29 • **Annual Chocolate and Champagne Gala**, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, hybrid at Barrister Winery, 1213 W. Railroad Ave., 6:30 to 8 p.m., 465-3591, lcsnw.org/chocolate-and-champagne-gala
- Apr 29- May 5 • **National Action Week** for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, niwrc.org/mmiwnatweek22
- Apr 30 • **Spring Compost Fair**, Finch Arboretum, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., spokanecountysolidwaste.org
- **Family Fun Fair, Coeur d'Alene**, Silver Lake Mall, 200 W. Hanley Ave., 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., 928-9664, thefamilyfunguide.org
- **El Mercadito**, Latinos En Spokane, AM Cannon Park., 11 a.m., info@LatinosEnSpokane.org
- **America Sings of Faith and Liberty**, Chorale Coeur d'Alene, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Whistalks Wy, 2 to 3:30 p.m., 208-446-2333
- May 4 • **The Fig Tree Distribution and Mailing**, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 535-4112, development@thefigtree.org
- May 5 • **The Fig Tree Development and Board Meeting**, 12 to 3 p.m., 535-4112, mary@thefigtree.org
- Tues • **Talk-Oh! Tuesdays**, Kootenai Environmental Alliance and Lake Coeur d'Alene Waterkeeper, www.kealliance.org
- Tues-Sun • **Awakenings: Traditional Canoes and Calling the Salmon Home**, MAC, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sun • **Burritos for the People**, Spokane Community Against Racism, Main Market, 44, W. Main, 9 to 10 a.m., scarspokane.org/burritos-for-the-people

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Chewelah church keeps its Advent message of 'Hope' lit year round

Each year, Chewelah United Church of Christ (UCC) celebrates the themes of the four Sundays in Advent—Hope, Peace, Joy, Love—by hanging a small, themed banner near the altar and lighting candles in the Advent wreath.

Hymns and scripture also reflect each Sunday's theme. This has been a long-standing tradition at the church and one that is meaningful to the congregation, said Holly Peterson, a long-time member.

As Advent approached in 2016, the country experienced a presidential election that left many people feeling hopeless and despondent.

"We, at Chewelah UCC, were hoping the Advent season could bring some light to our melancholy," said Holly. "As some of us were discussing this one day, we realized the entire community needed to be uplifted, not just those in Sunday morning worship."

That's when the idea of setting up a Hope sign emerged.

The 50-member church sits on a corner lot on Highway 395, which is the main route from Spokane to the Canadian border. Many people drive by the church every day.

"As one of the few progressive churches in the Colville Valley, we wanted to show the world that hope was still possible," she said.

The family of Jennifer Bell-Towne found a large metal grid used for fencing.

They worked with other church members, purchasing blue Christmas lights and inserting them to spell the word "Hope" in four-foot letters on the grid.

They needed a string of large blue lights for each letter. The lights are on a timer to turn on and off when the sun sets and rises.

They mounted the "Hope" sign on the side of the building to remain through the Advent and Christmas seasons.

"Many community members commented on this positive message, a light in the darkness of winter, with the message of Hope," said Holly, who has attended the church for nearly 50 years, since she moved to Chewelah from Montana when her husband came to teach there.

Maybe it was too cold or there was too much snow, but the sign did not come down as planned after Christmas.

"The feeling was that we needed the message of Hope for a little bit longer," Holly said.

For more than five years, the Hope sign is still on the side of the building. Its blue letters glow in the dark for the world to see every day.

Through these years, Chewelah UCC has become known as the "Hope Church" in their small town.



Lights wind around fence grid on side of church say: "Hope."

"In the last few weeks we have felt hopeless watching and hearing of the current situation in Ukraine," Holly said. "Our Hope sign is still there to remind us that God always gives us hope. Chewelah UCC is pleased to share this message with our community and the world."

For the first Advent, church members planned to put up signs for Love, Joy and Peace, too.

Several other members made a Love sign with red lights and put it up on the bell tower that's on the church's front lawn. They took it down last year after all the lights went out.

During the five years the Hope sign has been up, Susan has replaced the lights several times.

"The HOPE sign has also become a reference point when people give directions," she added.

Beyond the sign, people in the community know what the church stands for, because its

actions also speak of hope.

"During the first Women's March, we stood along the highway in front of the church wearing pink hats and holding signs," Holly said. "We also stood on the highway holding Black Lives Matter signs and offering a Black Lives Matter Vigil in the summer of 2020. On the anniversary of the Jan. 6 insurrection, we stood there with signs."

"Now to express hope, the church has painted poster boards blue and yellow, the colors of the Ukrainian flag, and hung them along the highway in solidarity with Ukraine," said Holly. "We also hung Ukrainian flags inside and outside the building."

"When we have done the marches and vigils, a lot of those who stand with us are community members who share our church's values," she said.

For information, call 509-936-1258 or email hollyron@gmail.com.

Fig Tree Spring Benefit Donations still welcome at thefigtree.org/donate.html

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