

40TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Stories inside

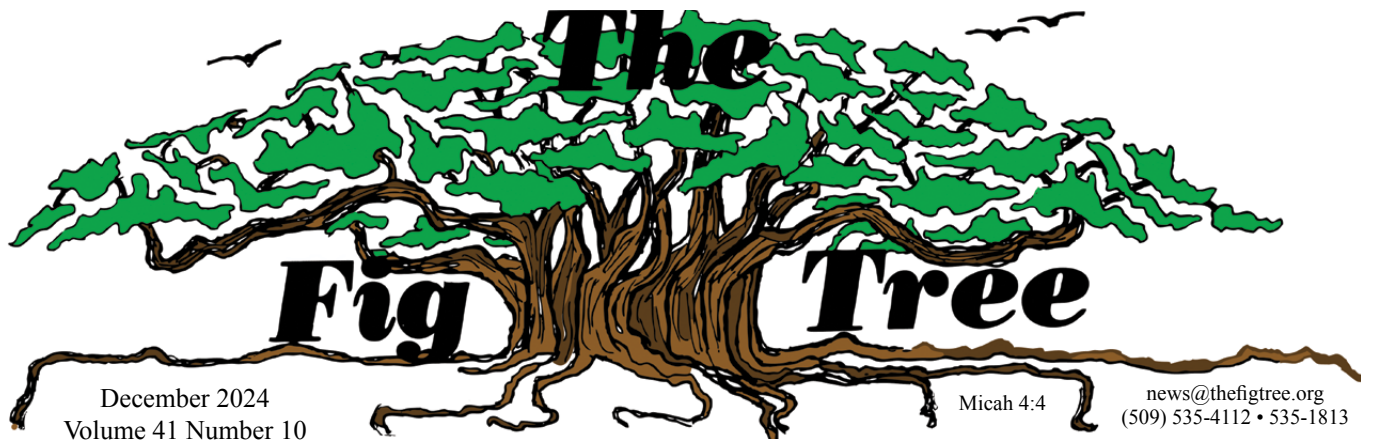
GU films 'Carla, The Rescuer' - p. 5

Couple write climate curriculum - p. 6

Students immerse in monastery, wilderness - p. 8

Daoist Hermitage marks 30th year - p. 16

CALENDAR ON PAGE 15
FEATURES 70+ EVENTS



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

His call is to 'dream ridiculous dreams'

By Mary Stamp

Human and civil rights leader, pastor and chaplain, the Rev. Percy Happy Watkins, who died Oct. 25, leaves a legacy of and call to "dream ridiculous dreams."

At the close of the celebration of his life on Nov. 15, his wife of 61 years, Etta, said, "Remember the smile on Happy's face. He will always be with us and guide us as long as we put our lives in God's hands. I pray that his dreams and legacy will be uplifted by those here."

One of the ridiculous dreams Happy helped bring into being was The Fig Tree. When he was on the board of the Spokane Christian Coalition, he voted to start it in 1984. He served on The Fig Tree Board from 2008 to 2018 after it became an independent nonprofit.

Happy shared ideas for articles to give voice to people and issues of the African American, multi-racial, multicultural, multi-faith, social justice and human rights communities.

Along with being known for reciting Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech, Happy comforted parishioners as pastor at New Hope Baptist



The Rev. Percy Happy Watkins' disarming smile broke through distrust.

Church and shared wisdom in community discussions from proverbs and quotes he memorized.

The oldest of 10 children, Happy grew up in a poor family in the Bronx on a block with thousands of blacks, whites, Puerto Ricans, Irish, Poles, Italians and Jews. He was shocked by the lack of diversity when he came in 1961 to Spokane at 19 in the Air Force.

Attending Morningstar Baptist Church lightened the depression and loneliness he felt, especially when he met Etta Jean Batsell. They married in 1963. They have five children, Percy, John, Paul James and Anna, 14 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren.

Happy worked six years at a grocery store, treating every customer with respect. Then he traveled around Eastern Washington and North Idaho as an insurance salesman. He also drove a school bus and opened a barbecue restaurant.

Knowing he was the first black person some had seen, he defused racial slurs and stereotypes, breaking down distrust and putting people at ease with his friendliness and disarming smile.

Continued on page 4

Pullman church challenges others to use loose offerings for outreach

Since May 2022, the Community Congregational United Church of Christ (CCUCC) in Pullman has selected different local nonprofit groups that fulfill its mission of social justice to receive the loose offerings it collects each Sunday.

"The process is administered by the Justice and Witness Team and engages the congregation by informing them that their gifts are being directed in ways that can truly benefit those in need," said Ginny Hauser of that team.

The loose offerings usually range between \$500 and \$800 per month.

"We thought at first people would give \$1 or coins, but many give \$5 and more," Ginny said.

"We are glad to continue this ministry," said member Kym Dye.

Carl Hauser, church treasurer, said the idea came from the Finance and Stewardship Team.

"We observed that most people who were significantly supporting the needs of the church

were giving regularly through automatic payments," he said. "We wondered if the loose offerings were relevant anymore. How was the sense of offering relevant in terms of the church's liturgy or religious needs?"

Carl asked the team if the Sunday loose offerings were more than symbolic as part of the liturgy.

Could the loose offering be used for something more?

They decided the funds could be used for more than church operations. They could be used for positive actions in the community. So the Stewardship and Finance Team turned to the Justice and Witness Team to identify charities to support.

Carl's wife Ginny was chair of that team, which compiled a list of agencies the church has been involved with and asked members to suggest names of organizations in the community. They put those names in a box in the narthex.

They now have a list of about 30 agencies they decided to support.

Continued on page 7

2025 Legislative Conference focus is on being prophetic

At the 2025 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, plenary panel speakers, workshop leaders and regional faith advocates will address the theme, "What Does It Mean to Be Prophetic?"

Members of faith communities will join in person and online, meeting from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, 115 N. Raymond St.

Following an interfaith opening sharing insights on the theme, there will be a keynote plenary panel featuring DR Michel of Upper Columbia United Tribes, Margo Hill of the Spokane Tribe, Caj Matheson of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and Bishop Gretchen Rehberg of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane discussing the theme related to persistent tribal efforts to share Indigenous wisdom, and work for river health, ecosystem values, salmon runs and changes so everyone benefits.

Other elements of the program will include a panel with youth/young adult advocates giving voice to their concerns and actions, plus reports from advocates from Faith Action Network, the Washington State Catholic Conference and Earth Ministry/Interfaith Power and Light on issues coming before the 2025 legislature.

There will be two sessions with six workshops considering various issues of concern to faith communities, such as housing, human rights, hunger, racial equity in education, recycling, the GTN pipeline, refugees and immigrants, plus a "how to advocate" session. There will also be information tables. Fliers are available to promote the conference in congregations.

For information or to sign up, call 535-1813, email event@thefigtree.org, visit secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/2025-legislative-conference or see ad on page 3.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION U.S. POSTAGE PAID SPOKANE WA Permit No. 1044

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
Fax: +41-22 788 7244 oikoumene.org

Churches call for taxing the super rich

At the G20 conference Nov. 12 to 19 in Brazil, World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Jerry Pillay spoke on the "Tax the Super Rich" campaign of Oxfam and Patriotic Millionaires, suggesting the wealthiest polluters pay.

"The climate crisis is accelerating, deepening scandalous levels of poverty and inequality," he said. "To protect communities, climate and ecosystems, trillions of dollars must be poured into climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience-building. Studies reveal that an annual wealth tax of 5 percent on the world's multi-millionaires and billionaires could drum up \$1.7 trillion a year. That would end hunger worldwide in 10 years, pull 2 billion people out of poverty, fund universal healthcare and social protection for everyone in low-income countries, and deliver climate finance loss and damage reparations to support poor, climate-vulnerable countries."

COP 29 side event called for climate finance

At the COP29 side event, "Beyond Numbers: A Dialogue on the New Collective Quantified Goal from Faith and Ethical Perspectives," faith leaders and advocates called for a climate finance model rooted in justice and accountability. Hosted by the Interfaith Liaison Committee, speakers said effective climate finance must support the adaptation and resilience of communities facing the harshest climate impacts. They called for policymakers to center climate finance policies on justice, equity and direct access for the most vulnerable.

Harjeet Singh, senior advisor at Climate Action Network International and a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty representative, said civil society demands billions in real finance—not just loans, but resources that support communities facing climate impacts.

Africa-Europe roundtable reimagines legacies

An Africa-Europe Ecumenical Roundtable in October at Berlin remembered and reimagined legacies of colonization and the future of ecumenical relations.

For two days, Christian leaders from 19 countries told how their lives connected through painful, exploitative circumstances from racist colonial, imperial projects of Europe in which most missionaries were complicit. They also valued the positive impact of missionaries bringing schools, hospitals and the Bible, awakening Africans to horrors of enslavement and colonization—evident in many from mission schools joining the liberation wars.

Participants saw that colonization disrupted traditional lifestyles, forced Indigenous people to seek jobs and weakened traditional social security systems. Africans became consumers of knowledge, culture, political systems and practices, losing their position as equal producers of knowledge, culture, economic and political systems.

Recognizing that colonization persists today in conflicts and the economy, they said decolonization seeks to disrupt the framework of domination, privilege and control. It is not about rejecting western systems but about recentering other global systems into a healthy ecosystem of ecumenical relations that embrace diversity.

They prayed for rejuvenation of the European church and stronger ecumenical relations with the African church based on the gospel maxims of sisterhood and brotherhood, and built on equality and equity. They called for acknowledging mistakes and failures of the past and for intentional exchange of staff and expertise to develop a sustainable, shared processes of decolonization and healthy interdependence among Christian communities.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Fall fundraiser blends into end-of-year giving

As of press time, The Fig Tree's Harvest Festival of Sharing has raised \$8,500 toward a year-end goal of \$20,000.

The campaign includes Giving Tuesday on Dec. 3.

Donations to support The Fig Tree, Resource Directory and educational events are about connecting people with information, inspiring people with stories of hope and involving people in strengthening the lives of people in their communities.

"There are always many peo-

ple engaged in many imaginative and impactful efforts to make a difference, to understand and respect one another despite differences and to work together to spread love," said editor-publisher Mary Stamp, who is featured as one of several 2024 women of the year chosen by the Spokesman-Review.

She invites those who have not yet renewed their annual sponsorship or who might join the ranks of sponsors to read through the articles in this issue,

and to look online at thefigtree.org to read other recent articles.

"Those stories alone should motivate donations to keep the stories coming," said Mary. "We are also excited that we have several new interns waiting to work with us to learn and apply our solutions-journalism approach, which contrasts with the usual fare of conflict, sensation, sexism and violence that define news in many media."

Donations may be made at thefigtree.org/donate.html.

Chewelah hosts Christmas tree labyrinth

The Chewelah Center for the Arts in presenting its annual Christmas Tree Labyrinth, an evening post-holiday experience from Dec 27 to Jan. 3 in its parking lot at 405 N. 3rd St. East.

A labyrinth is a symbolic path that guides participants on a contemplative walk toward the center and back. Traditionally used during Advent, this reflective journey creates space for calm, spiritual meditation. At the heart, participants will find an uplifting

message and small token of appreciation to take home.

The labyrinth is crafted from donated Christmas trees by Paula Randall, a performer at the center.

"I wanted to give people something simple and joyful to do after the holiday chaos," she said.

Community members bring undecorated trees to the center Dec. 26 and 27.

Other holiday events at the

Chewelah Center for the Arts include "Winter Wonderettes," Dec 5 to 8; "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, the Musical," Dec 13 to 15; "It's a Wonderful Life - A Live Radio Play," Dec 20 to 22; a "Very Merry Christmas Carol Sing-Along," Dec 22, and "Home for the Holidays," Dec 28.

For information, call 936-9333, email chewelahpaca@gmail.com or visit chewelahcenterforthearts.com.

Climate center speaker addresses issues

Nandita Bajaj, executive director of Population Balance and senior lecturer at Antioch University, will speak on "Confronting Population Denial Amid Unraveling Global Crises" at 4 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 3, at Hemmington Auditorium.

It will also be live streamed online on Gonzaga University's Institute for Climate, Water and the Environment.

Population Balance is a U.S.

nonprofit inspiring behavioral and systemic change to reduce human impact and elevate the well-being of people, animals and the planet. It holds the Overpopulation Podcast series that explores human expansionism.

Nandita, who teaches on the impacts of pronatalism and human expansionism at Antioch, will explain implications of population denial on vulnerable people and ecosystems, and

how systems benefit from it.

She says the human population doubled from 4 billion in 1970 to 8 billion in 2024. It is expected to grow by another 2.5 billion by 2100. While scientists warn that overpopulation and overconsumption drive climate change, resource scarcity and biodiversity collapse, many dismiss that idea.

For information, visit gonzaga.edu/climate-institute/events.

Christmas Bureau gives holiday assistance

The 2024 Christmas Bureau, coordinated by Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington, Volunteers of America of the Inland Northwest and the Spokesman-Review, is marking its 78th year of providing holiday assistance to low-income families.

Grocery vouchers, toys and gifts for individuals and families in Greater Spokane are made possible by monetary do-

nations and volunteer hours.

Persons interested in receiving gifts may apply online at christmasbureauspokane.org.

Donations may be made online or checks may be mailed to The Spokesman-Review Christmas Fund, PO Box 516,

Spokane, WA 99210.

People may bring their ID to pick up the gifts Dec. 12 to 19, at the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center, 404 N. Havana—10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Dec. 12, 13, 14 or 19, or from 3 to 7 p.m., Dec. 16 to 18.

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

Deadlines:
COPY - 3rd Wednesdays
ADS - 3rd Fridays

It is published by The Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry St., Spokane, WA 99202, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization.

Editorial Team
Editor/Publisher/Photos - Mary Stamp
Directory Editor - Malcolm Haworth
Website Developer - Lorna Kropp
Volunteer Coordinator - Kaye Hult
Development & Editing Assoc - Marijke Fakasiieiki
Editing Team - Susan Chaddock, Erin Endres, Catherine Ferguson
SNJM, Mary Mackay, Jill Redl, Nancy Roth, Pava Young

Fig Tree Board
Gloria Aston Baynes, Nick Beamer, Emily Clark, Amy Cross, Marijke Fakasiieiki, Catherine Ferguson SNJM, David Gortner, Malcolm Haworth, Kaye Hult, Gary Jewell, Betty Krafft, Raymond Reyes, Mary Stamp


Copyright © 2024
(509) 535-4112 or 535-1813
Email: news@thefigtree.org

CATHOLIC CHARITIES CHRISTMAS COLLECTION 2024

Catholic Charities serves over 66,000 people in need each year. Last year:

- Delivered nearly **72,000 lbs.** of nutritious food to low-income and elderly residents through Volunteer Chore Services.
- Our PREPARES program served and supported **4,847 families** last year.
- Our Community Behavioral Health Services annually assists more than **6,750 clients** in need.
- **5,136 children, women, men and seniors** put their heads on Catholic Charities pillows at one of our housing complexes.
- **94 percent** of our clients who engaged in our various housing services ended up in stable, long-term housing.

Please consider making a donation to the Catholic Charities Christmas Collection today.



www.donateCCEW.org

Donate now with your phone by scanning the QR code.

The Fig Tree is reader supported BECOME A SPONSOR!

\$20-50 Sponsor \$75-250 Friend
 \$300-\$1,200 Underwriter
 \$45 for bulk order of 10
 \$300/year pledge for five years

SEND YOUR DONATION TO

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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

‘Joy and Wonder’ gathering will be Dec. 5

“A Community Gathering: Joy and Wonder” will be held at 6 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 5, at Liberty Park Library, 402 S. Pittsburgh St., featuring an interfaith spiritual practice developed around Cole Arthur Riley’s “Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human.”

“**Black Liturgies provides a safe harbor** for people who have ‘escaped the trauma from white Christian nationalism, religious homophobia and transphobia, biblical ableism and ecclesial misogyny.’ It is also for people healing from spiritual spaces that were more violent than loving, more tyrannical than liberating,” said Jonathan Rossing of Gonzaga University, who will facilitate the gathering.

Readers from the community will share passages and reflections both from Black Liturgies and from Black intellectuals, ancestors, authors and mentors who have provided guidance, anchoring or safe harbor. There will be time for community reflection and discussion.

For information, call 444-5300 or email telref@spokane-elibrary.org.

Center holds Christmas in Mexico performances

Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center announces a family holiday performance of “Campana Sobre Campana: Christmas in Mexico” with Jaime Cuellar’s Mariachi Garibaldi and Ballet Folklorico Del Rio Grande at 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 14, and 2 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 15, at the Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 E. DeSmet.

The performance weaves Mexican traditions into a story of the season. The Campana Sobre Campana (Bells upon Bells) rhythms and Mexican dance reenact Mary and Joseph’s journey of Posada (the Inns), the majesty of Reyes Magos (Wise Men) and breaking pinatas.

Mariachi Garibaldi has performed 30 years in the U.S. and Mexico. Jimmy “El Pollo” Cuellar, son of Jaime, directs the group. The 20-member Ballet Folklorico has toured Canada, France, Italy, Argentina and Mexico.

For information and tickets, call 313-2787.

Manzanita House hosts Winter Tea event

Manzanita House will hold its annual Winter Tea Tasting and Bazaar, celebrating immigrant-owned businesses and entrepreneurs, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 14, at the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center, 500 S. Stone.

Activities include multicultural performances, traditional henna and face painting, wreath making, snowflake crafts and a photo booth.

There will be treats prepared by chefs at Feast World Kitchen, with allergen-friendly options from Boots Bakery.

YWCA Spokane makes holidays brighter

YWCA Spokane plans its annual Hope for the Holidays campaign to make the holidays brighter for those experiencing domestic violence, homelessness and unemployment.

“Many families face hardships during the holidays,” said Jeanette Hauck, CEO of YWCA Spokane. “Through Hope for the Holidays, we come together as a community to ensure that families and survivors feel supported.”

This year, 90 families served by YWCA Spokane seek support. Gift cards empower individuals and parents to choose meaningful items for themselves or their loved ones. The website at ywcaspokane.org/2024holidays offers an Adopt a Family’s Wishlist. Gifts must be dropped off at YWCA Spokane, 930 N Monroe St., from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Dec. 5 and 6, so they can be distributed to families before the holidays.

Donations may be made at ywcaspokane.org/2024holidays.

Nuestra Raíces opens community center

In October as part of Hispanic Heritage Month, about 300 gathered as Nuestra Raíces Centro Comunitario (NRCC) opened an office at 381 E. Main in Othello, where 75.6 percent of its population is Hispanic or Latino.

It is expanding there because Othello is a destination for immigrants from Latin America who come as migrant workers or for seasonal farm work.

The office provides services in Spanish close to their homes.

At the opening, a mobile clinic did blood pressure checks.

The Othello center services include Esperanza health and human services, Exito economic

development, education, advocacy, worker’s rights and cultural events.

“Agricultural workers are crucial in ensuring food security and driving economic growth. However, many face challenges that hinder their productivity and well-being. That’s why we are bringing our services to a rural area,” said Brianda Perez, NRCC outreach coordinator.

“Many rural areas lack services in different languages, so people travel distances for assistance. Our Exito Business Development program will help Hispanics and Latinos apply for taxpayer identification numbers

and permits to start a business, and offer advice,” she said.

“Agricultural workers also face mental health challenges. Our Esperanza Health and Human Services will be available at Othello to provide farmworkers and families tele-mental health services for counseling,” she said.

Four staff are on hand and more will be hired to meet community needs. Spokane health and wellness social workers are accessible by satellite.

Office hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Thursday for walk-ins or by appointment.

For information, call 557-0566, visit hbpaofspokane.org.

Grant provides food bank new freezer

Wellpoint/Washington Apple Health recently gave a grant to support Spokane families by granting \$20,000 to the Audubon Park Food Bank, which is located in the basement of Audubon Park United Methodist Church, 3908 N. Driscoll Blvd.

After more than 40 years of service assisting hundreds of area families, the food bank is ready for some updates.

Karen Peacock, food bank director, said they serve up to 65 different households each month. Most come each time the food bank is open.

There is a significant need for fresh, quality food, she said.

At the Audubon Park Food Bank, clients can shop the shelves and choose what they need for their families. Its goal is to feed families and make shop-

ping at the food bank a positive experience.

With the grant from Wellpoint, the church will install a walk-in freezer, so it is easier for volunteers and clients to access what they need. Last year, Wellpoint helped update flooring for the food bank.

For information, call 325-4541.

Family Promise receives \$2.5 million grant

Family Promise of Spokane has received a \$2.5 million award from the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund. It is one of 40 organizations across the U.S. selected by an independent advisory group of family homelessness experts for its leadership in helping families experiencing homelessness in Spokane find

stability and wellbeing.

Family Promise will use the funds to reach more families, improve its ability to serve them and create new models to meet needs of families in the area, said Joe Ader, executive director.

“This five-year award empowers us to expand our innovative housing solutions, offering fami-

lies a secure pathway back into stable homes,” he said. “With these resources, we can deepen our impact and drive lasting change, helping break the cycle of homelessness for countless children and parents.”

For information, call 747-5487 or visit familypromiseofspokane.org.

IHRC event is on Santa Claus

Immaculate Heart Retreat Center is offering a program for families and children from 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Dec. 7, on “How Saint Nicholas Became Santa,” connecting Santa Claus with the real Saint Nicholas.

Also, a Silent Day of Prayer will be led by Fr. Miguel Mejia on “Our Lady of Guadalupe: A Personal Encounter,” from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 11.

Both events are at the center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd.

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

Adam Bodhi
Artist / Business Owner
509-590-9174
email: AdamBodhi@diamondartworkscollective.com
diamondartworkscollective.com

Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY
FOR OUR COMMON HOME SPRING LECTURE SERIES
Free and open to the public
Find the event lineup:
www.gonzaga.edu/ClimateEvents

Donate now to help

The Fig Tree

Meet the challenges of these times by spreading hope as we fulfill our mission to inform • inspire • involve

Help us reach our 2024 year-end goal of \$11,500 by becoming a sponsor or renewing TODAY at

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

Join us in Person and on Zoom

2025 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference
‘What Does It Mean To Be Prophetic?’

Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025
8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
Spokane Valley United Methodist Church - 115 N. Raymond

KEYNOTE PLENARY PANEL
Indigenous Wisdom - River Health - Ecosystem Values
Restoring Salmon Runs - Everyone Benefits

YOUTH ADVOCACY PANEL
BRIEFING ON ISSUES

WORKSHOPS: recycling, GTN pipeline, housing, human rights, hunger, racial equity in education, refugees & immigrants, advocacy how-to

For information, contact
Fig Tree - 535-4112 / 216-6090 • Catholic Charities - 358-4273
Donation \$35 in person • \$25 online by Jan 21
Group of 5+ - \$30 in person, \$20 online/per person scholarships on request

RSVP by mail to:
The Fig Tree • 1323 S. Perry St. • Spokane WA 99202

SIGN UP ONLINE at:
secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/2025-legislative-conference

Event Planning Team and Sponsors:

James Watkins calls for community to carry forth his father's legacy

Continued from page 1

A ministry opportunity arose, and Happy restarted Sharon Christian Methodist Episcopal Church from 1982 to 1985, becoming licensed as a deacon, an elder and then a pastor. From 1985 to 1990, he was assistant pastor at Calvary Baptist, mentored by the Rev. C.W. Andrews. Then he followed in the footsteps of the Rev. Jim Sims in 1990 as pastor of New Hope Baptist Church and prison chaplain at Pine Lodge and Geiger correctional facilities.

New Hope's called him to serve the community, as well as the church.

While working 12 years in security at Deaconess Medical Center, he took clinical pastoral education and served several years as a chaplain at Deaconess and then at Holy Family Hospital.

In the community, Happy worked to improve racial equity in the correctional system, police department, school district and youth programs. On ecumenical and interfaith bodies, he worked for reconciliation among faiths.

With other clergy, he challenged the disparity between the proportion of blacks in Spokane's population and the proportion incarcerated.

Promoting education to overcome the achievement gap, he sought to assure that children of color graduated from high school, went to trade schools or college, and had career choices.

"Dr. King's message to young people was for them to be the best they can be," said Happy, urging youth to study and work hard.

In 1986, when there were no black police officers, he joined pastors and community leaders to bring equity to the civil service exam and hire people of color. That year, six black, two Hispanic and a Native American became police officers.

Happy also challenged bias he met in housing sales and rentals.

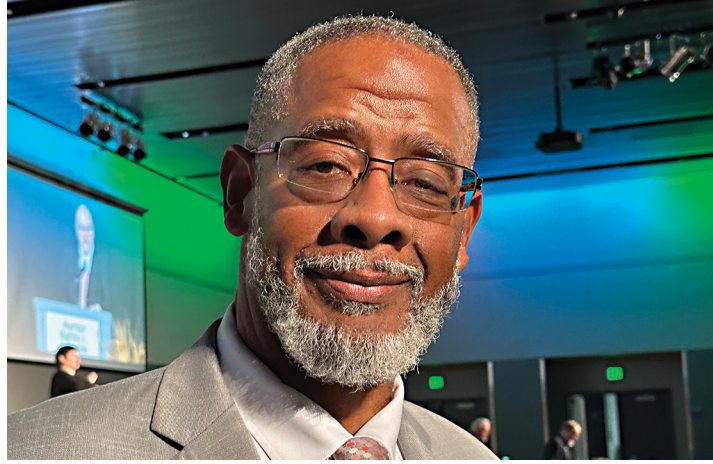
With pastors and community leaders, he helped start the Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. Family Outreach Center.

In 1986, Gov. Booth Gardner came to a luncheon at the Ridpath Hotel. Lydia Sims, president of NAACP Spokane, asked Happy to read the "I Have a Dream" speech. Happy memorized it and, until two years ago, passionately gave it 30 to 50 times a year in schools, churches and universities from Genesee, Idaho, to Cashmere, Wash.

"It's not just a black dream. It's for all races. It's also about the fight to legalize immigrants and respect people of all races" Happy said.

In 1989, he and other clergy organized Spokane's first annual MLK Day rally and march. At first, there were 50, then 300 and now about 3,000 participants.

When African American astronaut Michael Anderson of Spo-



James Watkins, senior pastor at New Hope Baptist Church, gave the eulogy for his father..

kane died when Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated on re-entry in 2003, Happy and others raised more than \$100,000 for a statue by the Opera House.

With Spokane Public Schools equity officer Ivan Bush and others, Happy dreamed of naming a street after King. After years of persevering, Martin Luther King Jr. Way became reality in May 2012, extending Riverside east of Division.

"Through disappointments, setbacks, roadblocks, tears and heartaches, when you fall on your back, you look up and get up," said Happy.

He served on and led the Spokane Ministers' Alliance, NAACP Spokane, the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center, The Fig Tree Board, the Spokane Office of Police Accountability, the Gonzaga Prep High School Board and other organizations.

Along with sharing King's dream for justice in the community, Happy stressed the importance of family, home and the kitchen table. He had an impact on many lives and families.

Happy officiated for thousands of weddings and funerals, providing pastoral care to parishioners and community members.

"The dream has validity," he said, calling for people to stand together in times of challenge and controversy.

At the Nov. 15 celebration of Happy's life, community leaders, clergy colleagues and family members paid tribute, concluding with a eulogy by the Rev. James Watkins, his son and successor at New Hope Baptist.

The following are a few insights and stories from the service celebrating Happy's life.

His son, Deacon John Watkins, said that the day Happy died, his clothes were laid out as he was ready to go to church.

"He was a church boy. For him, church was a place of healing and restoration," John said.

His son, Elder Percy H. Watkins III, said his father loved getting onto the floor to play with his children and grandchildren.

"When he came into a room it would light up," he said.

Retired Spokane school superintendent Gary Livingston

said Happy was his "most valued consultant and community liaison, a tireless advocate for equity in education. He fought to be sure every child learns."

Michael Dougherty, president of Gonzaga Preparatory School, said "Happy was a saint whose presence was, is and shall be God's presence."

Spokane Mayor Lisa Brown said Happy "led as a servant leader with faith, hope and love, with integrity and moral authority."

Freda Gandy, executive director of the MLK Community Center, said Happy "is responsible for the leader I am today." When she wanted to move home to Mississippi or to Atlanta, Happy said: "Spokane needs you here."

NAACP Spokane president Lisa Gardner said, "The NAACP lost a tireless advocate for civil rights and social justice" who "embodied the mission of the NAACP to drive out hate by transcending it with love."

Bishop Gary Tyson of General Baptist Convention of the Northwest said, "The tallest tree in Spokane's forest has fallen, but Spokane is in good shape because of the commitment of

the Watkins family."

Pastor Amos Atkinson of Calvary Baptist Church promised that "after weeping, joy will come again."

Bishop Ezra Kinlow of Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, said, "I joined him many times trying to make Spokane better. Because of him, Spokane is not the same."

As Todd Eklof, pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane said, "Happy was Spokane's best friend. He would introduce me as his best friend. I also heard him introduce others as his best friend."

Happy gave him Raphael Warnock's book, "The Divided Mind of the Black Church," which asks, Is the black church to save souls or to transform society? It concludes that it's for both.

"Happy was heroic, sticking his neck out in 2012 to support same-sex marriage and legalizing marijuana in Washington," Todd said. "Six months after marijuana was legalized, stop-and-search arrests were reduced by half."

"Happy had courage as he sought to create heaven on earth," he said.

In paying tribute, three of Happy's grandsons each claimed to be the favorite.

"Of all his titles, he was most proud to be 'Grandpa.' His advice to us was often scripture," said Isaiah.

"I know his legacy will endure and grow strong," said Ephraim. "He called us to act. To celebrate his life, we need to continue to do his work."

"Happy was my first best friend, I went wherever he went," said Elijah.

Thomas Bookman, a friend of James who became Happy's "second son," said, "He expected the best from us."

In his eulogy, James called

people to follow Happy's advice to "dream ridiculous dreams."

"Not all loved him. He got hurt," James said. "My father went through difficult times in the 1970s and 1980s when he went to North Idaho to help establish the human rights coalition to face the Aryan Nations.

"He was a miracle worker. When he walked in a room, he had a knack of diffusing tensions with his smile. He helped people hear each other. He dealt with people with kindness and love," said James. "I started following him because I feared for his safety in places where I saw hatred. I was in awe of his response."

As Happy declined, James realized he needed "a caretaker of his legacy," which is more than the "I Have a Dream" speech.

"Dad ministered to his dying day," James said. "As I sat at his bedside, I felt the spirit of God and asked, 'What do you want from me?'"

"A double portion, I want you to be the caretaker to advance his legacy," James heard, glad that Happy's sons, grandsons and the community will join him in this call.

"Dad left a legacy. Will we be the caretakers of his legacy? I am committed to carry on his legacy and dreams," said James, repeating his father's challenge: "Dream ridiculous dreams."

"It's not what you can do but what God gives you," James said. "Happy brought people together and did things—fed the hungry, housed the homeless, welcomed strangers, got police officers of color hired, started a family center, named a street..."

"My dad dreamed ridiculous dreams," James repeated.

For information, call 535-1336, email newhope9021@gmail.com or visit newhopebaptistchurch.org.

OUR COMMUNITY'S LONGSTANDING NONPROFIT HOSPICE, SERVING PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES SINCE 1977.

"I LOVE SINGING
with clients and just remembering to do the little things that make it special for each of them. It's my passion and honor to do this work."

— KATHRYN GORDON
HOSPICE NURSE AIDE
SOUTH HOSPICE HOUSE



DIGNITY. RESPECT. COMPASSION.

509.456.0438
hospiceofspokane.org



is proud to support the local journalism of The Fig Tree

Dances of Universal Peace



Simple movements
Singing sacred phrases,
From many traditions
All are Welcome!

Sept-Jun - 2nd & 4th Thurs
at 6:30pm

See Calendar or 509.818.6733
www.facebook.com/spokanedup

Gonzaga produces Holocaust documentary, 'Carla, the Rescuer'

By Mary Stamp

The 2025 Spokane Area Jewish Family Services Jewish Film Festival, from Jan. 25 to Feb. 2, will be the Pacific Northwest Premiere for the locally produced documentary, "Carla, the Rescuer."

Kristine Hoover and Clement Lye of Gonzaga University collaborated with Holocaust survivor and educator Carla Peperzak of Spokane to co-produce a 90-minute documentary on her life and her work as a Jewish member of the Dutch resistance during World War II.

The documentary is a testament to Carla's commitment to encourage everyone to embrace tolerance as she continues to this day to give talks to schools and community organizations.

"Carla's message of hope resonates today," said Kristine, chair of the master's program in organizational leadership in Gonzaga's School of Leadership Studies.

"As a teen in Amsterdam, Carla risked everything to aid fellow Jews, forging ID cards and providing shelter from the brutal Nazi regime and collaborators," Kristine said. "Growing up alongside Margot Frank, sister of Anne Frank, Carla witnessed the harrowing realities of the Holocaust, enduring the loss of three-quarters of her extended family."

From this tragedy, Carla emerged with "an unwavering determination to speak out against injustice"—a mission she continues at 101 years of age.

From multigenerational interviews with Carla and her family, including a great-granddaughter who is now the same age Carla was during World War II, the documentary captures Carla's enduring message of tolerance and inclusion, Kristine said.

Expert insights shed light on the significance of her narrative. "Carla is a living testament to the transformative power of individual action in shaping a brighter future," Kristine said.

Through the documentary, Carla shares the gift of her story as a firsthand witness and truth-teller, inspiring everyone to find their voice and make a positive difference in the world today.

Kristine and Clement are sending a trailer and summary to various film festivals. They hope the documentary or a 40-minute video will be viewed at schools, community conversations and religious gatherings in the Pa-



Clement Lye and Kristine Hoover meet in Clement's studio at Gonzaga University.

cific Northwest and around the U.S. Updates about how to access the documentary can be found at carlatherescuer.org.

"We supported the idea to do the documentary as a way to continue to take her presentations to schools," Kristine added. "Carla and her family were working to make a book of her presentation in schools. The movie and book assure her voice will continue to be directly heard into the future."

Kristine is helping the family set up a nonprofit to continue to promote Carla's initiatives.

The book, "My Journey," is on the years she lived in The Netherlands and how she came to do the work to help save the lives of more than 40 people when she was living under Nazi control.

Carla's first book, "The Keys of My Life"—published several years ago on Amazon—gives a bigger picture of her story.

Kristine has worked with Carla and her family on writing the book, "My Journey." Because it is intended for school children, Kristine arranged for it to be published by an academic publisher, which will help distribute it into more schools. Innovative Ink Publishing, a branch of Kendall Hunt Publishing, will publish it as a softcover book, but it will also be available in hard copy and electronically.

The book includes personal photos, documenting Carla's stories.

The project started three years ago, when Carla invited Kristine to her home on a Wednesday morning in January.

"I came in and Carla immediately said, 'Happy birthday.'

Here was a 97-year-old woman who knew it was my birthday from Facebook," said Kristine. "That's illustrative of warmth, humor, kindness and caring from a woman who lived through starvation. She grew up using a typewriter and now she's on Facebook, staying connected."

Kristine said Mary Noble, who is on the Spokane Observance of the Holocaust Committee and who worked with Carla on presentations at schools, suggested the documentary as a way to connect with more students.

The documentary of her life is told by four generations of Carla's family: Marian Cummings, Yvonne Peperzak-Blake and Joan Conner, her three daughters; Marc Peperzak, her son; Megan Knowles, her granddaughter, and Aubrey Knowles, her great-granddaughter.

Carla believes that "the biggest success of her life" over the Nazis was to have a full and loving family after losing three-fourths of her family in the war. All 54 members of her family appear in the documentary.

She said that of 150,000 Jews in the Netherlands before the war, only 20,000 survived. That means that more than 86 percent were killed. In contrast, two-thirds of all Jews in Europe were killed.

There are also comments from Paul Regelbrugge of the Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle, from Ray Sun, associate professor of history with a focus on Holocaust and genocide studies at Washington State University, and from Rabbi Tamar Malino of Temple Beth Shalom and Congregation Emanu-El in Spokane. The documentary also spotlights Andre Wicks, principal of the Carla Olman Peperzak Middle School in Spokane.

Kristine is the producer and director of "Carla, The Rescuer."

Clement, who is the film's co-director and made the video, is associate director for instructional design and development at Gonzaga and has worked with Kristine on other video projects.

Clement thought they were going for a one-time video interview with Carla for a half-hour video, but he had never met or talked to a Holocaust survivor before then. He only knew about the Holocaust from reading the *Diary of Anne Frank* and from learning about World War II.

He had left Spokane and spent about 10 years in the film industry in Los Angeles before marrying in 2009 and returning to Spokane. He began work at Gonzaga in 2012.

"I was wowed by her story and wanted to give more to it and do a documentary. We spent three days interviewing her, and I followed her around, going to a presentation she gave to sixth graders who would be the first class at Carla Peperzak Middle School," said Clement, who took 40 hours of video.

"The simple thing I learned from Carla was when a family member asked for an ID to pass as non-Jewish to avoid death, she did it because of what her faith had taught her," he commented.

As a follower of Jesus, Clement expressed his frustration that some today associate Jesus' name with hate.

"I wanted to do this video because what she said is in line with what my faith commands me to do—to love God with all

my heart and love my neighbor as myself. I did this documentary out of love, to make her story known. I hope it moves people to take action," said Clement, who attends Turning Point Open Bible Church.

"For both of us, it was a labor of love," said Kristine.

"My professional commitment to the story is about lessons of leadership and how we create more inclusive organizations and communities, and how we support cultures of dignity," she said.

Two pilot showings of "Carla, the Rescuer" were held on Nov. 20 and 21.

One was for students at Upper St. Clair High School in Pittsburgh. The relationship with the school grew from connections at the Eradicate Hate Global Summit, a conference held in 2018 after the Tree of Life Synagogue massacre. Kristine connected as director of Gonzaga's Center for the Study of Hate. The summit draws people globally to prevent hate-fueled violence. The school's Jewish Student Union asked to show the documentary as part of its Global Education Week.

The second pilot showing was for students at Bard College in New York, arranged by Ken Stern, director of the Bard Center for the Study of Hate, a partner with Gonzaga's Center for the Study of Hate.

Kristine will present portions of the documentary and lead a discussion for a workshop at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, which is being held from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 25, at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, 115 N. Raymond.

For information, call 419-308-0571, email lyec@gonzaga.edu or visit carlatherescuer.org.

Dan the Piano Man is now... **DAN the MOVING MAN**

- Household Moving
- Piano Tuning & Repair
- Piano Moving & Storage


509.922.1085

Licensed & Insured Free in-home estimates

www.DanTheMovingManWA.com

"WE DO JUSTICE."

DRIVER'S RELICENSING & POST-CONVICTION RELIEF, INCLUDING STATE V. BLAKE



THE WAY

THE WAY TO JUSTICE

321 W. BOONE AVE.
SPOKANE, WA 99201
(509)822-7514

MAILING/DONATIONS:
P.O. BOX 7503
SPOKANE, WA 99207

WWW.THEWAYTOJUSTICE.COM



Community Colleges of Spokane

Be a Bigfoot Among Eagles

Start Here, Transfer There

spokane.edu/next #BigfootBigFuture

"Probably my best choice of my life to start going to community college."

Community Colleges of Spokane does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation or age in its programs, activities or employment. Marketing and Public Relations. 21-690 - AS

Couple write 'Wake Up, World' curriculum to educate on climate

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

While driving through rural Arizona in the winter of 2020, a retired Methodist pastor, Robert Dygert-Gearheart, and his wife, Anita, were listening to podcasts, as they often did on their trips. They heard author-activist Terry Patten interviewing futurist Peter Russell.

It became a moment of conversion for Bob and Anita.

They were, as they say, "introduced to the idea that the earth is on a collision course with destruction without much hope"—the climate crisis.

It was their "wake-up" call that led them to publish a curriculum, "Wake Up World," to make lifestyle changes and to help 350 Spokane start Eco-Anxiety Cafés.

They heard the same message from others like author Margaret Wheatley and ecotheology advocate Michael Dowd.

Then, as the lockdown for COVID 19 began, they studied the situation by themselves and with book groups of their friends. They devoured books, podcasts, documentaries, hungry for understanding to help them sort the science from the politics.

Three books shaped their understanding and choice of how to respond: William Catton's *Overshoot: the Ecological Basis of Evolutionary Change*, Mike Berners-Lee's *There is No Planet B: A Handbook for the Make or Break Years*, and Leslie Crutchfield's *How Change Happens: Why Some Social Movements Succeed While Others Don't*.

These books and other research convinced them of the seriousness of the climate crisis and the need to change human behavior. The third book con-



Bob and Anita Dygert-Gearheart

vinced them that major social change required building understanding that would activate large numbers of ordinary people at the grassroots level.

Anita explained their approach to building this grassroots understanding. "It seemed like faith-based and interfaith groups would be the people to understand the needed change and to talk with each other about what they saw," she said.

As they explored what was happening in churches, they found that leaders in most were saying nothing about it. Only Pope Francis in the Catholic Church addressed the issue in his encyclical *Laudato si* and they found his critical analysis crucial in their conversations.

They began building grassroots understanding among the people of the churches by teaching classes in various states and talking with many congregations.

In 2022, they published a curriculum, "Wake Up World: Hope through Understanding," addressing the climate crisis for faith and community groups. It is available in a 102-page book and online at wakeupworld.earth.

The book gives detailed lesson plans for people who want to facilitate the six lessons and an additional optional one. The lessons are geared to people of faith. Additional interfaith resources are available on the website.

The website was designed by James Little, a retired medical researcher and clinician in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Seattle. He read their curriculum in 2022 and was impressed.

He was particularly concerned about the world his grandchildren could be facing.

"He told us we needed a website and he worked with us to design one that makes all of the material in the book accessible and even added some contributions of his own," said Anita.

On the site, in addition to what is in print, Bob narrates short videos of which he and Anita are particularly proud. They are called "Minutes for Mother Earth."

Each of the one- or two-minute clips explains one aspect of the climate crisis in easy-to-understand sound bites, which follow the content of the classes.

Both Anita and Bob had careers of service in their communities in Indiana prior to their retirement. Anita was the CEO of Campagna Academy

in Schererville in northwestern Indiana, a child welfare agency that provides therapeutic foster care, substance abuse treatment, day and residential services. Bob is a retired United Methodist pastor who served 42 years.

"Before that podcast, we were among the ordinary people living an exuberant life," said Bob.

Since then much in that lifestyle has changed as they make changes that favor Mother Earth.

Although the new home they purchased in Spokane about five years ago had a lawn, they were concerned about the chemical fertilizers it took to maintain that lawn and the amount of water they needed to keep it green. So, they tore up the lawn and put in a garden of native plants to attract pollinators.

"These don't require fertilizer or watering as our lawn did, and this year we saw so many pollinators visiting the garden," Anita commented.

She admits that she is still learning the names of all the plants in the garden.

"In Indiana, my parents loved nature and knew the names of every wildflower," she said. "The ones here are different, and I haven't learned them all yet."

They have taken steps to electrify their home as much as possible putting in a heat pump electric hot water heater. They have become vegan to do their part to offset the contribution of animal-raising to greenhouse gas.

Since their study deepened their understanding about the climate crisis they no longer fly.

"If there were an emergency with our son's family in Chile, we would go," Anita explains, "but we don't fly otherwise."

Although their professional lives kept them in cities, both Bob and Anita grew up loving nature on farms in Indiana and

admit that has predisposed them to a sensitivity to the damage the climate crisis is doing to earth.

"When I was young, being out in nature was my happy place," Bob said.

Now both of them spend time each day hiking on the trails near Spokane and love especially the hikes along the Spokane River.

Since coming to Spokane, Bob and Anita joined 350 Spokane and its Interfaith Committee, a volunteer-run organization that works to build the movement for climate action in the Spokane area.

Through 350 Spokane, they have helped partner with other groups to offer a program of Eco-Anxiety Cafés, aware from a recent survey by the American Psychiatric Association, that about 67 percent of Americans experience climate-related anxiety or depression.

Eco-anxiety refers to a fear of environmental doom that can lead people to feeling isolated, helpless or overwhelmed, they said.

With three other organizations, 350 Spokane is sponsoring Eco-Anxiety Cafés—see related news article—to provide a space for people to talk about their anxiety and depression and continue to build the momentum for climate action.

For information, email adygertgearheart@hotmail.com.

Need advice finding accessible or affordable transportation?

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

"we'll steer you right"
509-499-4810

Groups provide schedule times to gather for Eco-Anxiety Cafés

350 Spokane, NAACP Spokane, Manito United Methodist Church and The Lands Council are each co-sponsoring one of five free Eco-Anxiety Cafés for people who are concerned about climate change.

The next one will take place from 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Dec. 7, at Manito United Methodist Church, 3220 S. Grand Blvd.

Participants come to an Eco-Anxiety Cafe to share their thoughts and feelings, find or share resources, and connect with others who feel the way.

Although the event is free, registration is requested at 747-4755.

The other Eco-Anxiety Cafés scheduled on first Saturdays of January, February, March, April and May 2025.

For information, email adygertgearheart@hotmail.com or visit docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd8-ZSFrijr3oPZR00-PMO1W-RkS_klKglifuqo52Zwu7t8Ow/viewform.

D A C
DISABILITY ACTION CENTER
NORTH EAST WASHINGTON

Working for Independence, Equity and Justice!

Build your network of friends and allies!
Join us in advocating for choice, and raising the voices of the disability community who are most marginalized.

Our team provides services including:

- ✓ Peer Counseling & Support
- ✓ Independent Living Skills Training
- ✓ Information and Referral
- ✓ Personal & Community Advocacy
- ✓ Transition Services

Call us
509.606.4639

Located in Garden Court
222 W Mission Ave., #230 Spokane

May You Have a
Blessed Christmas & Joy-Filled New Year!

from
Immaculate Heart Retreat Center

A Peaceful Place to Pray and Ponder

Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, rooted in the Catholic faith, provides opportunities for spiritual growth to all people on their journey toward God, in an atmosphere of prayer and reflection. Experience unmatched hospitality and insightful speakers in a perfect Christian setting available all year for private or group retreats.

"Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while"
Mark 6:31

6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., Spokane, WA 99223 ihrc.net **(509) 448-1224**

Church urges congregations to include Fig Tree among offering recipients

Continued from page 1

Every week, the group that is the beneficiary of the offering is listed in the bulletin. In addition, the Zoom tech person puts a graphic on the screen in the sanctuary and on Zoom before the service.

“The graphics are creative and inviting, such as showing cute puppies and kittens for the humane society appeal,” Carl said.

The Nonprofit of the Month is given time on the first Sunday of the month to share information about its programs. Someone from the nonprofit, someone involved in the program or someone who has received its services—often a church member or attendee—tells about it, Ginny said.

“People have been receptive to the idea of giving to something meaningful in the community,” she commented. “Most recipients are local to the Palouse region.”

Ginny and Carl moved to Pullman in 2001 after leaving their careers in the San Francisco Bay area, where Carl worked in the computer industry and Ginny taught in community colleges. Carl had graduated from Washington State University and then Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. Ginny had studied at California State University East Bay in Hayward and Pacific Oaks College in Oakland and Pasadena.

When Ginny and Carl moved



Pullman Community Congregational United Church of Christ's loose offering of cash and coins goes for outreach.

Photo by Megan Guido

to Pullman with their daughter, Katie, Carl's parents were attending the CCUCC, so they drove his parents to church and soon began attending regularly.

With the church declining in membership—about 50 of 80 regulars attend on Sundays—Carl and Ginny took on more responsibilities.

Both are also involved in the church's music programs, Carl as choir director and Ginny playing flute.

“As I thought about what we do with our loose offerings, I began to think about sharing the idea with other congregations, to challenge them to think about how their offerings can contribute to their church and community,” he said.

“Offering is part of worship for many, but how might it be used beyond supporting the needs of the church?” he asked.

CCUCC gives regularly as part of its budget to the wider United Church of Christ through Our Church's Wider Mission, but also offers people the opportunity to give to the denomination's Neighbors in Need fall offering and to One Great Hour of Sharing in March. There is also an offering for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

“Many of the people who support the denominational offerings place a check in the offering plate,” he pointed out.

Beneficiaries of the loose change offerings include Alternatives to Violence of the

Palouse (ATVP), Community Action Center Emergency Housing Fund, Planned Parenthood, Inland Oasis, Family Promise of the Palouse, Pullman Child Welfare, Circles of Caring Adult Day Services, Whitman County Humane Society, Disability Action Center, PFLAG Moscow, Equal Justice Initiative, Blackbird Ranch Animal Sanctuary, N-Sid-Sen Camp and Retreat Center, BOOST Collaborative, Sojourners' Alliance, Latah Recovery Center, Palouse River Counseling, and Intersectional Advocacy Coalition for refugee families on the Palouse.

“We set our schedule of organizations a year ahead, but when Pullman Child Welfare found itself without sufficient food stores for the community, we immediately began dedicating the Sunday loose offerings to support their needs,” said Kym, who has attended the church since 2001, after coming to a friend's commitment ceremony.

Kym, who taught third grade in Pullman, said she has heard back from organizations that the gifts have made a big difference for them. In addition, people in the congregation have told her they appreciate knowing where the offerings are going.

In April 2024, the loose offerings of \$1,100 went to The Fig Tree on a Sunday after Marijke Fakasiieiki, development and editorial associate for The Fig Tree, preached at CCUCC.

“With The Fig Tree's role in connecting and inspiring congregations, I thought The Fig Tree could let other churches know about this idea, because they might be willing to provide such offerings for The Fig Tree and other community agencies, ministries and outreach centers.”

Kym hopes other congregations will be inspired to take offerings for community groups.

For information, email carl.hauser@gmail.com or ginny.hauser@gmail.com.

Program empowers girls, women of color

YWCA Spokane and Strong Women Achieving Greatness (SWAG) are partnering for their Youth Self-Care Summit for young women of color to help girls ages 11 to 17 feel belonging and self-worth so they develop positive relationships. It is from 1:30 to 4 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 14, at The HIVE, 2904 E. Sprague.

SWAG founder Jaime Stacy who seeks to empower youth through Spokane Public Schools and SWAG, will speak on “12 Ways to Celebrate Yourself.”

Prosparetti Coleman and Priya Osborne will lead the discussions.

Prosparetti is a community educator, advocate, wellness coach and doula committed to the well-being of Black and Brown women and girls. She founded “I Hear You Sis” to create environments rooted in

storytelling, collective healing and embodied support.

Priya is director of student success, equity and diversity at Spokane Community College and advisor to the NAACP Youth Council. She uplifts young voices

and fosters spaces for students to access resources to help young women of color to thrive.

For information, call/text 370-9024, email prevention@ywca-spokane.org or register at ywca-spokane.org > self-care-summit.

THE RIGHT SPACE & RIGHT PRICE FOR YOUR EVENT

Quinceaneras - Birthdays
Weddings - Anniversaries
Reunions - Memorials
Meetings - Conferences
Or???

Southside Community Center
3161 E.27th Ave - Spokakne WA
509-535-0803
director@southsidecenter.org

Students experience monastery life or wilderness in college Jan Term

Some of Samantha Miller's colleagues take Whitworth students to Europe for a "Jan Term" experience, but she has taken groups to a monastery or into the wilderness.

For January (Jan) Term 2024, eight Whitworth students made applesauce, shelled walnuts, shoveled snow, washed dishes, did housekeeping and shared tasks with Benedictine sisters at the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho.

The students followed the sisters' daily routine. When a bell rang, they went to eat or to prayers. They listened to the stories and insights on the life the sisters shared. They also played with the sisters—snowshoeing and sledding.

One 85-year-old sister told them her secret for calming herself when she gets nervous. She keeps a pill bottle filled with M&Ms.

"They are my courage pills," she told the students. "When I am anxious, I take out the bottle and take two 'courage pills.'"

During college, she became interested in monasticism and the third-century desert fathers and mothers who went into the wilderness when Christianity became the legal state religion of the Roman Empire. They went to figure out how to be a committed Christian when Christianity was the religion of the empire.

At Hope College in Holland, Mich., Samantha took a course on ecological theology and ethics and discovered the power of immersive experiences in the wilderness. Her professor led a May-term eight-day backpacking trip in the Adirondack Mountains of New York.

"We were based at a Reformed Church in America camp, Camp Fowler. The next summer, I worked a week for a children's camp there. For six years in seminary and doctoral studies, I worked there as a wilderness guide, teaching groups through immersive trips in the wilderness."

Samantha earned a bachelor's degree in religion and history from Hope College in 2008. She earned a master of divinity degree at Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C., in 2011.

After completing doctoral studies at Marquette University in Milwaukee, she taught at Anderson University in Anderson, Ind., from 2016 to 2020.

In the fall of 2020, Samantha began as assistant professor at Whitworth University in Spokane, teaching church history and introduction to the Bible.

In her second year at Whit-



Samantha Miller introduces students to ecological theology.

Photo courtesy of Samantha Miller

worth, she led a wilderness spirituality Jan Term course that Jerry Sittser, professor emeritus of theology, started at Tall Timber Camp near Leavenworth.

For Jan Term 2023, she taught "Backpacking with the Saints," taking students backpacking in Arizona, staying a week at an inactive monastery, backpacking a week and returning to the monastery to debrief.

Last January, after building relationships with Benedictine sisters during frequent retreats at the Monastery of St. Gertrude, she led a Jan Term class there, immersing students in the life, community and rule of the sisters.

"The sisters loved the students, and the students loved the sisters," said Samantha.

Although she's Protestant—a United Methodist who attends Salem Lutheran Church—she values her retreats with the Catholic community at St. Gertrude's.

"There, students were drawn by the simplicity and single-mindedness of the sisters' lives, as they focused on becoming closer to God and becoming who God made them to be," Samantha said. "The sisters' life is a stable rhythm of prayer and work."

"They have a solid structure to every day, week, month and year. That structure sustains everything," she said "Prayers happened, and we showed up. It's solid when the rest of life feels unstable, as it does for many."

To help the students enter the rhythm of life in the monastery, Samantha took their phones away for three weeks so they could immerse themselves in a

simple life and learn to be present to themselves, each other and the sisters.

"Last spring after returning to campus, the students competed to have the lowest screen time," she said. "They came back as a community. Five graduated but they keep in touch and still discuss what the sisters told them."

"They gained perspective from older women, instead of just being influenced by being around peers," Samantha said.

During Jan Term, she read them a bedtime story, two chapters every night from the book "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry," by Swedish author Fredrik Backman. It is about a seven-year-old girl delivering her grandmother's letters to neighbors and discovering what community can be.

When the participants graduated, she gave each a copy.

Samantha took the Jan Term 2023 group backpacking in the wilderness near St. David, Ariz., and stayed a week at Holy Trinity Monastery, which is no longer a monastery, but a retreat center where oblates lead daily prayers. The students had classes there.

Samantha also took their cell phones and computers, assigned them to each read a book on a monk and to handwrite reports.

While they hiked and backpacked for a week in Paria Canyon, there was a rhythm to each day, waking up, eating, walking, eating, walking, making camp, eating and going to bed. Each carried only two shirts and two pairs of socks.

"The canyon landscape is stark with red rock cliffs rising up beside the river. Looking

up, we saw the blue sky where the rock cliffs stopped. Being in the wilderness is humbling," she said. "We realize our limits. The world is wild and untamed. God is wild and untamed. We think we can control our lives and think we can control God."

During the week backpacking they had evening campfires, using twinkling lights rather than a real fire, and reading a bedtime story.

"Wilderness is a spiritual practice. Our days are full, busy with things that are not our normal responsibilities," she said. "Meals take longer to fix. Water has to be filtered, so it takes time."

"There is no multitasking," she said.

They returned to the monastery for a few days to debrief and then flew home. Two who went backpacking took the monasticism class the next year.

Samantha believes the monastery and wilderness immersion transform lives.

"The monastery is a place where we can depend on community, being present to each other, listening and slowing down, breathing and playing, being open to awe and wonder. We can't do theology without awe and wonder," she said.

"Students need space and structure, even if they are not called to a vocation of being away in community to pray," Samantha added. "They need stillness rather than multitasking by watching TV and doing homework."

In three weeks at the monastery, they learned they needed the pace there. That's why St. Gertrude's has guests come for retreats.

Samantha still loves going to the Adirondacks, which are old, rounded mountains with trees up to their bald tops, where hikers can look out over a green and blue carpet.

She still goes to Camp Fowler as a cabin counselor or chaplain, often arriving two days before the camp just to rest and be in the space.

"My faith is interwoven in everything I do. I chase God all the time, or God chases me. I study what I study and teach what I teach, because I am in wonder and awe of God," she said.

"The book and musical, 'Les Misérables' talks of a bishop being dazzled by God," she said, "I invite students to come to the monastery or wilderness to be dazzled by God," which she likens to inviting someone to watch a sunset with her.

"I bring them tools and resources they can use to follow their faith journeys and be present," she said.

On campus, Samantha often sees students walking and holding their phones as if they are attached to their arms. When she sees students who have been on the Jan Terms with her, walking with no phone, being in reality, not virtual reality, she is gratified.

For information, email samanthamiller@whitworth.edu.

Sundays 8 am & 10 am

St. Luke's Episcopal Church Sunday Services:
8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m. with Children's Chapel
501 E. Wallace Ave. Coeur d'Alene, ID (5th & Wallace downtown)
208-664-5533 · www.stlukesca.org

| | |
|---|---|
| Sunday, Dec. 8 Advent Lessons & Carols | Sunday, Dec. 29 Christmas Lessons & Carols |
| Tuesday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Services 5 pm & 7:30 pm | Sunday, Jan 5 Epiphany Lessons & Carols King Cake at both Coffee Hours |

Free for 11-17yrs olds
1:30pm-4:00pm @ The Hive
Dec 14th

Youth Self-Care Summit

Register: Scan QR code to register online.

Questions? ywcaspokane.org/summit
509-385-2320

Provided by **ywca** eliminating racism empowering women

STUDIO 1892

Spokane • Lewiston

Your passion is our purpose.
A full service creation and marketing shop.
Focused on results.

Wishing you and yours a healthy and happy holiday season.

Studio1892.com | 208.848.2245

Spend your Holidays at the MAC

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Holiday Kick-Off Celebration Ring in the spirit of the season. Saturday, Nov 30 4-6 pm FREE | Annual Artists Studio Tour Meet six Spokane artists in their studios. Saturday, Dec 7 10 am - 4 pm \$25 | Campbell House Holidays Festive living history experience Dec 19-22 12-4 pm INCLUDED WITH ADMISSION |
|---|---|---|

Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture 2316 W First Ave, Spokane | 509-456-3931
northwestmuseum.org

Generously Sponsored by **Washington Trust Bank**
Privately Owned. Locally Invested.

Task force perseveres in challenging hate

By Tony Stewart

Civil rights leader Cheryl Brown Henderson recently told the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations (KCTFHR) that public education is the cornerstone of democracy and the rule of law.

At its 25th annual human rights banquet on Sept. 28 in Coeur d'Alene, the task force also presented civil rights awards and raised funds for minority student scholarships at North Idaho College in partnership with the North Idaho College Foundation.

Cheryl is the daughter of the lead plaintiff, the Rev. Oliver Brown, in the United States Supreme Court landmark case "Brown v. Board of Education" (1954) ending legalized segregation in America's public schools. Oliver and 12 other parents in Topeka, Kansas, were joined with cases from Delaware, South Carolina, Virginia and Washington, D.C.

In 1988, Cheryl founded the Brown Foundation, which provides student scholarships, presents awards to leaders, establishes libraries for children in low-income communities and many more functions.

Her address traced the history of racial discrimination in the United States and pointed out her concerns on recent acts to attack public education, such as banning books and efforts to remove teaching in the classroom of diversity, equality, equity, inclusion and social justice. Her words drew a standing ovation.

The KCTFHR presented its 25th annual civil rights award to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe for its long history of supporting equality and justice for all people, as well as its major financial gifts to so many individuals and groups in the region. The Tribe employs more than 1,700 individuals, adding more than \$330 million to Idaho's economy each year.

In accepting the award, Chairman Chief J. Allan shared with the audience how the Coeur d'Alene Tribe has historically faced vicious discrimination, including being labeled as savages. Its members were not granted American citizenship until 1924, although the Coeur d'Alene



Tony Stewart

people were here for centuries before white settlers came.

Scott Kennedy, the KCTFHR treasurer, received the annual KCTFHR Bill Wassmuth Memorial Volunteer-of-the-Year Award. He has volunteered many years with the task force.

The Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations is in its 44th year as a human rights organization promoting human rights, while combating discrimination, malicious harassment and hate crimes.

It works across America helping communities combat hate in their communities.

For 40 years, task force members have traveled across the United States from coast to coast, visiting communities, cities, colleges, universities, places of worship, chambers, businesses and community events.

To tell the story of the KCTFHR, in 2020, Kristine Hoover, who was then director of Gonzaga University Institute for the Study of Hate, reviewed data and written materials (in my files as one of the founders). She wrote a book called "Countering Hate: Leadership Cases for Non-violent Action," published by Kendall Hunt Publishing.

She included reports on the task force work with several communities around the U.S.

Individual chapters discuss our work in various communities, which include three cities in Idaho, Pulaski, Tenn., Sanders County, Mont., Asheville, N.C., John Day, Ore., Grand Forks, N.D., Stevens County, Wash., and multiple cities in Wyoming

and Pennsylvania.

In addition, to promote opportunities for minority students, the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations also offers minority student scholarships at North Idaho College (NIC). Each year, it gives \$4,000 and NIC Foundation adds \$4,000 for a total of \$8,000 given to two women and two men minority students selected by NIC. The two women's scholarships are named for former Idaho State Senator Mary Lou Reed and the two men's scholarships are named for the late Idaho Governor Phil Batt.

As of 2024, the KCTFHR has given a total of 116 scholarships.

The present board includes three young people: a recent graduate of Gonzaga University Law school, a young businessman in San Diego, Calif., and an employee of Verizon in Seattle. The other board members range in age from their early 40s up.

The KCTFHR, which was founded in February 1981, has no employees. Its board makes all the decisions.

For information, call 208-765-3932 or visit idahohumanrights.org.

SPOKANE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

Happy Streaming for the Holidays

kanopy

View films & shows at home or on the go:

- Holiday Hilarity
- Festive Documentaries

- More Scary Than Merry
- Romance Under the Mistletoe
- Is It a Christmas Movie?

Get started at sclcd.org/kanopy

Access to Kanopy requires an in-district SCLD library card.

sclcd.org

MYRTLE WOLDSON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AT GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

'24 '25 Season

CAMPANA SOBRE CAMPANA: CHRISTMAS IN MEXICO!

Mariachi Garibaldi De Jaime Cuéllar and Ballet Folklórico Del Rio Grande

7:00 P.M. | Saturday, December 14
2:00 P.M. | Sunday, December 15
Coughlin Theater
Tickets: \$18 - \$52

Presenting Partner: GONZAGA DANCE

Tickets On Sale Now - Visit gonzaga.edu/TicketCenter
Learn more at myrtlewoldsoncenter.org

Photo Credit: Ballet Folklórico del Rio Grande

Fire victims in North Spokane need supplies

By Bon Wakabayashi

Camping when the weather is great, can be fun, but for 36 families facing another winter in a camper or RV because they lost everything in the Oregon Rd. fire last year, not so much.

Some are waiting for contractors to rebuild. Some had insufficient or no insurance.

These North Spokane neighbors need help.

New Hope Resource Center in Colbert has been helping since the fire, providing coats, hats, scarves, gloves, boots, snow pants, sleeping bags, blankets and camp stoves, but supplies are low, and funds are needed.

The center asks churches and organizations to provide dona-

tions or items.

In addition to the above items, the needs include insulated coveralls, warm work gloves, wool sweaters, down or fleece jackets, shirts, pants, down comforters, lap throws, polar fleece or flannel sheets, heating pads, crock pots, teapots for a stove, TV trays, oil filled radiator-type heaters, tarps and bungees, snow shovels, deicer, small squeegees, mouse and rat repellent.

Donors can drop off items at New Hope Resource Center, 4211 E. Colbert Rd., from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, at 467-2900. Online donations can be made at newhoperesource.org/donate-here.

Volunteers are needed to split

firewood and help rebuild.

The Resource Team is available at the North County Food Pantry from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays or 9 a.m. to noon, Wednesdays at 4001A N. Collins Rd. Elk. For information, call 292-2530.



Join us Sundays

at 9:15 & 11 a.m.
or watch our live stream
www.uuspokane.org

We are an LGBTQ welcoming liberal religious congregation
All are welcome

City, EWU recognize local leaders

Eastern Washington University and the City of Spokane is organizing a storytelling project, "Neighbors You Should Know: A Spokane Video Series," for the 25th anniversary of the City's Office of Neighborhood Services.

Sixty-second videos will highlight community leaders and groups. They are published on CityCable5, said Tyler Tamoush, research staff associate and project organizer.

For information, email ttamoush@spokanecity.org.



Locally owned nutrition stores since 1977

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------|----------|
| Valley | 109 N. University Rd. | 922-3655 |
| North | NorthPointe Plaza | 466-9661 |
| South | 3001 E. 29th | 533-0554 |

Do you ever
wish you had a nurse that would visit with you throughout and after pregnancy to see if everything is going ok?

Someone to answer questions, be understanding, and cheer you on to becoming the best parent you can be?



Visit srhd.org/nfp or call 509.324.1621 to see if Nurse-Family Partnership can make that happen! Services are available in Spanish.



When you take your child (ages 0-18 years) to a health clinic in Washington state, you might have to pay a small charge for getting the shot and for the office visit, but you will not be charged for the vaccine itself. Spokane Regional Health District assures nondiscrimination in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. To file a complaint or to request more information, reasonable accommodations, or language translations, contact 509.324.1501 or visit srhd.org. Created: December 2024

Othello pastor and school band director recruits instruments, starts band

For Adam Janes, the pastor of Othello Christian Church, a band instrument can change a life because music opens opportunities and minds.

Since January 2020 and after COVID, the church has hosted a community band for elementary school students.

It's secular, but it's one of the church's outreach ministries.

Adam, who is also the high school marching band instructor, said that when the school superintendent asked the church and community to help when funding for the music program dropped, he saw another opportunity to share his love of music with young people.

"I enjoy seeing students excel at music—more than performing it myself," said Adam, whose three sons have been in the school band.

Because of changes in the school music program, students were not provided instruments.

So Othello Christian Church began a campaign, asking people to donate gently used flutes, saxophones, clarinets, trumpets, trombones and percussion instruments and bring them to the church.

They called the campaign, "Liberating as Christ Liberated," because the goal is to remove barriers to students learning music and to give them an opportunity to expand their horizons.

"We don't want families to have to spend \$50 a month to rent instruments. We want everyone who wants to play an instrument to be able to learn to play one," he said.

Sixth graders previously had band all year to prepare them to enter the middle and high school band. Now sixth graders have band only one-fourth of the school year, so they were less prepared when they entered seventh grade, Adam said.

That led the church to offer space for a community band to meet to fill the gap.

Adam makes it clear that the church music program is separate from the school band program.

"To have student musicians meet in the church, we assured the school that we use secular, not religious music," Adam said, "although most secular music for that age conveys values.

"I've been in a band since I was 12 years old in sixth grade. I played through high school. In college, I continued in music, because for me music and ministry are intertwined," he said.

Adam's primary instrument was the trombone, but he branched out to play 13 instruments. He can teach almost any band instrument, including flute, clarinet, sax, trumpet, baritone and tuba.

"The instruments are similar,



Pastor Adam Janes teaches students to play instruments.
Photo courtesy of Adam Janes

so students can learn one instrument and transfer what they learn to another," he added.

"Music is a gateway for students to move into college and other endeavors," said Adam.

Even if the music is secular, he considers music to be a spiritual expression.

"**For our church**, the opportunity to provide the instruments and band for students is a justice issue," he said. "Our faith compels us to do what we can to help people have as many opportunities as possible.

"To me, music, especially instrumental music, expands horizons like nothing else," Adam said, explaining that it awakens use of many parts of the brain and provides leadership training that "sets people up for a better future."

Adam sees a false dichotomy between sacred and secular.

"Ancestors in the faith would have had no concept that there could be anything that we do in our lives that isn't connected to the sacred," he observed.

"Music is a language that can give expression to ideas and feelings where words are inadequate," he added, citing from Rom. 8:26, "the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words."

Growing up on the Oregon Coast, Adam graduated from high school in Salem. He first felt called to ministry during his sophomore year but decided to study music. In his first year at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Ore., he felt God calling him to pastor a church.

He earned a joint bachelor's degree in music from Northwest Christian and the University of Oregon.

In 2007, he earned a master of divinity degree with a concentration in Christian care and counseling at Emmanuel School of Religion—now Emmanuel Christian Seminary—at Milligan University in Johnson City, Tenn.

Adam began in ministry in 2008, serving primarily in rural

towns, including small towns in Tennessee and Virginia before he came to the Othello Christian Church in July 2016.

He asked to have his profile sent to the Pacific Northwest, because his family are in Oregon. He wanted his children to have a closer relationship with their extended family.

Adam told about other ministries of Othello Christian Church. The church live streams its Sunday services so homebound members can participate.

"Our ages range from elementary school to elder members with just about every generation represented in the congregation," he said. "We are currently not offering Sunday School classes, so we can focus on other things. We have small discipleship groups."

The church has a praise band and hand bell choir. The praise band includes members, who play for every service, singing a blend of traditional hymns and contemporary praise songs.

"In this congregation, it's easy to incorporate multicultural, international music because my predecessor was also musically inclined. She pushed the congregation musically outside their comfort zone. Now there is no question. We sing a variety of music," he said.

"If music from around the world is done correctly, it gives the congregation the opportunity to understand that no matter how

isolated they may feel, they are not alone. We can connect with one another by sharing a variety of worship resources," said Adam.

"It does wonders for rural congregations to introduce music from other parts of the world," he added, noting that the Disciples of Christ hymnal incorporates hymns from around the world.

For example, he has been singing "We are Walking in the Light of God!" since he was 12 years old.

He was introduced to more music from around the world in 2008, when he attended a World Convention of Christian Churches, Churches of Christ and Disciples of Christ in Nashville, Tenn. It gathers every four years, rotating its location around the world.

Adam believes the variety of music his church offers moves

people to connect more with other outreach ministries and be open to new and unconventional ways of doing ministry in the community.

For other community outreach in Othello, the church has a feeding ministry, taking meals to a homeless encampment for 30 individuals.

The church also collects baby supplies for layettes and provides a new baby kit for families when they return from the hospital.

They make baby and other quilts—keeping a third locally for the hospital or families in need, sending a third to the New Hope women's shelter in Moses Lake and sending the rest to a refugee and immigrant ministry in Tecate, Calif.

For information, call 488-2208 or email pastor@othello-christianchurch.com.

Wishing Tree Books
Books
Gifts
Storytimes
Events
So. Perry

WishingTreeBookstore.com
1410 E. 11th Ave. Spokane, WA

五針和真
CDA Acupuncture
and
Holistic Healing

Acupuncture • Naturopathic Medicine • Chiropractic
Counseling • Massage • Holistic Esthetics • Nutrition
IV Therapy • Classes • Nature Cure • Retail

CDAHealing.com 208-665-2293

Visit the
Jacklin Arts & Cultural Center
in December
for Holiday
Concerts, Classes,
Exhibits and Free
Community Art
Days
thejacklincenter.org

THE JACC
Jacklin Arts & Cultural Center

TAIZÉ PRAYER
via Zoom
Thursdays at 4:15 p.m.

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

96% of Spokane knows we can
work together to end domestic
violence for all families.

our commitment.
Their future.

SRDVC SAFE STATES

Holiday funds are used all year by Coeur d'Alene's Kroc Center

By Kaye Hult

As many nonprofit organizations, The Salvation Army's Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Coeur d'Alene uses the holiday months of November and December for fundraising.

"Every penny we raise through our Flannel Fest and Red Kettle collections goes to outreach, not to support community center operations," said Don Gilger, executive director.

"It all goes back into the community. It helps fund programs such as a counselor for children and families, our Third Grade Swim to keep children safe in the lake or scholarships for people and families to access to the Kroc Center offerings," he said.

The Kroc Center, which celebrated its 15th anniversary in May 2024, has developed into more than an athletic center, swimming pool and a church. Other programs include a summer camp, outreach to area schools in partnership with local churches, and social services for low-income individuals, families and groups.

"The Kroc is a gathering place," he continued.

Don and his wife Ronda, both majors in the Salvation Army, celebrated their sixth year leading the center in October.

Both are senior pastors of Kroc Church. Don's ministry includes setting the direction for the center. Ronda shares her art and teaching skills.

Don and Ronda came to the Kroc Center in 2018, soon after they returned from three years as missionaries in Moldova, which is next to Ukraine.

Ronda was the divisional commander there. Don was in charge of the business, which was all Salvation Army activities in Moldova, Romania, Ukraine and the Republic of Georgia.

"Ronda raises money as an artist to send to the Moldova Salvation Army," he added. "By now, she has sent more than \$100,000."

In their roles as pastors of the Kroc Church, they lead 10 a.m. Sunday worship, as well as Bible studies during the week for women, men and teens.

"We both lean into the skills of those around us," Don said. "We learn from each place we serve. For example, we learned what it was like to be an immigrant while living in Moldova, having to adapt to different customs and not speaking the language."

"We seek collaboration with the organizations in town, so we don't duplicate what is being done," he said. "We want to offer long-term help, not band-aid solutions."

For example, because mental health is a top need in this area, the Kroc Center brought in Tyson Durbin, a licensed counselor, as youth and family specialist. People pay on a sliding scale.



Don and Ronda Gilger are in sixth year at The Kroc.

Photo courtesy of The Kroc

At the request of the Coeur d'Alene School District, Tyson spends a day a week at the Woodland Middle School, working with students through the Mental Awareness Club.

He sees about 12 kids at a time. They offer each other group support, deciding what to focus on and learning coping skills. Tyson, who once was a professional gamer and understands kids' struggles with social media, helps them reduce time on gaming.

"We would like to offer more counselors, setting up interns as one way to reach that goal," Don said.

The Kroc has responded to school requests through Mobile Kroc, a program in 17 North Idaho elementary schools to organize staff and students to play games at recess.

"They help the children learn not to fight with each other," Don said. "When the staff are not there, the children continue to play the games."

"We connect with churches near the schools, teaching volunteers to play games with the children," he said.

"The Kroc staff and other volunteers are not proselytizing. They are simply offering loving interaction with children, meeting them where they are," he added.

"A Sandpoint pastor volunteering at a nearby school told of a girl coming to stand by him," Don shared. "She just wanted to stand by him, even when he suggested she join the other children. Many children need that kind of support."

The Kroc and churches also provide food, fruits and even clothing for school children when they are taking tests.

In the spring of 2024, 1,900 children participated in a one-week Third Grade Swim at the Kroc. In North Idaho, where there is so much water, children need to learn to keep safe in the water.

"They can float," Don said. "They can kick to shore. They

learn water safety, such as wearing a life vest. Parents are saying thank you."

A video on the Kroc Center website tells the story of a girl who fell off a boat and was able to keep safe. The lessons free children from anxiety about going into the water.

"I can be in the pool and see a baby on a raft float by, accompanied by parents," Don said. "I then look across the pool to see an 80-year-old woman who is afraid of the water but is learning to swim. That's the Kroc Center!"

Because many organizations hold Christmastime food drives, the Kroc collects food—primarily protein—in February to distribute in the five North Idaho counties.

"We have chosen a time when there's a gap to be filled," he said.

"We used to do our Clothe-a-Child program at Christmas. A volunteer would take a child to a store with \$100 to buy clothes," he said, "but in recent years, we have changed from that approach."

"Now a volunteer brings the whole family and involves the parents. We are helping the whole family, giving them dignity," he explained. "The parents give \$10 as an investment, for them to donate to a charity to help other families. It's them giving back."

These programs exist and flourish because of donations that come to the Kroc Center through fundraising in November and December.

Don and Ronda married 46 years ago, just out of high school.

Don had felt a call to pastor when he was 14. After they married, he worked at several jobs. In one, he served as a youth pastor at a Nazarene church, where he observed that any time someone came to the door asking for help, the church sent them to the Salvation Army.

"I asked why we couldn't just give them the help," Don recalled. "The pastor said that kind of help was the Army's

specialty. The church annually sent \$200 to support that."

When Don, age 20, met Bill Nottle, a Salvation Army captain, it changed his life.

"I suddenly felt I was supposed to be there," Don said. "I wanted to be part of a church that helps people and does more than just pray for them."

He and Ronda had one child at the time, with a second on the way. Both were invited to go to the Salvation Army training college in Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif. They completed the two-year seminary and were commissioned as Salvation Army officers and ordained as ministers. They could serve anywhere in the world.

At the same time, they attended Azusa Pacific University near Los Angeles, where they received associate of arts degrees.

Ronda attended Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, where she received a master in theology with a concentration in youth and family.

They have been in ministry for 41 years, serving in 15 places in the western United States and other parts of the world.

"The Salvation Army is a vehicle God uses, wherever it is located," Don said. "My motivation, throughout my time with the Salvation Army, and even before, has been helping others. No one can do everything. Everyone can do something."

"The Kroc Center is everybody's center, not mine but ours. It is alive only when people are here," Don said. "Its life for 15 years comes from the people."

For information, call 208-667-1865 or email info@kroccda.org.



35 W Main, Suite 250, Spokane, WA 99201
Tel: 509-325-2665 • Fax: 866-376-6308 • nwfairhousing.org

Federal and state laws prohibit housing discrimination based on:

Race • Color • Religion • Gender • Disability
National Origin • Familial Status • Marital Status
Sexual Orientation • Military/Veteran Status
Citizenship or Immigration Status

Our services include: fair housing counseling, advocacy and education

This ad is supported in part by funds from a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD. NWFHA is solely responsible for the accuracy of statements and interpretations in this ad.



RIVERCARE

2360 N. Stone Street

Need assistance with housekeeping, home making, personal care, care management or companionship?
RiverCare is the right choice for you!



RiverCare Home Care is officially open!

For more information call 509-482-8159
www.RiverviewRetirement.org



Rockwood South Hill:
2903 E. 25th Ave.
509-536-6650

Rockwood at Whitworth
10322 N. Middleton Dr.
509-466-0411

www.rockwoodretirement.org

independent • assisted • skilled nursing • memory care

Recycling Pick-Up Service



- appliances
- office paper
- cardboard
- electronics

Call for hours

EarthworksRecycling.com

(509) 534-1638

1904 E Broadway-Spokane
2 blks N of Trent/Napa

YOUTH 18 & UNDER RIDE FREE ON STA!



Spokane Transit

spokanetransit.com/youth

Camp and volunteers from Post Falls connect for future collaboration

By Kaye Hult

One never knows when chance connections will take place or where they will lead.

Pam Peterson, designated camp director for N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center for the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) near Harrison, Idaho, needed helpers for a work camp in May 2024 to help prepare for the summer season.

She came to N-Sid-Sen in April 2023, bringing skills to administer the camp for a limited period. She ends her service on Dec. 31, 2024.

“While my children were growing up, I directed a Boy Scout camp in Western New York, which taught me facilities management,” she said. “I was ordained as a UCC minister in 2013 in Middletown, Conn.

Pam earned a doctor of ministries in church leadership with a focus on eco-spirituality from Hartford International University for Religion and Peace in Hartford, Conn., in May 2022. Her dissertation was on ‘Worship in the Wilderness,’” said Pam.

She came to N-Sid-Sen to run the camp while helping determine next steps to find a settled camp manager.

For a spring work camp, she was recruiting people with skills for managing forests, running large machinery and operating a kitchen feeding large groups.

Brana Cully is development assistant and volunteer coordinator for the 3rd Avenue Marketplace, formerly the Post Falls Food Bank. She and her husband, Tim, who does drone filming and video making, moved to North Idaho in 2021.

Brana was born in a small town in Serbia. After she and her family moved to San Diego in 2004, she went to high school, attended community college and transferred to the University of California San Diego, graduating in 2013 with a bachelor’s in political science.

She worked in San Diego and Orange County before moving to North Idaho and finding a job at the Post Falls Food Bank, which recently expanded to become the 3rd Avenue Marketplace.

Chelsea Nesbit, who owns Chelsea’s Gypsy Kitchen in Coeur d’Alene, is N-Sid-Sen’s designated caterer.

When a mutual friend of Chelsea and Brana met Chelsea at the U.S. Chef Store last spring, Chelsea mentioned that Pam needed some help.

This was the chance encounter that led to a new, mutually beneficial relationship.



Work campers enjoy campfire after a day of work.

Photo courtesy of N-Sid-Sen

When Brana learned of N-Sid-Sen’s need, she was interested. Learning of Tim’s video skills, Pam invited him to do drone filming for a volunteer work weekend in May. He created videos to help N-Sid-Sen with marketing.

Tim visited N-Sid-Sen. He returned raving to Brana about the beautiful location and suggesting they come with friends for a work weekend to enjoy the camp and help with what they need.

Four of Brana’s co-workers at the marketplace and other friends joined other volunteers at the work camp.

After supper Friday, they had a bonfire and enjoyed s’mores.

Brana enjoyed waking up Saturday morning and being called to breakfast by the ringing of a large bell in the yard beside the dining hall. While they ate, Pam handed out the day’s assignments.

“Volunteers fixed light bulbs and cut firewood,” Brana said. “A friend and I helped a long-time work camper clear dry brush around the wood shop for fire prevention. Then we cleared trails.

“She taught us to use a Pulaski, a fire-fighting tool named after the local fireman who invented it. It combines an axe and hoe to make it easier to dig soil and chop wood,” Brana explained. “We crossed the highway and

made new trails. They lead to a natural spring where there was once a homestead.”

They also created a memorial garden. Everyone worked all morning, broke for lunch and then returned to finish their projects in the afternoon.

Brana relished physical labor and seeing what they did.

“Where else can people come for free, do physical labor and get fed?” she asked.

Sunday morning, after breakfast, Pam led a short worship service before everyone departed.

She was delighted.

“These new volunteers had skills for the work we needed doing,” she said. “Some got our Kubota diesel tractor running again. They handled big equipment safely.

“Two worked in the kitchen, preparing it for the season,” she continued. “They cleaned up after themselves.

“Two power washed playground equipment and porches,” she said. “Others painted and stained furniture.

“Everyone was well-trained, giving support to the camp’s limited staff,” she said.

At that time, the camp did not have a maintenance person.

“The biggest gift,” Pam said, “was that we hired two volunteers from Post Falls as camp maintenance staff. It connected us with

new volunteers and contacts for campers for the summer.”

The relationship between this group of volunteers and N-Sid-Sen has deepened. The original group with some different people returned in June.

“They continue to help maintain trails and assist the maintenance crew,” said Pam. “They made sure we had an adequate wood supply. They came in September to button things up for fall and winter.

“We spread mulch with the tractor from the main camp to the lake. Every trip has its own vibe and a different mix of people,” said Brana.

That time there was a church camp. They joined a Saturday bonfire and met new people.

“These days, everyone needs more community, more nature and internet-free, screen-free

activities in our lives,” Brana said. “We had that chance at N-Sid-Sen to enjoy nature and build community with friends.”

“We worked on tasks together, rather than in our own bubbles. We don’t own it, but worked as hard as if we did,” she said.

Looking ahead, Pam hopes the new ties can lead the camp to connect children and youth who need financial assistance with churches who have campership funds but no children and youth to send to camp.

Brana appreciates the relationship between 3rd Avenue Marketplace and N-Sid-Sen. She hopes to connect their families with the camp.

For information, call 208-689-3489, email director@n-sid-sen.org or email brana@3rdavenuemarketplace.org.



At Emmanuel Family Life Center
“People Matter and We Care”
WE RENT SPACE
Office space with Wi-Fi, 24-hour access, security - \$2.50/sq.ft./month
Gymnasium Usage for weddings, parties, receptions - \$50/hour
 In South Perry neighborhood at 631 S. Richard Allen Ct.
 We house programs that help people improve their lives.
pbenjamin.eflc@gmail.com • (509) 443-4884

Have a Conflict?
 We can help you work it out.
Book a mediation today!


NMC
 509-456-0103
 nwmediationcenter.com
 info@nwmediationcenter.com

Mediation is for everyone. We can mediate many types of disputes.

- Divorce
- Parenting
- Neighbor
- Tenant-Landlord
- Business
- and many more

Goodwill®

Industries of the Inland Northwest

Donate. Shop. Change a life.

When you support Goodwill, you help change lives in the Inland Northwest through:

- Skills assessment and training
- Job development
- Financial education
- Resume development
- Housing stability for homeless and at-risk Veterans
- Youth Mentoring
- and more



www.DiscoverGoodwill.org



FAIRWOOD MEANS TOGETHER.

Independent Living Apartments, Condos, and Meadow Homes

Assisted Living • Memory Support Care

Watch our guided video tour at www.fairwoodretirement.com

call 509.467.2365 for tours and pricing

312 W. Hastings Road • Spokane, Washington 99218

Come join us.
 People living out their faith of inclusiveness and justice together.

Sundays at 9:30 a.m.
 806 W. Knox (temporarily)



Bethany
 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 BethanySpokane.org

509-534-0066

Whether you are a Believer, a Seeker, or a Doubter . . .
 You are Welcome Here.



ENRICHING LIVES
CREATING COMMUNITY

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #ffff00; margin: 0;">YOUTH DEVELOPMENT BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">The Youth Development programs offered at West Central provide children and teens numerous opportunities to participate in fun, active & educational activities in a safe and nurturing environment.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #ffff00; margin: 0;">509.323.7519</p> | <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #ffff00; margin: 0;">WIC WOMEN, INFANTS, and CHILDREN</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">The WIC program is a vital service available at WCCC with other locations in Cheney, Airway Heights, and Fairchild Air Force Base. This program provides health and nutrition education, breastfeeding support for new mothers, and access to healthy foods to help support healthy families.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #ffff00; margin: 0;">509.323.7497</p> | <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #ffff00; margin: 0;">SUPPORTIVE SERVICES</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">Two programs for adults with developmental disabilities provide socialization, education, recreation and community integration.</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">Private pay adult day care as well as county-funded community inclusion are among the services offered.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #ffff00; margin: 0;">509.323.7517</p> | <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #ffff00; margin: 0;">ASANTE HEALTH</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">Asante Health Primary Care provides comprehensive medical services for all ages, including preventive care, chronic disease management, acute illness treatment, vaccinations, health screenings, and wellness exams.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: #ffff00; margin: 0;">509.808.2835</p> |
|--|---|--|--|

1603 N. BELT ST, SPOKANE WA, 99205

Support Fig Tree stories to inform and inspire people for these times

In this new and uncertain time, we need to know who has our back. What collaborations and partnerships do folks in the faith and nonprofit communities need to strengthen themselves so they can continue to be the embodiment of God's love, as voices of hate are given permission to threaten efforts to serve.

Are we talking with each other about new ways of being, doing and serving? The same old patterns may not work as well as then have for years. Will people in fear withdraw or will they be more generous, knowing government funding may wane? Will private corporations, knowing they will likely have a tax windfall, be more generous, knowing that nonprofits are at the core of keeping the local and regional communities and economies healthy as a stable setting for business success.

There will be changes. There will be new people in need, losing jobs and homes, losing stability and safety. Are our congregations and nonprofits now engaged in including those concerns in their visioning for outreach, care and advocacy.

What will be the new landscape for advocacy? What will be safe? How will people protect each other?

I raise these questions because I have visited in closed societies with centralized rule that limited speech and action—East Germany and China. I know what creative ways faith communities and others acted because they cared.

In some ways it's no different from what we have been doing, what we have always done.

Look at what Happy Watkins did to break open understanding, action and relationships—to change hearts and minds, to make a difference until making a difference made the difference that was needed, aware there was more to do.

Look at what James Watkins, his family and others in the community are doing, committing to carry on Happy's legacy of dreaming ridiculous dreams.

Look at what Carla Peperzak did as a teen in the resistance in the Netherlands and later in life, despite her discomfort, has done to educate school children about the Holocaust and genocide. Now look at what Clement Lye and Kristine Hoover are doing to record a documentary of her first-hand story of standing up to inspiration future generations.

Look at how Bob and Anita Dygert-Gearheart heard some podcasts and were awakened to the impact of climate change, enough so that they made changes in their own lives and then wrote a curriculum, "Wake Up, World!"

Look at what Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Pullman is doing, collecting offerings to share \$500 to \$800 with programs improving lives of people who live in the Palouse.

Look at Samantha Miller taking college students to a monastery or into the wilderness for a faith journey because her love of the "desert fathers and mothers" in the early Christian Church going into the wilderness when Christianity became the legal state religion of the empire.

Look at what Tony Stewart has done

through the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations to say no to hate in North Idaho, support efforts around the country and persist in a witness that makes a difference in the lives of so many people.

Look at Bon Wakabayashi still calling attention to the ongoing needs of her neighbors in North Spokane following the Oregon Rd. fire more than a year ago.

Look at how Adam Janes is combining his work as school band director with his church's outreach to the community—to provide instruments and a setting so younger students can begin in band because he knows music can open doors and opportunities.

Look at how Don and Ronda Gilger guide The Kroc Center in Coeur d'Alene as it provides swim lesson to keep children and elders safe, offers a counselor to school children and meets all sorts of other needs of low-income people in the community.

Look at how a team from the Post Falls 3rd Avenue Marketplace volunteered skills they have to help at N-Sid-Sen Camp and Conference Center on Lake Coeur d'Alene in exchange for a time and place for respite on the lake.

Look at words of Gretchen Rehberg, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, who was asked to offer reflection for the Columbia River Basin Transboundary Governance Symposium, read up and offered succinct understanding of the impacts of colonialism, the church's role, the possibility to repent and change, and with new awareness to be in solidarity

with the concerns of Indigenous people and local citizens to protect the watershed in these times.

Look at Charlotte and Da-Jin Sun who found a place in Idaho for a Daoist hermitage where people can come to learn practices that will strengthen their health through meditation, qigong, tai chi, herbs and organic foods. Charlotte previously shared Chinese health practices to revolutionize long-term care in the Bay Area.

In the previous issue we shared about Kassahun Kabede's library in Ethiopia, Kizuri's fair trade efforts, Gen Heywood's photographic exhibit, Hershel Zellman and Mary Noble's promotion of Holocaust and genocide education, Kate Burke's outreach to West Central youth, Dewy Bill's work to reconcile congregations and Native Americans, Tom's Turkey Drive's campaign to feed people and Nuns on a Bus.

We have shared many such stories of people caring and serving others over our more than 40 years of publishing.

Such stories are reasons to support The Fig Tree as we meet the challenges in such times as these. We can each find our niche in these times and any times to be in solidarity with each other, to care for those who are suffering or excluded, to persist in using our unique gifts to make a difference in lives, communities, regions, the nation and the world, because God calls us to live our faith in these times—in any times.

Loving God, loving neighbor and living in community with all of God's creation has never been easy, but it's our call.

Mary Stamp - editor

Reflection

Sounding Board

Commentary

Episcopal bishop reflects on the sacred waters of the Columbia Basin

Speaking at the Columbia River Transboundary Governance Symposium Nov. 23 and 24 at Gonzaga University, Bishop Gretchen Rehberg of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane offered a call to bear witness to "our passion for sacred waters."

I grew up outside of Pullman and spent long days along the rivers of our area. As a person of faith, and as one who grew up here and lives here now, I come here.

We thank you, God, for the gift of water. When we baptize someone in the Episcopal Church, we start by giving thanks for the gift of water. Over it, we say, the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation, through it, God led the children of Israel out of slavery, in it, Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit. We continue to thank God for water, for what it means to us today as we are washed, healed and restored to life. Water is sacred from the beginning and is sacred to this day.

Our sacred stories tell us that not only is water sacred, but also all of creation is as well, and that we are all interconnected, part of each other. In the first story of creation in Genesis, we hear God act every day and call it good, and only after everything is created, only after all are named and put in relationship one to another, does God say it is very good. In my tradition, humans are not called to be separated from the rest of creation. We are part of creation and called to be stewards of creation.

The challenge is that for too long many of us—those who are Christians and of Western European origin, for I will only speak for my own people—too many of us thought humans were given the rest of creation as a gift to do with whatever we wanted, took for granted that water and fish, soil and air, plants and animals would always be there for us. Too slowly we have come to see the harm we did when we took the word "steward" and changed

it to "owner."

A steward does not own, a steward only acts on behalf of another. We were invited to steward creation, to care for it and nurture it as God's own. Instead, we took it as ours. We lost the sacred connection we have to the land and waters, the fish, birds and animals, the soil and the plants. We lost that we are all one.

In the Episcopal Church and many others, we also have the means to change our ways. We confess our sins, lament our actions, repent and amend our life. At times, we have to do this over and over and over again.

We have as a church recognized our own complicity in the exploitation of our natural resources, and our need to work for justice, advocacy and education in areas of creation care, indigenous rights and climate change. The Episcopal Church repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery in 2009, the first to do so in the Christian world, rejecting that evil heresy that justified taking by violent means land that was already being stewarded. We have joined in the call for Indigenous peoples around the world to have the right of self-determination.

When I was a college student, from the Palouse going to college in Tennessee, I remember explaining that a big issue in local politics back home was water rights. It took me a long time to realize that the term "rights" with respect to water implied ownership and privatization. We took something freely given and sold it, offered it to corporations, fought over it and depleted it.

I don't want to romanticize a particular time or culture, humans have from the start fought over natural resources, especially when they seem scarce, but I wonder how life today would be different if we had used different language such as water stewardship, or as our scripture says, living water.

Living water, that which over, in and

through carries life. Life such as salmon, a beautiful creature in and of itself, not just a means of food for us, and a means of life for other parts of creation. From the eagle and bear to the first peoples and to today, salmon provides sustenance that carries life. The salmon is connected to all of us in ways beyond simply being sustenance. The salmon represents a way of life that is deeply connected and life giving.

I was taught that to care for the earth and water was the right thing to do. Later I came to know that care also meant thinking about how to sustain soil and water. Later, I have come to hear the call to talk about the relationship and reciprocity we have with all creation, soil and water, plants and animals, sea and sky.

To simply think about sustainable agriculture is still a mindset of taking, making sure we work in such a way that we can always take. Relationship and reciprocity invite us to a mindset that asks what do we give? What are we called to give the rivers and lakes, the sea and sky? What are we called to give to the soil, plants and animals?

How does our relationship be relational, not just one taking but also one giving. How do we understand we are to give to the salmon as much as we would take from them. We are not the owners of salmon, but we are in community with them.

As a follower of Jesus, I am called to pattern my life after the life of Christ, and to live my life in alignment with the call of God from the beginning of time. This life is not one of ownership. It is one of stewardship, working for the creator on behalf of the good of creation.

Our current world makes this difficult. We are removed from the natural world in many ways. We can simply purchase meat and fish in a store and never think how they came to be there. We allow corporations to buy access to water and then purchase water in plastic bottles. We

drive in cars that pollute the air over roads that don't allow the rain to replenish the earth. I am as guilty of this as anyone, for I live in this world, drive a car, shop at the market and at times buy a plastic bottle of water.

I also am committed to seeking the good of all—truly being in a relationship of reciprocity with all creation, I am committed in my faith to the life of a steward. As the bishop, part of my call is to invite my congregation, the members and the wider church to this vision of a kingdom of heaven which has springs of living waters, where justice flows like rivers and righteousness like an ever-flowing steam.

What can we do? The Episcopal Church invites members to active, intentional work to change this way of life, to care for all of creation, to be in partnership with our Indigenous siblings—not only to be in partnership but also to prioritize Indigenous voices in these matters.

The first peoples have cared for this land for generations and have much to teach us. Our call is to listen, learn, be humble in the face of our complicity in the harm we have done, repent and amend our life.

If at the end, U.S. and Canadian governments continue to perpetuate the idea that water is a commodity to be bought and sold, and have treaties that ignore the greater role of water, salmon, eagles and bear, that does not recognize the sovereignty of tribes and their role, we will continue to be colonizers, not stewards.

The Supreme Court has said justice is a shibboleth, a word that has no meaning. It can mean anything. It is good that we say what it means and are clear there can be no justice unless we right historic wrongs, unless we protect those who cannot speak for themselves and unless we provide for future generations.

Bishop Gretchen Rehberg
Episcopal Diocese of Spokane

Calendar of Events

Submit events to development@thefigtree.org by 3rd Friday before publication for print or online calendar
Area codes are (509) unless otherwise listed

- Dec • **Transitions Holiday Wish List**, drop off at 3128 N. Hemlock St., 328-6702, help4women.org/wish-list
- To Dec 9 • **Adopt-A-Family**, Spokane Tribe of Indians, matches families with gift donors, 606-2018, mariah.sherwood@spokanetribe.com
- To Dec 15 • **Nativity Fair**, St. Mary Presentation, 602 W. 6th, Deer Park, Sats 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Suns, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., M-F 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 279-2948
- By Dec 16 • **The Salvation Army**, drop off gifts for Adopt-a-Family, Angel Tree and Amazon Wish List, 325-6810, spokanechristmas@usw.salvationarmy.org
- Dec 2-22 • **Vanessa Behan Fundraiser & Santa Express**, Dec 2 Kick-Off Event, Grocery Outlet, 1617 W. 3rd, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 624-4222, downtownspokane@groceryoutlet.com; to Dec 22 Santa Express, holiday store benefits agency, Spokane Valley Mall, 5004 E. Sprague, 415-3506, santaexpress.org
- Dec 2-5 • **Spectrum Center Clothing Drive**, drop off clothing for Dec 22 Clothing Swap, 1514 N. Monroe, 2 to 6 p.m., info@spectrumcenterspokane.org
- Dec 3 • **Confronting Population Denial**, Gonzaga Institute for Climate, Water and the Environment, Zoom, 4 p.m., 313-3972
- Dec 3-5 • **Live Nativity**: Nativities from Around the World, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 14111 E. 16th, Veradale, 99037, 5:30 to 8 p.m., cjaer2@gmail.com
- Dec 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 • **Heartistry**: Artistic Wellbeing, Spark Central, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy, 3 to 5 p.m., 279-0299
- Dec 3, 10, 17 • **Spiritual Center Spokane Talk and Practice**, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 6 to 7 p.m., 405-3373, revbonnieb@spiritualcenter.org
- Dec 4 • **Fig Tree mailing and delivery**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9 a.m. to noon, 535-1813
- Dec 4-8 • **The Nutcracker with State Street Ballet**, 1001 W. Sprague, Sensory Friendly Performance, Wed 6 p.m., Regular: Th 7:30 p.m., Fri 7:30 p.m., Sat 3 and 7:30 p.m., Sun 3 p.m., 624-1200, foxtheaterspokane.org
- Dec 4, 11, 18, 25 • **Coffee and Conversation**, Central Library, nx?yx?yex Hall, 10:30 a.m. to noon
• **Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR)** Meeting, Saranac Commons, 19 W. Main, noon, scarspokane.org
- Dec 5 • **Fig Tree Development/Benefit meeting**, noon, and Board, 1 to 3 p.m., Zoom, 535-1813
- Dec 5-Jan 30 • **Winter Coat Distribution**, New Hope Resource Center, 411 E. Colbert, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Dec 6 • **Nonprofit Showcase**, Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce, CenterPlace, 2426 N. Discovery Pl, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., business.spokanevalleychamber.org/events
• **Day of Candles**, traditional Colombian food, light candles for peace, unity to start the holiday season, Latinos en Spokane, 1502 N. Monroe, 5 to 8 p.m., 558-9359
- Dec 6-7 • **Live Nativity**, New Life Church, 6068 W. Hayden, Rathdrum, Idaho, 9 p.m., (208) 687-3606, info@newlifeid.com
- Dec 6-8 • **Journey to Bethlehem**: outdoor interactive event, South Hill Adventist, 5607 S. Freya, Fri 6 to 8 p.m., Sat/Sun 4 to 7 p.m., 448-6425, info@jbspokane.org
- Dec 6, 7, 10, 12-14 • **For Unto Y'all a Country Christmas**, Old West Christmas Story: Bethlehem in the Wyoming, Northwoods Performing Arts Center, 3645 N. SR 211, Newport, 6:30 p.m., (208) 448-1294, director@northwoodsperformingarts.com
- Dec 6, 12, 19 • **Taizé Prayer**, Zoom, 4:15 p.m., bartletts@gonzaga.edu
- Dec 6-22 • **Need a Little Christmas**, Radio City Music-show Fri-Sat 7 p.m., Sat/Sun 3 p.m., (208) 667-1865, needalittlechristmas.com/coeur-d-alene.html
- Dec 7 • **How Saint Nicholas Became Santa**, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc@ihrc.net
• **Holiday Artist Studio Tour**, NW Museum of Arts and Culture, 2316 W. First, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., tour and reception, 456-3931, northwestmuseum.org
• **Christmas Party**, Filipino-American Assn, Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, 500 S. Stone, 508-7293
- Dec 7, 8 • **Candlelight Christmas Concert**, Myrtle Woldson Center, 211 E. Desmet, Sat 2 and 7:30 p.m., Sun 2 p.m., 313-4776, gonzaga.edu/music
• **Christmas Festival Concerts**, Whitworth University Music at St. John's Cathedral, Sat 7:30 p.m., Sun 3 p.m.
• **The Nutcracker**, University of Idaho Hartung Theater, 851 Campus Dr., Sat 2 to 3:30 p.m., 6 to 7:30 p.m., 888-884-3246, wa-idsymphony.org, givebutter.com/nutcracker24
- Dec 7, 14 • **Story Time and Photo with Black Santa**, Wishing Tree Books, 1410 E. 10th, 10:30 a.m.
- Dec 7, Jan 4 • **Eco-Anxiety Café**, 350 Spokane, Manito UMC, 3220 S. Grand, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 747-4755
- Dec 8 • **The JACC Holiday Concert**, CdA Brassx5, The Jacklin Arts & Cultural Center, 405 N. William, Post Falls, 2 p.m., (208) 457-8950, thejacklincenter.org
- Dec 8, 15, 22, 29 • **SCAR Coffee**, Saranac Commons, 9 a.m., scarspokane.org
- Dec 9 • **Children's Christmas Joy Clothing Drive** Shopping, Mission Community Outreach Center at

- Stevens Elementary, 1717 E. Sinto, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 536-1084, 4mission.org
- Dec 9-10 • **Drive Thru Living Nativity**, Amazing Grace Fellowship, 416 W. Betz, Cheney, Mon 6 to 9 p.m., Tues 5 to 9 p.m., cheneyag.org
- Dec 9, 23 • **Native Cultural Craft Nights**, American Indian Community Center, 1025 S. Indiana, 5 to 7 p.m., 535-0886, aiccinfo509@gmail.com, aiccinc.org
- Dec 11 • **Executive Director Coffee Hour**, Nonprofit Assn of Wa (NAWA), online, 9 to 10 a.m., nonprofitwa.org
• **Silent Day of Prayer** on Our Lady of Guadalupe: A Personal Encounter, Fr. Miguel Mejia, IHRC, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc@ihrc.net
• **A Christmas Carol**, Feed Spokane benefit, Spokane Civic Theatre, 1020 N. Howard, 6 p.m., 770-2202, admin@feedspokane.org, feedspokane.org
- Dec 12 • **Equity in Action**: Drafting Competitive Compensation Strategies for Nonprofits (NAWA), Common Good Vermont, online, 10 to 11 a.m., nonprofitwa.org
• **Holiday Remembrance Service**, Fairmount Memorial, Heritage Funeral and Pacific NW Cremation, 508 N. Government Wy, 6 to 7:30 p.m., RSVP to 838-8900, fairmountmemorial.com
- Dec 12-14, 16-19 • **Christmas Bureau**, Spokane County Fair and Expo Center, 404 N. Havana, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., christmasbureauspokane.org
- Dec 13-15 • **The Nutcracker**, Panida Theater, 300 N. First, Sandpoint, call for times, (208) 263-9191, panida.org
- Dec 14 • **Celebrating Christmas**, NIC Schuler Center, 880 W. Garden, CdA, (208) 769-7780, cdasympphony.org
• **Winter Tea Tasting & Bazaar**, Manzanita House, MLK Family Outreach Center, 500 S. Stone, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., ehughes@mhsppokane.org
• **Terrain's BrrrZAAR**, art market, River Park Square, 808 W. Main, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., 624-3945
• **Taste of Gingerbread**, The ISAAC Foundation, 606 W. Sharp, 1 to 4 p.m., 325-1515, theisaacfoundation.org
• **Youth Self-Care Summit**, for young women of color ages 11-17, ywcasppokane.org/summit
• **Festive Favorites**, Lilac City Voices Barbershop Chorus, St. Stephen's Episcopal, 5720 S. Perry, 7 to 9 p.m., 994-3016, lilaccityvoices.org
• **Clarion Brass**: This Is What Christmas Sounds Like, St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th, 7 to 9 p.m., 838-4277, figarotunes.com
- Dec 14, 21 • **Breakfast with Santa**, Southside Community Center, 3151 E. 27th, 9 a.m. to noon, eat-in or take out, photos with Santa, 535-0803 - needs "elves"
- Dec 14-15 • **Campana Sobre Campana Christmas**, Myrtle Woldson Center, 211 E. Desmet, Sat 7 p.m., Sun 2 & 7 p.m., 313-2787, gonzaga.edu/dance
- Dec 15 • **German Christmas Service**, Pastor Edwin Weber, with the Concordia Choir, St. Mark's Lutheran, 24th and Grand, 3 p.m.; coffee and cake following at Deutsches Haus, 25 W. 3rd, charlotte.shell@yahoo.com
- Dec 18 • **A Christmas Carol Benefit Performance** for Lutheran Community Services NW, Spokane Civic Theatre, 1020 N. Howard, 6 p.m., bit.ly/3YMXCVp
- Dec 19 • **Handel's Messiah Sing-a-Long**, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 3 p.m., 747-1058
• **Winter Solstice Worship**, St. David's Episcopal, 7315 N. Wall, 7 p.m., 466-3100
- Dec 19-22 • **Campbell House Holidays**, 2316 W. First, 12 to 4 p.m., 456-3931, northwestmuseum.org
- Dec 20 • **Sinto Senior Center Christmas Brunch**, 1124 W. Sinto, 11:30 a.m., 327-2861
• **City Gate Lunch**, 170 S. Madison, noon to 2 p.m., 455-9670
• **Winterfest**, dinner and activities, West Central Community Center, 1603 N. Belt, 5:30 to 7 p.m., 323-7517
- Dec 21 • **Victory Outreach Christmas Breakfast**, 1401 N. Monroe, 10 a.m. to noon, 413-1448
- Dec 22 • **Kingdom for Christ Ministries**, to-go meals, State St. and 2nd, 3 p.m., 558-1148
• **St. Ann's Catholic Lunch**, 2116 E. First, 1 to 2 p.m., 535-3031
- Dec 23 • **Christmas Breakfast**, Shalom Ministries, 518 W. Third, 7:30 to 9 a.m.
• **Off Broadway Lighthouse Hub**, food bank / dinner to go, 2225 W. Mallon, 2 to 4:30 p.m., 998-2630
- Dec 24 • **Greater Spokane County MOW Silver Cafés**, Clairview Senior Living, Hillyard Senior Center, Cheney UMC, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., 482-0803, mowgsc.org/silver-cafe-s
• **Union Gospel Mission**, sit-down family dinner (to-go for non-sober), 1224 E. Trent, 5 to 6:30 p.m., 535-8510
- Dec 25 • **Greater Spokane County MOW**, turkey dinner delivery to clients, sign up 924-6976
- Dec 27-Jan 3 • **A Christmas Labyrinth**, Chewelah Center for the Arts, 405 N. Third, 936-9333, chewelahcenterforthearts.com
- Dec 28 • **El Mercadito**, A.M. Cannon Park, 1920 W. Maxwell, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., latinosenspokane.org
- Dec 29 • **Taizé Prayer Service**, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr, 448-1224, ihrc@ihrc.net
- Dec 31 • **Spokane Symphony New Year's Eve**: 200th Anniversary. Beethoven's Ninth, The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, 7:30 p.m., 624-1200.
- Jan 2 • **Fig Tree Development/Benefit**, noon, and Board, 1 to 3 p.m., Zoom, 535-1813

United Way shared items for Winter Holiday events.
For details and more events see thefigtree.org/connections

C & H Foreign Auto Repair

E. 620 North Foothills Dr. Spokane, WA 99207
SCOTT M. CUSHMAN 487-9683 OR 484-5221

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Free admission invites you to Don't miss it
The Snowflake Faire!
Crafts • Gifts • Raffle Baskets • Goodies
Homemade chili, cornbread & pie - Lunch
Vendors & our famous **Treasure Trobe**
of lightly used household items, art & other great finds
Saturday, Dec. 7 - 9 am to 3 pm
St. Luke's - 501 Wallace - Coeur d'Alene
www.stlukesca.org

QUIERO FLAMENGO PRESENTS
GRADIENCE
BROUGHT TO YOU BY
KSPS PBS
January 10th, 2025 7:00pm
Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center





YOU CAN
Give her a home for the holidays
voaspokane.org/give




NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS
A Holiday Musical Celebration!
Radio City Music Hall Style Show
December 6 - 22, 2024
Kroc Center, Coeur 'd Alene




"LISTEN"
SPECIAL HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING
ALL SEASON LONG
More information at SpokanePublicRadio.org



SPOKANE PUBLIC RADIO
KPBX 91.1 | KSFC 91.9 | KPBZ 90.3
"Listen" - sculpture by Harold Balazs

Couple founded the Genesee Valley Daoist Hermitage 30 years ago

Thirty years ago, Charlotte Sun and her husband, Sun Da-Jin founded the Genesee Valley Daoist Hermitage on a six-acre farm, located 16 miles outside Moscow, Idaho.

Charlotte and Da-Jin live a simple life close to nature at the hermitage, a secluded residential center that draws a few people at a time from around the world to study.

There they practice and teach Daoist health preservation and healing skills, do daily qigong movement, breathing and meditation, and apply Daoist principles in their daily living.

Both also teach and still travel to China.

Daoism started about 2000 B.C. when the philosopher Laozi wrote down the basic precepts of Daoism.

Charlotte describes Daoism as more a philosophy to live life according to nature than a religion.

“Most people practice on their own, but we come together periodically to learn and share,” she said.

Helped only by students who stay at the hermitage, they do the work on their sustainable organic farm, providing food for their chang ming diet, which they share with the local community.

Charlotte and Da-Jin grow 80 percent of their own food and also grow food and herbs for the Moscow Food Co-op. For 20 years, they sold at the Moscow Farmers Market and to local restaurants. Da-Jin is a cook and prepares meals for up to 20 on many Sundays.

Their produce includes organic potatoes, beans, carrots, beets, lettuce, kale, chard, cucumber, zucchini, eggplant, green and red amaranth, daikon radish, eggplant, Chinese chives and green bamboo—known as Chinese lettuce.

“We use sustainable practices, such as adding ash from controlled burns to our soil,” she said.

The farm was settled by the Borgen family in the late 1800s. Because they used pesticides to grow wheat, barley and garbanzo beans, Charlotte and Da-Jin had to wait three years before their produce was considered organic.

Signs along the roadside say, “No spraying.”

“We are too small a farm to go through the expense and paperwork to be licensed as organic, but we have permission by a state program to call our produce organic,” she said. “We comply with organic growing practices and have trust from the community.”

“Chickens eat the food we eat in the summer and eat squash that



Charlotte and Da-Jin Sun in their home.

Photo by Chia-Chi Hu

we grow in the winter,” Charlotte said. “We sell their eggs.”

The Genesee Valley Daoist Hermitage provides a residential setting to study and practice Daoism. Daily life follows a schedule with time for practice, study, reading, resting and walking.

As far as Charlotte knows, it is the only residential center for Daoism in the U.S. since one in Colorado closed.

Charlotte, 84, said that she grew up feeling like an outsider in Totowa, N.J., a small town near New York City. Her parents were teachers there.

After high school, she decided to become a registered nurse and completed three years of study in New York City at St. Luke’s Hospital School of Nursing, affiliated with Columbia University. She continued studies there and graduated in 1966 with a degree in western psychology and nursing administration.

Charlotte moved to San Francisco, where she became a certified public health nurse and worked in geriatric care when Medicare just started.

Working in a long-term care facility and writing policies for elder care, she was concerned that “old people were warehoused—put in beds with catheters to stagnate.”

Charlotte “helped revolutionize long-term care” by getting people out of beds and dressed so they walked, exercised, did activities and ate well.”

She worked at a convalescent hospital, in home health and for long-term care facilities from 1970 to 1986. During those years, she earned a master’s degree in education at Holy Names College in Oakland and completed doctoral studies in philosophy and religion, particularly Daoism, at the Institute of Asian Studies—now the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco.

For her doctoral degree, she created her own program, studying Chinese language, history, herbs, taijiquan (tai chi) and

qigong at Hangzhou University in China.

Charlotte’s doctoral dissertation was on “Daoist Healing Practices in the Long-Term Care Setting.”

She shared what she was learning in China, both in teaching classes at several San Francisco Bay Area colleges and as administrator of five long-term care facilities in Vallejo, Calif.

“In those facilities, we called people residents, not patients. We encouraged them to meditate and do qigong, and we cooked meals with whole foods,” she said.

After completing the doctoral degree in 1985, Charlotte continued to do studies on Chinese health care, meditation and qigong at the Hangzhou Qigong Science Research Institute.

From 1988 to 1993, she directed a program she started on integral health studies at the Institute of Integral Studies. From 1989 to 1998, she also directed the Daoist Longevity Center in San Francisco.

“I found meaning that fit me outside western thought,” she said.

While studying and teaching in Hangzhou, she met Da-Jin at the Qigong Institute.

Da-Jin was born in Hangzhou in 1948 during the Communist Revolution. In his high school years, the Cultural Revolution began. He was sent to the countryside to do agricultural work. He injured his back and was told he might never walk. Da-Jin’s father brought a qigong master to work with him, and eventually he was able to walk again.

Da-Jin continued studies of gongfu (Kung Fu) physical and mental discipline and qigong under several masters. Then he taught it and became director at the Hangzhou Qigong Science Research Institute. He also taught as an adjunct faculty member at the California Institute of Integral Studies.

Before moving to Idaho, Charlotte and Da-Jin lived and worked in San Francisco and

Hangzhou. Their daughter, Sun-Hong, was born in China and raised by Da-Jin’s mother. She is now a registered nurse at the University of Washington Medical Center.

In March 1989, when visiting her sister in Moscow, Idaho, Charlotte and Da-Jin married. Because they met in China, they speak Chinese with each other, and she is his interpreter.

Charlotte, a Daoist nun in the 24th generation of the Dragon Gate School, was a disciple of Bao Zong-de in Dongyang, China. Since his death in 1992, she has continued the lineage.

In 1993, Charlotte and Da-Jin decided to move to Idaho and looked for a farm. In 1994, they opened the Genesee Valley Daoist Hermitage.

Charlotte’s mother moved to Moscow, where her sister and her husband worked and taught at the University of Idaho (UI). Charlotte has been a guest teacher at the UI, Washington State University and Lewis and Clark State College, and taught fundamentals of traditional Chinese medicine at the Moscow School of Massage.

“We grow traditional Chinese herbs for therapeutic use to treat people,” she said. “We also teach people to grow the Chinese herbs.”

Charlotte listed some of the

herbs and their purposes.

- Skull cap is an herbal antibiotic.
- Indigo leaves and roots treat colds, flu and COVID.
- Dandelion green poultice and dandelion tea treat cancer.
- Canadian thistle tea is used for cancer.

• Safflower oil on the skin relieves sprains and aches. Safflower tea improves circulation to relieve PMS and headaches.

“Garlic and onions that we grow are staples in our diet, along with vinegar and ginger—which we buy—to tone up our immune system and as antibiotics,” said Charlotte, explaining that most Indigenous cultures know medicinal use of herbs, but Chinese recorded the uses in writing.

“Western societies often consider these remedies as unscientific,” she said.

For the hermitage’s 30th anniversary, they held an educational event at the 1912 Center in Moscow. Of more than 50 who came, 15 former students traveled from the Bay area and Oregon.

Charlotte said she and Da-Jin have invited local younger people and students to serve on a hermitage succession committee to keep the center going.

For information, call 208-285-0123 or visit gvdaoisthermitage.org.

kizuri FAIR TRADE • HANDMADE • LOCAL

Curbside pickup, delivery and shipping available
35 W. Main, Spokane • 509-464-7677
www.kizurisokane.com

Express
 EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS

Respecting People. Impacting Business.™
 Owned by Susan and Ira Amstadter
 and now second generation Beverly Amstadter

30 years of serving Spokane helping area non-profits grow & prosper

“Give Her My Meal”

A Meals on Wheels Spokane volunteer, Rene, delivered emergency meals to Bev, a senior living in low-income housing.
 As he unpacked the food, he noticed an open bottle of ketchup on the floor. When Rene asked about it, Bev explained, “I eat that when I have nothing else.” At the next stop, Rene shared with his next client Bev’s situation. Moved to tears, she said, “You can give her my meal next time.”

These are the people we serve every day—seniors who, despite limited resources, continually inspire us with their strength, resilience and empathy. They remind us that sometimes those who have the least are the ones who give the most.

If you feel moved to volunteer, donate or learn more about the lifesaving work we do, please stop in or visit our website.

MOWspokane.org

Mid-City Concerns Senior Center 509-456-6597
 1222 W. 2nd Avenue
 Spokane, WA 99201

MEALS ON WHEELS SPOKANE

think globally.
 eat locally.

Feast
 WORLD KITCHEN

Learn more and order takeout:
feastworldkitchen.org

STRONGER TOGETHER

Aging doesn’t have to mean losing independence.

One number connects you to all the services you need to age at home... **help starts here.**

509.960.7281
ALTCEW.ORG

Aging & LONG TERM Care
 OF EASTERN WASHINGTON