

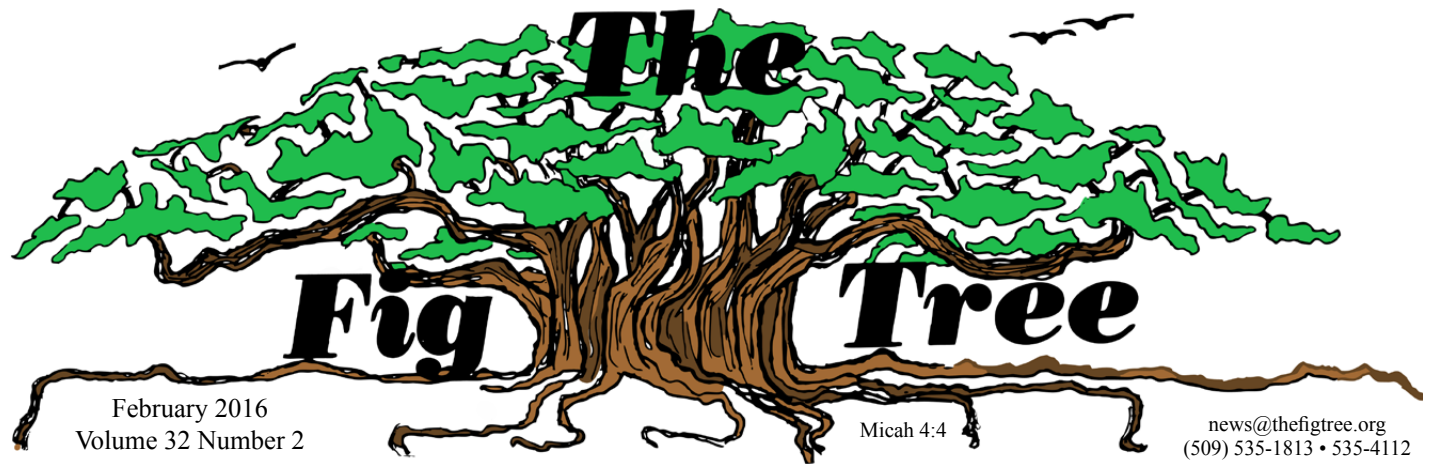
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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest online at www.thefigtree.org • check The Fig Tree Facebook page daily for news and links

Community curious about Islam

By Mary Stamp

More than 300 people, the largest group to attend one of the Spokane Interfaith Council's "Meet the Neighbors" events, gathered Jan. 19 at the Spokane Islamic Center to learn about the Muslim faith, community and concerns.

It was the third session as part of a "six-month journey through Spokane's religious communities."

The first one was visiting the Jewish synagogue Dec. 3 at Temple Beth Shalom and the second was Dec. 16 at the Sikh Temple (Gurdwara) of Spokane in Spokane Valley.

The next one will be from 2 to 4 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 27, at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Cultures, 2316 W. First Ave., to learn about Native American faith, spirituality, practices and culture.

Skyler Oberst, president of the Spokane Interfaith Council, said the goal is to bring people together to learn about their neighbors and their neighbors' faiths.

The council worked several months with the Islamic Center's board.

Opening the event, Skyler introduced Sara Brody, a Presbyterian, who presented the Spokane Islamic Center with a copy of a letter cir-



Muslim leaders in Spokane welcome crowd of people interested in learning about Islam.

culated online by Groundswell, a nonprofit that empowers people to reduce energy use. The letter, signed by 25,000 faith leaders, expresses concern that hate speech today incites fear of and violence against Muslims.

The letter said, "America is not America without Muslims. As people of faith and moral conscience, we promise to defend our Muslim brothers and sisters from attack, to speak up when they are maligned, and to support them with our voices, our actions and our bodies."

"When they come for any member of our community, they come for all of us," they said, appalled that thousands cheer bigotry in the "rantings of a politician."

Recognizing that Muslim people are afraid and concerned about their safety, the faith leaders said, "we must not allow fear to undermine the values that stand at the core of who we are as faith leaders and Americans."

"You are our neighbors"—doctors, merchants, school board presidents, restaurant owners, soccer coaches, policewomen, public officials, mothers, fathers, caregivers, and "allies and colleagues

Continued on page 4

Spokane Alliance and partners celebrate city passing leave policy

After three years of organizing, research and collaboration, the Spokane Alliance celebrated the Spokane City Council passing of an earned sick and safe leave policy in the city.

The Alliance, a group of congregations, unions, school and community groups, worked with more than 30 businesses for several years advocating for the policy. It also worked in collaboration with Fuse Washington.

The Spokane Alliance commended the council members who voted for and passed this policy, "which will improve the lives

and health of tens of thousands of people in Spokane," said Carol Krawczyk, lead organizer for the Spokane Alliance.

More than 180 people came to the Council Chamber in support of the ordinance. Of the 52 testifying about the policy, 40 were in favor.

Many shared stories that represented an array of perspectives and groups, such as military veterans, domestic abuse survivors and advocates, teachers, parents, business owners, nonprofits, and service workers, Carol said.

Health care providers also shared why this is a victory for

personal and public health.

"When my patients are sick, I advise them to stay home, but so often I hear that they can't afford to, because of a lack of paid leave. This decision means that more people—especially the most vulnerable members of our community—will be better able to take care of themselves and their loved ones without risking their economic security," said Bill Lockwood, a Spokane physician.

Rebecca Moffitt, a single mother with two young children, told of offering the benefit as a business owner, losing the benefit as an employee and feeling guilt sending her children to school sick because she couldn't afford to miss work.

Numerous small business owners spoke in support of a five-day sick and safe leave policy, including Brent Hendricks with Global Neighborhood, who knows it's the right thing to do and helps his business succeed by improving employee morale and productivity, and reducing turnover.

For information, call 638-7555 or visit fusewashington.org.

Environmental justice retreat planned at camp

N-Sid-Sen Camp and Retreat Center on Lake Coeur d'Alene in Idaho will host an Environmental Justice Workshop Wednesday to Friday, March 9 to 11 to train participants to teach classes in their own congregations.

The train-the-trainer program will look at how people of faith can work for environmental justice and help create a sustainable, healthy and inclusive community.

It will explore these questions to empower conversations and actions around environmental justice beyond the workshop, said Meighan Pritchard, environmental justice curriculum trainer for the national United Church of Christ (UCC). She is also half-time pastor at Prospect UCC in Seattle. For two years, she was minister of environmental justice for the national UCC.

Participants explore a faith-based approach to environmental justice: gratitude, humility, responsibility, justice and community. Each theme includes biblical readings, selections from the video, "Renewal," insights from respected leaders and study questions.

"We will look at water management practices in urban and rural settings with Janet Torline of the Kootenai Environmental Alliance in Coeur d'Alene," said Meighan.

The session will also address working through environmental despair to build communities based on hope, developing strategies and activities for participants' communities, and creating plans for participants to lead workshops.

"Renewal" includes stories of Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities of faith responding to environmental issues in their communities," she said.

For information, call 208-689-3489 or visit n-sid-sen.

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Refugee conference calls for more coordination

A high-level World Council of Churches/United Nations conference on the refugee crisis in Europe held Jan. 18 to 19 at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, underlined the need for urgent action to strengthen coordination and cooperation in Europe's response to the refugee and migrant crisis.

Representatives of governments, UN agencies and civil society, including churches and faith organizations issued a statement, "Europe's Response to the Refugee Crisis, from Origin to Transit, Reception and Refuge, a Call for Shared Responsibility and Coordinated Action."

The conference was hosted by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and co-sponsored by UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund; UNFPA, the UN Population Fund, and UNHCR, the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The conference focused on commitments to strengthen coordinated responses to the crisis, including the implementation of migration and integration policies, and the creation of adequate mechanisms for orderly and safe refugee and migrant movements across Europe.

While the majority of refugees and migrants have fled countries gripped by conflict, violence, persecution and hardship, responses of European governments have varied from compassionate and generous hospitality, to resumption of border controls, push back and raising fences.

"The European countries and people must live up to their humanitarian values and standards reflected in commitments to international conventions. This must be evident in a crisis for so many refugees who are coming to Europe or who are already in Europe," said the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC general secretary.

"To be human is to have the ability to hope. Faith in God is a hope that the present reality can change to something better, change through actions of love. The refugees themselves need to know that we provide them signs of hope," he continued.

Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF special coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe, said: "The refugee and migrant crisis in Europe is a children's crisis. Of the one million people who crossed the Mediterranean last year, more than one in four was a child. Since September, in southeastern Europe, this proportion has risen to one in three. Faith-based organizations are critical partners to governments and to UN agencies, such as UNICEF, in the response to the crisis in countries of origin, countries where people are on the move, and countries of destination. We must protect children as they arrive in Europe, working together to make our societies inclusive. This call to action for shared responsibility and coordinated action is both timely and essential."

Alfonso Barragues, human rights advisor, UNFPA, said: "UNFPA has an important role in this discussion, which is to give a voice to vulnerable women and adolescent girls, who are powerless and who suffer from the refugee crisis in a particular way. Faith-based organizations are in a unique place to challenge social norms and discriminatory attitudes. Therefore, this is a natural partnership for us."

During the conference, representatives offered facts, figures, and testimonies from their own experiences and perspectives on the refugee and migrant crisis in the countries of origin, transit and reception.

In a keynote address to the conference, Thomas de Maizière, Minister of the Interior of the Federal Republic of Germany, underlined that managing the global refugee crisis is not the task of government policy-makers alone, nor only the task for the governments in the European countries receiving refugees and migrants.

"The extraordinary political, social and humanitarian challenges raised by the refugee crisis show that government, civil society, business and also churches have a shared responsibility," he said.

The final statement from the conference was issued on Jan. 20 and is at www.oikoumene.org under the press center reports.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Fig Tree focuses on benefits, directory updates

Uplifting The Fig Tree's commitment to communicate among the diverse people of the region, the theme speakers will address at the 2016 Benefit Lunch and Benefit Breakfast will be "Reflecting Diversity."

The Benefit Lunch buffet will open at 11:30 a.m., Friday, March 11, with the program from noon to 1 p.m.

The Benefit Breakfast buffet will begin at 7 a.m., Wednesday March 16 with the program from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Usually the breakfast has been the same week (before) the lunch, but this year organizers decided to hold it the following week, which is after the Gonzaga University spring break, so people from the Gonzaga community can participate.

"We have nearly 30 table hosts for each event, but still could use a few more," said Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp.

The Fig Tree has been raising nearly \$30,000 through the two events, with a goal of \$50,000 to

cover capacity building costs.

Invitations are being mailed Wednesday, Feb. 2. That mailing will include forms for congregations and some of the community agencies in the region to update their listings for the 2016-17 annual Resource Directory.

It is also possible for those listed in the directory to email updates to resourcedirectory@thefigtree.org.

To host a table or RSVP for the benefits, call 535-1813 or 535-4112, or email info@thefigtree.org.

PJALS organizes peace, justice conference

The Peace and Economic Justice Action Conference will be Friday and Saturday, Feb. 26 and 27, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr.

The feature will be a panel discussion from 1 to 2:30 p.m., Saturday, on "40 Years of Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) Leadership."

There will be three education-action workshop sessions with a

choice of seven workshops.

Workshops in the first session will be on housing justice, non-violent communication, dismantling white supremacy, postwar pedagogy, criminal justice reform, heroes' narrative, military recruitment and challenging oppressive statements.

The second session topics are a new local economy, beloved community, reproductive justice,

love and outrage, criminal justice system, indigenous communities and solidarity with Muslims.

Workshops in the third session are on food justice, reconciliation through arts, naming racism, breaking the school to prison pipeline, fund raising, government transparency and police accountability.

For information, call 838-7879 or visit pjals.org/2016conference.

Winter Waters event honors Bishop Skylstad

"Advancing Ethics for Rivers" is the theme for Winter Waters 2016 at 5:30 p.m., Friday, March 4, at the Patsy Clark Mansion, 2208 W. 2nd Ave.

The event will honor Bishop William Skylstad as a "watershed hero" for his leadership in advancing ethical decision making for rivers and his role with the Northwest Catholic Bishops in developing the

2001 pastoral letter, "The Columbia River Watershed: Caring for Creation and the Common Good."

The letter urges responsibility for and awareness of environmental problems in the watershed. It challenges political and economic divisions related to salmon recovery and dam management.

"The letter serves as a basis for our work on the Ethics and Columbia River Treaty Project that uses the Columbia River,"

said John Osborn, of the Upper Columbia River Group of the Sierra Club. "It also has helped advance efforts in Canada and the U.S. to modernize the Columbia River Treaty based on stewardship and justice."

The event raises funds for advocacy by the Sierra Club chapter and the Center for Environmental Law and Policy.

For information, call 939-1290 or email john@waterplanet.ws.

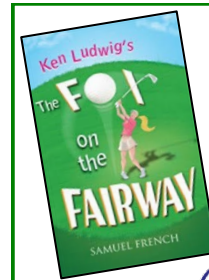
St. Mark's offers Jazz Mass Feb. 9

The Rev. Mindy Smith, campus minister at Whitworth University, will be the preacher for the 2016 Jazz Mass at 7 p.m., Shrove Tuesday, Feb. 9 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 316 E. 24th.

Dan Keberle, professor at Whitworth University's Music Department and director of the Whitworth Jazz Ensemble, will lead the Jazz Orchestra and St. Mark's Choir.

The tradition of Shrove Tuesday is to feast on fat things before the lean weeks of Lent, said Eric Dull, pastor at St. Mark's.

For information, call 747-6677 or email psover@stmarks-spokane.org.



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Featuring:

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Dr. Robert Hostetter**

**February 11
7:00 pm**

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

Deadlines:

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

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KSPS honors Carl Maxey with two events

KSPS Public Television is honoring the life and legacy of Carl Maxey with two events, a panel discussion and the premiere of the film, "Carl Maxey: A Fighting Life," based on the book by Jim Kershner.

Orphaned at five, Maxey made a national name for himself, first as an NCAA championship boxer at Gonzaga University, then as Eastern Washington's first prominent black lawyer and a renowned civil rights attorney who always fought for the underdog.

The premiere screening is from 6:30 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 18, at the Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague.

The panel discussion on "Civil Rights in Washington: The Post-Maxey Era Public Forum," moderated by Jim Kershner, will be at 10 a.m. that day at the Gonzaga Law School's Court Room.

Panelists are Emily Chiang, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington from the Harvard Law School; Raymond Reyes, associate academic vice-president and chief diversity officer at Gonzaga University; Jason Gilmer, associate dean for faculty research and development, and professor of law at the Gonzaga School of Law, and Dwayne Mack, associate professor of history at Berea College. For information, visit <http://www.ksp.org/community/maxey-doc/>.

African American history lecture set

Dwight Hopkins will give an African American History Month Lecture on "What Is a Christian Black Theology of Liberation?" at 7 p.m., Monday, Feb. 8, in Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth University.

Dwight, professor of theology at University of Chicago Divinity School and term professor at the University of South Africa, will link the rise of black liberation theology to the Bible, and to Jesus, justice and race. For information, call 777-4215 or email lburnley@whitworth.edu.

Lecture on Christian humanism planned

Gregory Wolfe, founder and editor of Image Journal and advocate of Christian humanism, will give a lecture at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 10, in the Lied Center for the Visual Arts at Whitworth University. He is writer-in-residence at Seattle Pacific University. His books include *Beauty Will Save the World: Recovering the Human in an Ideological Age* and *Intruding Upon the Timeless: Meditations on Art, Faith, and Mystery*. For information, call 777-3252 or email tcarrow@whitworth.edu.

'The Inconsolable Voter' is theme for lecture

Anita Perez Ferguson, an educator in program management and the development of leadership and advocacy skills, will present a lecture on "The Inconsolable Voter," at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 16, in Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth.

She was a visiting fellow for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and a specialist for the U.S. Department of State's Office of International Information Programs. She co-wrote *Women Seen and Heard*. For information, call 777-4371 or email kkarr-cornejo@whitworth.edu.

Journalist discusses books on Palestinian issues

Ramzy Baroud, a Palestinian-American journalist, author and syndicated columnist, will speak on his books at 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 19, at Auntie's Bookstore, 402 W. Main. One is *My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story*. His latest is *The Second Palestinian Intifada*. Ramzy earned a doctorate of philosophy in Palestine studies from the European Center for Palestinian Studies at the University of Exeter in Southwest England. He will discuss the plight of Palestine and its decades of occupation. For information, call 891-8545.

Second Harvest's Kitchen offers cooking nights

Free Community Cooking Nights will be held from 5 to 7:30 p.m., Wednesdays in February and March at The Kitchen at Second Harvest, 1234 E. Front. Classes will cover scratch cooking skills and apply those skills to simple, healthful and cost-effective meals. Recipes are based on what is available through county food banks. For information, call 252-6246 or email jandy.l.doak@2-harvest.org

Habitat for Humanity partners with Project Restoration on six assistance areas

With the support of community volunteers and donors, another low-income family achieved the dream of homeownership through Habitat for Humanity as part of Habitat-Spokane's Project Restoration in THEZONE Project.

A simple, decent, affordable home was built for Jack Santos' family at 525 S. Fiske St. He did the 500 hours of sweat equity, saved for his closing costs and attended homebuyer readiness training.

"Project Restoration fits Habitat-Spokane's mission of serving Spokane families through affordable housing solutions," said Michelle Girardot, CEO of Habitat-Spokane. "The partnership will rehab or repair vacant homes, restoring them to be safe, decent and affordable for low-to-moderate income families."

A shared vision of a thriving Northeast Spokane drives cross-sector collaboration. Project Restoration's team takes vacant homes and turns them into opportunities for students to gain skills, and for community organizations to do their missions.

Project Restoration can lead to better outcomes in education, health, housing and economic growth while discouraging crime," said Andre Wicks, director of THEZONE Project.

THEZONE Partnership Network includes Habitat as the anchor organization, Youth Build, the City of Spokane, Spokane Public Schools and the Inland Northwest AGC Apprenticeship Programs. The project is a comprehensive, cross-sector collaborative approach to create a sustainable, thriving community.

The project focuses on results in six goal areas—education, health, housing, safety, resident engagement, and economic growth and job development.

It's focused in Northeast Spokane where high poverty, crime and unemployment rates create barriers to the community thriving, said Andre.

About 250 people from more

than 75 organizations committed more than 2,500 work hours to create and begin implementing THEZONE Project.

Members of THEZONE Partnership Network are preparing a proposal for a Promise Zone, a federal designation to bring access to coordinated resources, technical assistance, tax incentives and other benefits.

In Spokane, Habitat for Humanity has built 265 new homes and housing solutions, empowering low-income residents to move from poverty to homeownership. Mortgages are repaid with a zero-percent interest loan, making homeownership possible.

For information, call 534-2552 or visit www.habitat-spokane.org.

Concert to help nursing student

The Spokane Ministers' Fellowship is presenting a musical concert at 4 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 21, at Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, 806 W. Indiana.

The concert will raise funds so Bryn Martin-Williams of Spokane can complete studies in nursing at Seattle University's College of Nursing. Bryn graduated from the University of Washington with a bachelor's degree in public health with a minor in Spanish to help her serve diverse patient

populations.

Her work at a Starbucks in Seattle Children's Hospital led to a Certified Nursing Assistant position, intensifying her belief that nursing is her calling.

Happy Watkins, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church; Ezra Kinlow, pastor at Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, and Ivan Bush, retired educator, are organizing the concert.

For information, call 534-9071 or email ifbush@aol.com.

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Community learns about and makes friends at Spokane Islamic Center

Continued from page 1
in movements for justice," they wrote. "You are us."

Signers hope for a future where racism, hate and violence are relics of the past, and where differences are celebrated.

Skyler then said he had done research and found that Muslims have been in the region for generations, many drawn to study at area universities. In the 1950s, Muslim students and faculty at Gonzaga University and Eastern Washington University (EWU) met. They formed the Spokane Islamic Center, which now serves more than 1,100 of the Muslims in the area.

Skyler introduced Mamdouh El Aarag, a member of the Spokane Islamic Center board.

Mamdouh looked out on the crowded room and said, "It moves my heart to see you here. This is the America I love. This is the America that stands against hate, that lives in love and mercy."

He read a verse from the Quran that says God created all humankind from one person.

"God is all knowing," he said, pointing out that God created people with many different languages, nations, tribes, cultures and colors.

He explained that Muslims who decided to stay in Spokane after college first bought a house in North Spokane in 1979 as a prayer hall. It became crowded, as did the meeting spaces at Gonzaga and EWU.

"We decided to build a central facility for all Muslims. With contributions of Muslims, we built the Spokane Islamic Center in 2008 at 6411 E. Second Ave. as a place for us to practice and grow in understanding our Muslim faith," Mamdouh said.

Muslims gather there for religious, social and educational activities—daily prayers, Friday midday prayers, a Wednesday study, Sunday school and youth activities. It is also used for holy days, weddings and funerals.

Mamdouh said there are four types of people among the 5,000 Muslims in the region: immigrants and refugees born outside the United States, their children, converts and international students.

"I enjoy the diversity of the people, languages and cultures," he said. "We are stronger together."

Muslims here come from Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Croatia, England, Egypt, Gambia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Kashmir, Kenya, Libya, Morocco, Nigeria, Palestine, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Senegal, Singapore, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United States and Yemen, according to the website.

"We love the United States," said Mamdouh, who came from Palestine to the U.S. in 1982 and to Spokane in 1986 as a civil engineering student at Gonzaga University. After graduating, he worked as an environmental engineer.

While many students return to their homelands, others stay. Some don't have a country to go back to.

While Mamdouh said he has not experienced bigotry, his wife, who wears a scarf, has, and his children have been picked on because they look different and have different names. They use incidents as opportunities to educate.

Mamdouh then answered questions.

Why do Muslims use Arabic?

It is the language in which God revealed the Quran over 23 years to the Prophet Mohammed. Muslims need to know enough Arabic to be able to pray a few easy words.

What type of Muslims are here?

Most Muslims here are Sunni, which means "the way of the Prophet." Sunni are open to all. Shia, a minority of Muslims, have different sects, he said.

What is most important to you about your faith?

"The most beautiful thing about Islam is its simplicity. It's a way of life. We connect with the Creator as we prostrate ourselves in prayer," he said.

How do you handle talk about banning Muslims from entering the United States as refugees?

"This is how," he said, gesturing to the gathering.

Then Kawkab Shishani, a member of the Islamic Center and Washington State University nursing professor, added, "I have a passion to bring people together. We need to ask each other what we believe to gain knowledge and be empowered. I believe we are to love everything around us, people, plants and animals."

What is the role of Muslim women?

Kawkab said: "I've been practicing since I was a child in Jordan in the 1970s. My family encouraged me to be educated and be myself. Women can be whoever and whatever we want to be. As a woman of faith, I go to the source and learn my responsibilities and rights. If women do not know our rights, we will not fight for them."

How does Islam relate to Judaism and Christianity?

Mamdouh said: "Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael.

From Isaac, came Judaism and Christianity. From Ishmael, came Islam. We are cousins in faith. We share many beliefs."

How do Muslims approach infidels? Not all the verses in the Quran are about love and mercy. How do you have one book with different meanings?

Mamdouh said that some people who claim to be Muslim, Christian or Jewish may be bad, but the message of these three faiths is love, peace and forgiveness. It's important to understand a verse based on the context of when, why and where it was revealed and for what purpose.

Kawkab added, "Muslims also fear terrorists. Hundreds of mosques have been destroyed. A few people hijack the faith to implement what they want. Their actions mean the world misunderstands us. It's frustrating."

What are some practical ways we can walk together?

Skyler said that it's important to remember "we are community

beyond our spiritual, faith or political communities."

Saying that his Christian faith calls him to love unconditionally, he called for people to share each other's sorrows, trials and joys, and to come to events like Meet the Neighbors, so "we will not be strangers."

Skyler encouraged people to make new friends, meet for coffee and recognize common bonds in their choice to live in Spokane.

For information, call 360-989-8217 or visit spokaneifc.org.

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Upcoming Programs

<p style="text-align: center;">From Ashes to New Life</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A Lenten Reflection Day</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Saturday, Feb. 20, 2016 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Retreat Facilitator: <i>Sr. Patricia Novak, OSF</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Suggested Donation \$30 includes simple soup and salad lunch</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Soul Collage Workshop with Colleen Russell</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Saturday, March 12, 2016</p> <p>Nourish your soul and learn more about yourself in this creative workshop! Soul Collage uses a process of imagination, and intuition to explore your life's own unique story.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$49.00/per person <i>Materials will be furnished</i></p>
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Film festival at Whitworth features three films

The eighth annual Leonard A. Oakland Film Festival will feature Whitworth alumni filmmakers, an international film and an evening on faith and film led by Matthew Rindge, professor of religious studies at Gonzaga University.

The showings at 7 p.m., Saturday to Monday, Feb. 20 to 22, will be in Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth University.

Alumni Ryan Graves, 2011, and Kelly McCrillis, 2009, will show their feature-length film, "Emily," on Saturday.

The film is about daily struggles of a young married couple in Portland, Ore.: career anxieties, finding time for friends and being there for family. When Nathan suffers a faith crisis, their marriage collapses. He struggles to find himself and remain the husband Emily married. Meanwhile, her faith is challenged as she questions what it means to stay true to her husband.

The Sunday film, "Ida," is about Anna, a young novitiate nun in 1960s Poland. She is on

the verge of taking her vows when she discovers a family secret from the Nazi occupation.

Matthew will speak on Monday on his book, *Profane Parables: Film and the American Dream* and will introduce the film, "Fight Club," which is about an insomniac office worker, looking for a way to change his life. He crosses paths with a devil-may-care soap maker, forming an underground fight club.

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New pastor rebuilds congregation, leads African-American community

Shaped in the 1960s by the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, by fires and race riots in cities, and the election of Carl Stokes as the first African-American mayor in Cleveland 30 miles east of his hometown, Lorain, Ohio, Walter Kendricks is inspired by how the United States has moved from where it was in 1956 to where it is today.

He remembers when not everyone could drink out of the same water fountain or sit at the same lunch counter, but today people are more able to go where they want to go when they want to go.

Walter brings a lesson of hope to Spokane, where he has been pastor of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church since August 2013 and was recently elected to succeed Roberta Wilburn as president of the Spokane Ministers' Fellowship.

He also recently connected that fellowship with the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center, helping organize the first Prayer Breakfast on Jan. 9 to help the center launch its funding campaign for a new facility.

He also was the preacher for the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Celebration Service, held Jan. 18 at Morning Star.

At the breakfast, Walter spoke of the power of dreams of equality and equal access to health care, education, jobs and legal services.

He spoke of everyday dreams of children, a child by his mother's bedside dreaming of becoming a doctor to cure cancer, a child hearing an airplane fly over and wanting to be an astronaut, as did the late Michael Anderson, whose family is at Morning Star Baptist.

His church of humble means pledged \$1,200 to help build a new and larger Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center to nurture children's dreams.

That's \$100 a month or \$25 a week, Walter said, challenging other churches in the fellowship and community to match that pledge to help reach the \$3 million cost to build a new facility.

At the commemorative service, he said that Martin Luther King Jr. was no average man. "He shook the consciousness of a nation and led a nonviolent protest, asking the nation to live up to words in one of its most treasured documents," that "all men are created



Walter Kendricks makes community connections.

equal" and are "given certain rights by their Creator—acknowledging there is a Creator—inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Walter said that when "God became tired that millions were denied those rights for years, God sent a man who would answer God's call. Throughout history, God has sent men and women when people have gone astray."

Walter said God called Martin, as God calls "all of us," and Martin, a "young, charismatic, eloquent and learned Baptist preacher," answered God's call.

God called him to face "the modern-day Pharaoh, who went by the name poll tax, Jim Crow laws and segregation," Walter said. "God chose what the world would deem as foolish, a small in stature, dark-skinned man, to put to shame the wise, as God chooses weak things of the world, to put to shame the mighty.

"Martin was a nobody God chose to lead a group of nobodies," people many considered subhuman, Walter said. "God pricked the conscience of a nation, even though it took the murder of some, even though dogs were set upon people as they marched peacefully in the street, and even though water hoses were turned on them full force. God, because a man answered his call, brought to nothing the things that were."

Walter expressed gratitude "as we gaze through the prism of time" for King—for his service, his sacrifice, his witness and his labor. "We are thankful he answered the call that was issued to many before him for a specific purpose in a specific time."

In a recent interview, Walter shared his background, his vision for his church and his involvements in the community.

The son of a Baptist pastor, Walter started studies at Ohio State in Columbus in 1976, but was drawn into work with United Airlines from 1977 to 2012 as ramp serviceman. He worked in Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, Denver and Seattle, where he came in 1989. In 2012, he decided to leave United Airlines, because he found the secular workplace and work schedule wearing, discouraging a religious lifestyle.

In 1994, Walter accepted the call to ministry and, in 1997, he was ordained to do prison ministry through the Martin Luther King Memorial Baptist Church in Renton.

While serving Eastside Baptist Church in Tacoma from 2005 to 2013, he graduated from Faith Evangelical Seminary in Tacoma in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in religious studies.

In August 2013, Arthur Banks, the pastor of Eastside assigned him to the vacant pulpit at Morning Star Baptist Church in Spokane, with a call to rebuild the ministry there.

"I knew something was up. It had no website or Facebook page," Walter said.

His first sermon was the first Sunday of November 2013. When he moved to Spokane in December, the office phone and internet did not work, and the boiler heated only part of the church. He set to work getting them functioning.

The church has grown from under 30 members to nearly 60. There was no youth program, but

now there is a teen choir. While most attending are African American, there are also many white people, rich and poor.

Walter's focus is on preaching and teaching the Word. In January 2014, he started a Bible study, with John 1:1. The group is walking piece-by-piece through John, expecting to finish it in 2016.

As he continues to do prison ministry in Spokane, he tells prisoners that God forgives them, but they still need to pay the penalty for what they did.

He also calls on society and churches to care about people when they are out of prison. To transition the prison population, especially African Americans, there is need for jobs, education or health care.

"I ask Morning Star how it relates church to society, how it perceives God, how it relates to prisoners, homeless, elderly, sickly and shut ins. How we as a church relate to people in all situations is how we relate to God," Walter asserted. "As we do to the least, we do to Jesus."

Walter promotes caring and community involvement.

Morning Star now has a cloth-

ing ministry, Tabitha's Closet, which offers free, gently used clothing for men, women and children from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturdays and from 2 to 4 p.m., Wednesdays.

Walter is active in the NAACP Spokane, in addition to the Spokane Ministers' Fellowship.

Morning Star recently had a joint worship service with New Vision Lutheran Church nearby.

"Churches should come together," he said. "We need to learn about each other so Sunday is no longer the most segregated day of the week. We worship the same God."

Morning Star has also reached out to other churches.

"Spokane is on the cutting edge of race relations in work with the police and city to change attitudes and build understanding about the diverse community here," Walter said. "The NAACP Spokane and city are working together to address issues and inequities.

"Black people want the same things as all people—jobs, homes, family and being left to live their lives," he said.

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Silver Valley woman leads challenge to lead contamination in area

By Kaye Hult

Concerned about people in the Silver Valley living with lead poisoning for generations, then being intimidated, shouted down and discouraged from addressing their living conditions, Barbara Miller came home 30 years ago as a community organizer.

In 1986, Idaho Fair Share received a grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development to address the devastation in the Silver Valley through grassroots organizing.

Through her leadership of the Silver Valley Community Resource Center (SVCRC) in Kellogg, she helps people address conditions that affect residents' lives and health.

"We're entitled to pursuit of happiness and freedom of speech, and people here are willing to work to improve their lives," she said.

She heads this effort to clean up the Bunker Hill Superfund site and the Coeur d'Alene Basin, and to bring adequate health care to the Silver Valley in the form of a Community Lead Health Clinic/Center.

Many who rely on tourism in the region downplay the toxic waste. Barbara and those with whom she labors, however, continue to work for environmental justice and health care related to lead poisoning. She also works for decent housing, care for the homeless and economic development in a seriously depressed area.

The 21 square miles of the Bunker Hill site were placed on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Priority List in 1983.

The area had a 30 percent unemployment rate. It had been designated the second largest Superfund site in the nation. Generations of people dealt with chronic health issues from poisoning from lead and other heavy metals.

"This isolated company town had no help for people, who were being deceived about what was going on with their lives. The grant put me here to find the cause of the conditions," she said. "I spent six months talking to people to determine how they wanted to improve the quality of life here. They accepted the outreach, the grant and my ability to bring them together."

The SVCRC participants include church leaders, unions, social justice advocates, local people, social service groups and a network of health professionals and environmental justice representatives.

In 2000, the EPA extended the boundaries of the Superfund site



Barbara Miller visits contaminated site near Cataldo Mission.

to include 1,500 more square miles. The Coeur d'Alene Basin site runs from the Montana border into Eastern Washington, following the Coeur d'Alene River into Lake Coeur d'Alene and then into the Spokane River.

Stacks of paper cover every bookcase, desktop and table in the resource center's office, detailing years of work to make the EPA live up to its directive to clean up the site.

Major tomes describe studies of the environmental impact of the pollution and how best to clean it up. Newspaper articles and records detail SVCRC actions over the years, and the push-back and threats they have received.

The SVCRC has focused on four priorities: 1) to shut down the repositories, especially at East Mission Flats (EMF); 2) to replace them with permanent waste technology; 3) to fund a Community Lead Health Center, and 4) to employ community people to do this.

The EPA chose to place the EMF repository across Interstate 90, 1,500 feet from the Sacred Heart Mission at Cataldo, the oldest building in Idaho and a National Historic Landmark. Built in the late 1800s by the Catholic Jesuits and the Coeur d'Alene and Flathead Native American tribes, the mission is on sacred land.

"At the base of the mission is a visitors center," Barbara said. "During spring run-off, it floods almost to the doors. The Coeur d'Alene Tribe decontaminated the grounds in the fall of 1987. The next spring, it was re-contaminated. In 2011, 160 metric tons of contamination washed downstream during a flood. The repository does not belong there."

For the clean-up work, the resource center has worked with the EPA to make sure local people receive the jobs.

Barbara said the SVCRC encourages the EPA to use better remediation techniques—in particular, permanent waste technology—but to no avail.

Permanent waste technology includes burying soundly encapsulated contaminated soil. Vitriification would burn the contamination off at very high heat. It is also possible to wash the soil and plant vegetation, such as iris bulbs or certain non-edible mushrooms that absorb the pollution, she said.

The resource center works with the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out its mandate to help residents clean up their homes.

Barbara described the piecemeal effort: One yard is decontaminated, but the one next door is not. The yard of one apartment complex has been remediated three times because contamination comes back.

Dust blows off trucks on their way to the repositories, blows off hillsides, or is kicked up in the clean-up process.

The EPA also is mandated to help residents clean their home interiors.

Barbara said that has not happened, even though "an official document says homes in the 21-square-mile Bunker Hill epicenter have two to 50 times more lead in them than do the yards."

Lead is in furnaces, attics, carpets, crawl spaces and ducts. People ingest it, said Barbara, citing scientific data.

A 2005 National Academy of Science report on the Coeur d'Alene Basin Superfund Site also recommends ways the EPA should protect and improve human health and the environment there: 1) provide universal blood-lead testing for children from one to four; 2) increase long-term funding for human health intervention,

and 3) assess the contribution of dissolved metals in groundwater.

Barbara said the EPA has tested only a handful of young children for blood-lead levels, using old guidelines, not the current, more stringent ones.

"Parents receive a letter that they don't understand, with inadequate advice, such as to damp mop their floors and make sure their children's hands are washed," Barbara said. "I've been in most homes in the Silver Valley. I know dust is tracked in, re-contaminating the homes."

The Panhandle Health District recently published a coloring book called "Eat Clean, Keep Clean, Play Clean." While making good suggestions, it also encourages children and families to visit the Old Mission State Park, which is contaminated. Barbara considers that irresponsible.

The SVCRC's current "Children Run Better Unleaded" is their most successful tool for lead education. It is on Facebook

The SVCRC has repeatedly sought to establish a Community Lead Health Clinic/Center. Experts have drawn up a plan, but the EPA has not acted on it.

"We interviewed people in 250 households, one of the area's broadest surveys. Responders said 30 percent of the children have trouble reasoning; 40 percent are in special education, and 80 percent affirmed they would use a clinic," Barbara said.

A health center could provide state-of-the-art care, as well as other economic and cultural pro-

grams, and professional health referrals that would improve the quality of life.

After 30 years, Barbara finds it hard to convince people to keep fighting.

"They are tired. They've been intimidated and ignored. They feel beaten down," she said. "We have to continue to empower them."

Barbara perseveres because she was brought up to treat people with respect.

"If we don't have the environment, Mother Earth, we don't have anything. I draw on spirituality and facts, believing in people and believing a better way of life will prevail. People deserve it. As long as I can continue, I will," she said.

"I pray a lot and count on divine intervention. That's where so much comes from in life. We pick ourselves up and find new approaches. We keep working until enough of the right people understand," said Barbara.

For information, call 208-784-8891, email svcommunityresourcecenter@airpipe.com or visit silvervalleyaction.com.

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The tradition of Fat Tuesday (Shrove Tuesday) is to feast on fat things before the lean weeks of Lent.

Professor/rabbi works to build bridges among faiths, perspectives

Rabbi Elizabeth Goldstein, assistant professor of religious studies at Gonzaga University, seeks to be a bridge person—between Gonzaga and Temple Beth Shalom, between Christians and Jews, and in discussions on Israel and Palestine.

At Elizabeth's Bat Mitzvah in a progressive synagogue, the rabbi called her, as someone who had attended an Orthodox day school, a "gesher," which means a "bridge."

Today, she seeks to find ways for people who have different perspectives and are from different communities to talk with each other.

"I believe the spark of God is in every human heart, and we have more in common than we have different," she said. "As a rabbi and teacher, I find the spark in others and in myself."

In her work Gonzaga for six years, she has had regular opportunities to do bridge work between faith communities and among people with different viewpoints.

"There is space at the table for all voices," she said.

Aware that this is the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the papal encyclical, "Our Time," on Catholic relationship with and acknowledgement of Jews, Elizabeth raised funds to bring Amy-Jill Levine, professor of New Testament and Jewish studies at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, to lecture at Gonzaga.

Amy-Jill is a scholar who explores the shared heritage of Christianity and Judaism, studying Jesus in light of his Jewish roots.

Her books include *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, *The Historical Jesus in Context*, *Feminist Companions to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings*, and *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*.

Elizabeth, the first person in Gonzaga's Religious Studies Department to teach from a Jewish perspective, said she has gone to Mass and listened to New Testament passages on Jews in Jesus' time.

"There is something I can learn and something the Christian community can learn from this scholar," she said, finding the Jesuit setting conducive to that possibility.

So she invited Amy-Jill, as a New Testament scholar, to situate Jesus in his first-century Jewish context.

The day after the public lecture on "Of Pearls and Prodigals: Hearing Jesus' Parables through Jewish Ears," at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 4, there is a lunch on



Elizabeth Goldstein brings speaker on Jewish context of Jesus.

Friday, Feb. 5, for more than 50 Christian clergy on "Misunderstanding Judaism Means Misunderstanding Jesus."

"The more people understand Judaism of the first century, the more they can understand Jesus in his time," said Elizabeth.

"Catholics read the text through the lens of a long history of interpretation, not just what the text says to them in an unmediated encounter," Elizabeth said.

"I have been able to help Gonzaga University and the Jewish community collaborate," she said, "for example, raising funds at Temple Beth Shalom for the lecture."

Amy-Jill will stay through Sunday and also offer presentations at Temple Beth Shalom on "How Jews and Christians Read Scripture Differently," "David and Bathsheba/ Sex and Politics," and "How Jews and Christians Misunderstand Each Other."

Elizabeth will talk with members of the Gonzaga and Jewish communities to find how opinions shift after hearing Amy-Jill.

Elizabeth, who was ordained in 2001 after completing studies at the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, grew up in New Jersey and majored in religion at Dartmouth in Hanover, N.H. Both her undergraduate and her rabbinical studies included time studying in Israel. In 2010, she completed her doctoral degree in biblical studies at the University of California in

San Diego.

There, while she was involved with a Jewish-Christian group that read Scripture together, she realized that "we have different ways of understanding Scripture and our roles in the world."

At Gonzaga, she has continued to intersect with people on understanding Scriptures.

"I have learned much from my colleagues, as I hope my colleagues have learned from me," she said. "My colleagues are my friends. I have found a home here and feel valued for the diverse approach I bring," she said.

She has also valued her interactions with hundreds of students who have taken her classes at the University and at Temple Beth Shalom.

"I have learned what questions to ask to increase my learning, and I have learned to be a more effective teacher at reaching students both in classes and the congregations."

Living in community with Catholics who faithfully attend Mass and take Eucharist, Elizabeth said she was struck to witness communion at a recent funeral service for a member of the Gonzaga community.

"It was beautiful that the bread is blessed and the whole community partakes, not just each as individual persons connecting with God, but also people connecting with each other as part of the community and responsible for one another," she said.

"We are not in the world alone," she said "It reminds me of the saying that every Jewish person is responsible for other people and for the whole of Israel. In the recent funeral for one person, there was something larger at work that is part of the tradition and part of being there for each other."

Elizabeth, who teaches biblical Hebrew, Judaism, Hebrew Bible, Jewish and Christian comparative feminism, recently published a book, *Impurity and Gender in the Hebrew Bible*.

In addition to teaching at Gonzaga, she teaches classes and helps lead services once a month at Temple Beth Shalom and once a month at the Jewish Community of the Palouse in Moscow.

In applying for tenure, Elizabeth said she has been reflecting about her role at Gonzaga.

On campus, she said she is perceived as progressive, so people of progressive perspectives come to converse with her.

For example, some Protestant women, studying to be ordained in their denominations, come to her to talk about ordination.

She also listens to people and is open to those with many different perspectives.

"I meet people where they are on their faith journeys," she said.

Elizabeth would also like to contribute to Gonzaga by leading a study trip to Israel and by encouraging Jewish students to think of Gonzaga as a place to study in the humanist Jesuit tradition that is open to dialogue.

She also seeks to connect Jews and non-Jews to The Third Narrative for peace and justice for Israelis and Palestinians.

It's an initiative to hear the voices between the narrative of staunch pro-Israel groups and the narrative of those who support boycotts, divestment and sanctions in solidarity with Palestinians.

"We tend to hear one narrative to the exclusion of the other," Elizabeth said.

"Whether Jews and Christians agree or disagree, conversations need to continue. It's about relationships, because religion is about relationships," she said.

"Judaism is infused with teachings of love and acceptance, and acknowledgment that we all share a deep spiritual yearning," said Elizabeth.

For information, call 313-6788 or email Goldstein@gonzaga.edu.

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CEO sees 'giving back' as part of his obligation in life and at work

By Sr. Sue Orłowski, SP

Over the years, Jeff Philipps, president and chief executive officer of Spokane-based Rosauers Supermarket, Inc., has not been an average independent grocery industry CEO.

His servant leadership style is defined by personal relationships with vendors, customers, managers and employees.

Growing up in Great Falls, Mont., where he was the second of five children, he attended Catholic schools where students were expected to participate in local service projects. He learned that "giving back" was just part of his obligation and serving others was part of what was asked of him as a Christian.

"I have been strongly rooted in my faith since childhood," said Jeff, whose mother was a role model as a volunteer at school and in her concern about others.

"She taught me how to listen by modeling good listening skills," Jeff said.

Two days after he turned 16, he went to work for Buttrey Food and Drug as a "bag boy," bagging and carrying out groceries. It was his introduction to the food industry.

"I loved my job," said Jeff, who was promoted to bottle boy. That was when soda came in glass bottles and the empties had to be sorted by the company. "My goal was to be the fastest when it came to sorting bottles."

After high school, he attended Carroll College in Helena, Mont., earning degrees in business, accounting and economics with the thought of entering the banking industry. At Carroll he continued to work at Buttrey to earn money to help with college expenses.

At age 20, he gave up thoughts of banking when he was promoted to become the youngest assistant store manager at Buttrey. Over the years, the company provided him with experiences in every aspect of the grocery business including store and district management, merchandising, operations, advertising and accounting.

After 22 years, Jeff left Buttrey to explore additional industry opportunities in Utah, Alaska and Minnesota. He worked his way up the administrative ladder in



Jeff Philipps applies faith in corporate grocery business.

several companies until in 2000 he was recruited by Rosauers to become its CEO.

Rosauers began as a Spokane-based business when J. Merton Rosauer purchased his first little grocery store in 1934. Rosauers was Spokane's first supermarket in 1949. From 1989 to 2000, it was worker-owned.

Over the years, it has grown to include Rosauers Food & Drug stores, Super 1 Foods and Huckleberry's Natural Markets with a total of 22 stores located throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. Today Jeff is responsible for 2,100 employees who work at those stores.

With the growth of natural and organic foods, 16 of the traditional stores now have a store-within-a-store representation of Huckleberry's.

Jeff's 15 years of leadership at Rosauers has resulted in a grocery chain that values its employees and customers, and embraces its responsibilities in the community. "If one is given much, much is expected from that person, and I have been given much," he said. "I want to do the right thing for the well-being of my employees, customers and community."

Jeff has a passion for what he does and a work ethic that values people for who they are, so he knows his employees and they know him well.

"We rally around those who are in need of support. We are like family here," he said.

Jeff, who belongs to Sacred Heart Parish in Spokane, said that "without good employees we re-

ally don't have a business."

and by working together they can all succeed. Jeff tries to model listening. "I listen to the trials and tribulations that employees have to let them know that they are not alone," he said. "I encourage my staff to listen well so we can get through tough things together." In December 2008, a roof on one of the Rosauers stores in Spokane collapsed from the weight of the snow. Some 120 employees were affected and they had begun to prepare themselves for unemployment checks and less-than-certain futures. To their surprise, Jeff did something they did not expect. He told his employees there would be no lost jobs and no unemployment checks. Jeff and his management team decided to keep every worker employed, rotating them to other Rosauers locations, while paying them 90 percent of their base pay and maintaining their employee benefits. "I wanted them to know that they are our family. I wanted to prove how we care for them in

times of crisis," he said. With Jeff at the helm, Rosauers has taken its role of being a good corporate citizen seriously by being involved in supporting numerous activities, events, clubs, civic organizations and licensed nonprofit groups that help to improve the quality of life in the cities and towns where their stores are located. They have developed strategic partnerships with food banks and other organizations, working to address basic needs of people. Jeff models community involvement for his employees. He has led the United Way Campaign for Spokane County, served on the Providence Health Care Foundation Board, was board chair for the Washington Food Industry Association and for Greater Spokane Incorporated. He is also president for the Inland Northwest Council of the Boy Scouts and on the Providence Community Ministry Board. For information, call 326-8900 ext. 165 or email debbief@rosauers.com.

Since its founding, Rosauers has developed a culture of care and sense of family, not only from management to employee, but employees caring for each other. "If employees are supportive of one another, that will extend to customers. I like to know employees by name because each of them contributes to our success. I like to know what is going on in their lives and what motivates them," he said. Jeff tries to provide inspiration. "Nobody is just a bag boy here. That is where I started, and look at where I am today. It just takes a focus and hard work," he said. He tells employees that their jobs are not ends, but are journeys,

and by working together they can all succeed. Jeff tries to model listening. "I listen to the trials and tribulations that employees have to let them know that they are not alone," he said. "I encourage my staff to listen well so we can get through tough things together." In December 2008, a roof on one of the Rosauers stores in Spokane collapsed from the weight of the snow. Some 120 employees were affected and they had begun to prepare themselves for unemployment checks and less-than-certain futures. To their surprise, Jeff did something they did not expect. He told his employees there would be no lost jobs and no unemployment checks. Jeff and his management team decided to keep every worker employed, rotating them to other Rosauers locations, while paying them 90 percent of their base pay and maintaining their employee benefits. "I wanted them to know that they are our family. I wanted to prove how we care for them in

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About 900 of Life Center's 4,000 participants involved locally, globally

Amanda Hepper believes that participating in church is more than focusing on life inside the church. It's about being active in the community and world, even if it's just serving one hour a month.

For two years, she has been overseeing community outreach and global outreach ministries at Life Center in Spokane, originally developed over the last six years by ministry leader Kristi Burns.

Over that time, the number of community partners has risen from four to 33.

About 900 of the 4,000 people who attend Life Center serve in some way in the community, said Amanda, who is responsible for local partnerships and has helped nurture many of the relationships.

Kristi's focus now is on global partnerships with ministries in El Salvador, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mexico, Nicaragua and Kaliningrad, Russia.

Expecting to take on the global responsibilities when Kristi retires in 2017, Amanda has visited Nicaragua, and recently spent three weeks in Kenya and three weeks in Ethiopia.

In 2016, Life Center will hold its annual Serve Our City half a day on Saturday, May 21, providing volunteers to local agencies.

"It's a way to expose members to ministries in the hope they may want to continue to serve," she said.

Amanda gave an overview of some of the local opportunities.

- In 2015, many helped Greater Spokane Meals on Wheels with meals.

- Every week in February a team from Life Center is going to Deer Park to help Habitat For Humanity build homes.

- Last year for Serve Our City, members framed a Habitat for Humanity house in the church parking lot and took it to the Habitat Deer Park neighborhood.

- Some members helped Hearth Homes in the summer with landscaping and painting, as a way to share in assisting the homeless women and children there who are gaining skills to change their lives.

- After Family Promise, which shelters homeless families temporarily in churches, moved, Life Center helped put up a playground for children at the day center.

- Through Reach Ministries, volunteers are trained to help families affected by HIV/AIDS, mentoring HIV patients.

Other Life Center volunteers participate in programs that reach out to help children who struggle with abuse, poverty and hunger.

- Amanda and two others from Life Center were trained in November in Texas for a new project,



Amanda Hepper matches volunteers with ministry opportunities.

the Royal Family KIDS Camp for foster children ages seven to 11. She has arranged for a week at a local campground and will start with 20 foster children.

Royal Family KIDS Camp is a national program with extensive training on how to set up the camp, elicit and train volunteers, work with the state to identify children for camp and provide 12-hour training for camp volunteer staff.

"The goal is to create memorable experiences. Each child leaves with a memory album with photos of themselves having fun outdoors, having a birthday party, experiencing fishing and crafts, and more," Amanda explained.

The program seeks to give foster children, many of whom have experienced abuse, a camp experience with "life-changing moments." To address the abuse, church members launch and sustain camps, clubs and mentors to follow up with the children.

Church members who are not on the camp volunteer staff can make such things as quilts and stuffed animals for each child.

- Another program assisting foster children is Embrace Washington, which serves Department of Social and Health Services employees who are "on the front line" working with foster children and to help recruit foster parents. For those who may not be able to be a foster parent, there is the option of helping provide age-appropriate welcome kits of goodies

for children awaiting placement.

- About 70 Life Center members volunteer as mentors in 18 schools, many at Sheridan Elementary School, through Communities In Schools. That program surrounds students with support to empower them to stay in school and succeed in life. Volunteers help struggling students stay on track to complete studies by developing one-to-one relationships.

- With Second Harvest's Bites-2Go, members help provide weekend meals for students who do not have enough food. The program runs on donations and individual sponsorships of \$12 a month as a way to fight hunger. Volunteers go to Second Harvest and pick up 72 packs of food for Sheridan students to take home.

- Project i.d., co-founded by Life Center members, provides recreation, social, work and life opportunities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities so they can support their families. Members go there and "hang out" with those served by that program.

Amanda and her husband volunteer at Union Gospel Mission's Shelter for Women and Children to help break the cycle of homelessness, abuse and addiction. Others help at the men's shelter, Anna Ogden Hall or the Union Gospel Mission's Camp Tshimikain for Sheridan students.

These are a few examples of how Life Center members are involved in the community.

Life Center is starting a 10-week Bible study program, "Rooted," to help people assimilate into Life Center and begin steps toward discipleship. The program includes both prayer and service experiences, and helping participants understand why they serve.

"It's important to know that doing good works for others blesses the person doing them and is what Jesus calls us to do," she said.

"Community Health Evangelism is a Christ-centered educational program that equips communities to identify issues and mobilize resources to achieve positive, sustainable change," she said. "Lives and communities are transformed as people come to Christ and work together to address local needs. It often includes instruction on hygiene, clean water, safe cooking, latrines, health care, HIV/AIDS prevention and care, and other basic life issues."

Amanda's background is in IT (Information Technology) and she worked for Lockheed Martin at Hanford several years, and then at Inland Northwest Health Services, directing the physician services division in Spokane.

She said she "came to the Lord" in 1994 and then started attending Richland Assembly of God.

She began attending Life Center in 2010, and took Pastor Noel Campbell's discipleship class that communicated to her God's unconditional love, grace and forgiveness.

"That turned my life around," said Amanda.

"God wooed me toward Christian community service and in 2014 I came on staff at Life Center, overseeing community engagement," she said. "This has been a fulfilling experience as I develop relationships with local ministries and shepherd volunteers in their directions."

"**People may be shy** about volunteering, but it can be as simple as spending time with someone in need, smiling and saying a kind word," Amanda said.

Life Center also uses Facebook to tell stories of how people are serving and to publicize community volunteer opportunities and mission trips.

"Telling stories helps make experiences real and encourages participation," Amanda said.

For information, call 327-4422 or email Amanda@lifecenter.net.

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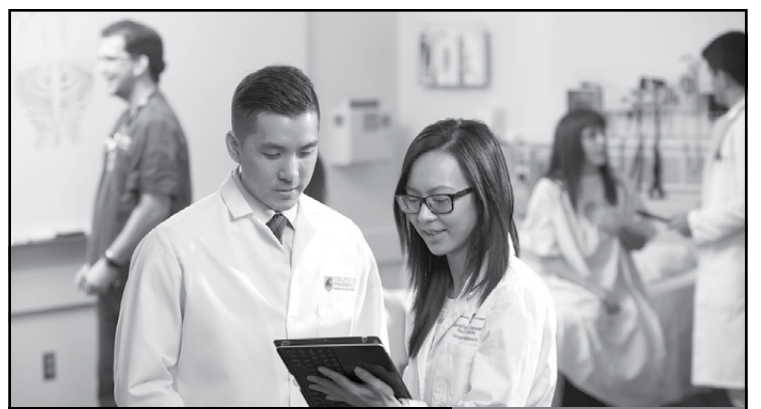


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Faith calls us to rise up out of the swamps of life and be God's family

As a parent, God must be weary with warring children, children who don't listen to each other and don't want to understand one another, children who don't love and respect one another.

On the personal level, it's sibling rivalry in varying degrees. On the community level, it's different groups vying for the attention of others. In the faith community, we are divided and segregated. In the business world, firms gobble each other up and redistribute wealth to the greedy few.

In social media and daily life, it's about bullying and excluding people. On the state and national levels, extremist views gain in media popularity polls. In the world, we are still at war. One person's perspective of right is another person's perspective of wrong. In nature, it's land grabs. In the sports of life, it's a game of win or lose.

Those realities hardly jive with the 1970s Sesame Street song "Sisters and Brothers" by Stephen Lawrence and Bruce Hart: "Sisters and brothers, brothers and sisters,

ain't we everyone....Ain't we lucky, everybody, lookin' out for one another..."

Are we looking out for one another?

Songs can help give us visions of how things are to be. Songs can help us awaken from our bad habits. Songs empowered the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Songs can instill hope enabling us to act.

The many hymns—old and new—give words to our faith with rhythms and tunes that help us remember.

Songs can lift us out of sorrow. When I was at the seventh assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra, Australia, in 1991, I knew I was going home to perhaps no home, facing divorce from my husband who was a pastor. It would have been a time to leave the church. I could not sing the hymns and songs. They rang hollow. They did not speak of my experience.

Songs, however, are central to the soul of any World Council of Churches assembly, which gathers 4,000 Christians from around

the world. Many songs were not familiar to me in my tradition. Many songs were in other languages. While I could not sing the words in my language, English, I could sing them in another language, because I did not have to think about whether I meant them or they were true to my faith at that moment.

The Assembly theme was "Come, Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation." I believe that by being able to sing those songs without having to think, the Holy Spirit could be at work on my soul in pain. Those songs are now an important part of my faith pilgrimage today.

At that global gathering, we talked about and shared in each other's pain about how world relationships were faltering. The Iraq war was on. We heard each other's stories of hunger, hatred, refugees, racism, slavery and inequities. The global anguish divided people, yet the delegates called for unity as in the 1982 Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry convergence document, calling for mutual recognition of baptism, Eucharist

and ministry—areas in which churches are often most divided.

The statement, "The Unity of the Church: Gift and Calling," said the Church's calling "is to proclaim reconciliation and provide healing, to overcome divisions based on race, gender, age, culture, color and to bring all people into communion with God. Because of sin and the misunderstanding of the diverse gifts of the Spirit, the churches are painfully divided within themselves and among each other. The scandalous divisions damage the credibility of their witness to the world in worship and service. Moreover, they contradict not only the Church's witness but also its very nature."

Our faith calls us to more than our everyday slogging in the swamps of life. Our faith calls us to pick ourselves up again, to forgive our family, friends, colleagues, neighbors and enemies. Our faith requires reconciliation because we are "brothers and sisters, looking out for one another."

Mary Stamp - Editor

Debate continues everywhere about relationship of religion and politics

In his autobiography, Mohandas Gandhi spoke of the relationship between religion and politics. For Gandhi, "those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is."

Those familiar with the history of India in the 20th century witnessed how religion was used as a powerful tool for every political movement. Not only in India but also in many places around the world, religion is a powerful force in every political realm.

The debate over whether religion and politics go hand in hand continues everywhere.

The idea of the separation between church and state is a product of the Enlightenment and modern Western nations. It occurred mainly as a reaction against the hegemonic rule of the Medieval Catholic Church.

Those who claim that religion has nothing to do with politics may think politics is only about social and political values that have nothing to do with religion. Those

who make decisions have religious beliefs and values that affect those decisions.

Their moral and ethical values are influenced by their religious beliefs. The separation of religion and politics is hard to define because of their intertwining nature. In some places, they are indistinguishable.

One might ask how far Gandhi's observation goes: What is the role of religion in politics?

Religion has its own political issues. We often hear how devoted religious people press their own understandings and interpretations of religion in the political arena, without considering the religious perspectives of others.

Use of religious language in political debates often proves to be effective for self-advancement.

When politicians use religious language to appeal to the beliefs of some in a negative way, it is often done to dominate them.

Politicians can easily manipulate people. The essence of politics is about using power

to control others.

When religious language and ideas are used in political conversations, they can create confusion and more conflict, especially if politicians do not consider the multiplicity and complexity of religious beliefs in this country.

For politicians, religion can become both a dangerous tool and an effective tool, depending on how it is used.

The influence of religion in politics is unavoidable. As the use of religious language and imagery increases across the political spectrum, politicians and religious leaders should use religion in a way that does not violate anyone's constitutional rights or religious values.

It's up to politicians whether they use religion for the common good and with respect for each religious faith.

We know that the line between an appropriate accommodation of religion and an inappropriate establishment of a state religion can be unclear.

Today, we can see the damage through history of how religion was used inappropriately to exert political power over others. Some policy makers, however, are able to consider the complexity of religion and put forth concerted efforts to balance the competing interests of politics and religion.

The United States is now a religiously pluralistic country with an increasing population of religious minorities, whose perspectives we rarely hear in the political arena.

In addition, the population of people with no religious affiliation is increasing. That being the case, we should seek to be more open to everyone's perspectives rather than using religion to rally people of a particular political persuasion. At the same time, we need to create more space for conversation to lift up values that lead government and faith communities to work to benefit the good of the whole population.

Ikani Fakasiieiki
Contributing editor

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

Dean of cathedral explains background on Anglican Communion

Upon hearing of his own demise Mark Twain was said to have written a public response declaring that "rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated." That is how I feel about the recent meeting of the heads of the various branches of the Anglican Communion.

Some reports declared that we have been expelled from the Communion, others that we have merely been suspended. Neither happened, nor could they have.

The Anglican Communion is composed of the branches of Christianity that trace their history back to Jesus and the disciples through the Church of England, which was formed after the Reformation. Wherever the British Empire went, there went the Church of England, and today those churches that were once outposts of the Anglican Church in the colonies of the British Empire comprise the Anglican Communion.

The concept itself dates in a formal sense only to approximately the 1870s, when the Archbishop of Canterbury decided to invite bishops from all branches of the Anglican Church throughout the world to a conference. At that point the United States was the only colony that had successfully separated from England, and the Archbishop received a lot of advice against inviting the American Bishops.

He invited the Americans anyway, and

from then on we have been members of the Anglican Communion. In addition, from that day to this, membership in the Anglican Communion has been determined by a single person, the Archbishop of Canterbury. No other person or group has ever presumed to determine membership in the Communion, and none did at this meeting.

What did happen recently is that the heads of some of the African provinces, with support from a number of others, presented a resolution demanding that representatives from the Episcopal Church on the various committees of the Anglican Communion take no part in any discussion, and exercise no right to vote on any measure for the next three years. That resolution passed.

In the public statement the Primates—that is what the heads of the various branches are called—declared that they wish to hold the Communion together, but profound differences in the understanding of marriage between the American Church and most of the other branches of the Communion made it necessary to take this step.

We all know what this means. The problem is not with differences over polygamy, a practice still observed in some cultures within the Anglican Communion. The problem is that the American Church, along with Canada and a couple of others, now allows same sex marriage. It is exactly

that simple.

It is certain that three years from now we will still differ on that same issue with the folks who advanced this resolution.

The Primates had no authority to order the various committees to refuse voice and vote to any members. That is up to the committees themselves.

Some will likely obey the injunction, and some probably won't. What happens if most don't remains to be seen.

In view of the central role in determining who is in and who is out of the Communion, it is very likely that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, will receive enormous pressure over the next three years to expel the American Church, or at the very least to announce that we will no longer be invited to the decennial—once in 10 years—meeting of the bishops of the Anglican Communion called the Lambeth Council.

No one knows, perhaps least of all Archbishop Welby himself, how he will respond to this pressure. The next three years will thus determine whether the Anglican Communion continues in its present form.

Whether it does or does not, the Episcopal Church in the USA will continue its mission of proclaiming the gospel, and that, as far as I am concerned, is all that matters.

The Very Rev. Bill Ellis
Episcopal Cathedral of St. John

God has told us we will dream dreams and see visions. We cycle through another series of numbers in squares on paper and say here we go.

Let's begin again. One more time. Let's dream of a different world. One filled with hope. One focused on the Common Good.

Let's dream of what kind of world we want. Let's imagine forgiveness. Let's dream of loving our neighbors and our enemies. Let's dream of feeding the hungry.

Imagine the meek inheriting the earth. Imagine a world where the first would be last and the last would be first. Imagine justice falling like water. Imagine following the peacemakers.

Let's imagine another world, let's imagine how it could work, and let's imagine where and how we can begin to put it together. That place? That dream? That's where God's kingdom begins.

Greg Skinner
Country Homes Christian newsletter

As Lent begins on Feb. 10, we welcome the most honest part of the church year, the time of quiet reflection on sin and grace, the heart of the late winter when resurrected life is just about to push through the soil all around and we cling to that promise.

Bishop Martin Wells - Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America
Eastern Washington Idaho Synod

Calendar of Events

- To Mar 20** • **Selma March Photography Exhibit** by James Barker, Anthropology Museum, College Hall, Washington State University, Pullman, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday, mlk.wsu.edu
- Feb 3** • **Lecture on Early Mediterranean Sea-Farers: Neanderthals, Pygmy Hippo Hunters – Myth or Reality**, Alan Simmons of the University of Nevada, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 8 p.m., northwestmuseum.org/calendar/all-events/cfm
- Feb 5** • **Inland Northwest Native Artists**, Philanthropy Center, 1020 W. Riverside, 5 to 9 p.m., sponsored by American Indian Community Center
- **Native Project Healthy Heart Pow Wow**, Rogers High School, 1622 E. Wellesley Ave., 6 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. grand entry, 325-5502, NATIVEproject.org
- Feb 8** • **Dwight Hopkins**, African American History Month Lecture, "What Is a Christian Black Theology of Liberation?" Robinson Theatre, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth University, 7 p.m., 777-4215, lburnley@whitworth.edu
- Feb 9** • **"Theatre of Witness: Stories of Suffering, Transformation and Peace,"** Teya Sepinuck, Wolff Auditorium, Jepson Center, Gonzaga University, 7 p.m., gonzaga.edu/CommunicationWeek
- **"Jazz Mass"** with preacher Mindy Smith, Campus Minister, Whitworth University, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 7 p.m.
- Feb 9-Apr 1** • **Whitworth Art Exhibit**, "Gala Bent: Everything Seems To Be Coming Together," Lied Center for the Visual Arts, Whitworth University, Feb 9 reception 5 p.m., lecture, 6 p.m. room 102, 777-3258, wuart@whitworth.edu
- Feb 10** • **Lecture by Gregory Wolfe**, founder and editor of Image Journal and advocate of Christian humanism, Room 102, Lied Center for the Visual Arts, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-3252, tcaraway@whitworth.edu
- **Silent Day of Prayer**, "Lent Seen through the Eyes of St. Ignatius," Fr. Michael Maher, SJ, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 448-1224
- Feb 11** • **"Dialogues for a Just Peace** in Israel-Palestine," Robert Hostetter, Jepson Center, Gonzaga, 7 p.m., gonzaga.edu/CommunicationWeek
- Feb 11-Mar 3** • **"Parenting with Love and Logic,"** Northwood Presbyterian, 6721 N. Monroe, 6 p.m. Thursdays, 328-2012
- Feb. 12** • **19th Annual Gospel Explosion**, Black History Month, Seeley Mudd Chapel, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4568, sbeans@whitworth.edu
- Feb 16** • **Spokane PFLAG**, Bethany Presbyterian, 2607 S. Ray, 7 p.m., support@SpokanePFLAG.org.
- **Lecture by Anita Perez Ferguson**, "The Inconsolable Voter," Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m.,
- Feb 17** • **Coffee and Contemplation**, "God and Virtue or Self and Vice: Our Capacity to Reflect the Image of God," Jerry Sittser, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 to 11 a.m., 448-1224
- Feb 17-Mar 16** • **Lenten Dinner/Study Program**, Bishop Robert Barron Series "The Mystery of God: Who God Is and Why He Matters," Deacon John Ruscheinsky, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 5:30 p.m., 448-1224
- Feb 18** • **"Civil Rights in Washington: The Post-Maxey Era Public Forum,"** moderated by Jim Kershner, Gonzaga University Law School Court Room, 10 a.m.
- **"Carl Maxey: A Fighting Life,"** premiere screening of film based on book by Jim Kershner, Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague Ave., 6:30 p.m., ksps.org/community/maxey-doc/
- Feb 18-19** • **WSU College of Education's 12th Annual International Globalization, Diversity and Education Conference**, "Moving the Dialogue on Race, Culture, and Equity Forward in Education," Northern Quest Casino & Resort, 100 N. Hayford Rd., Airway Heights, 509-335-6393, khammer@wsu.edu
- Feb 19** • **Lecture by Temple Grandin**, "Helping Different Kinds of Minds to be Successful" North Central High School, 7 p.m., gifted@whitworth.edu.
- Feb 20** • **Lecture by Temple Grandin**, "Understanding Animal Behavior" Weyerhaeuser, Whitworth, 10:30 a.m., whitworth.edu/communityevent
- **Ashes to New Life**, Sr. Patricia Novak, OSF, The Franciscan Place, 1016 N. Superior, 483-6495, sjfconline.org
- Feb 20-22** • **8th Annual Leonard A. Oakland Film Festival**, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m. Saturday, 777-4401, twisenor@whitworth.edu
- Feb 22-Mar 1** • **"God's Name Is Mercy,"** Novena of Grace, St. Aloysius Catholic Church, 330 E. Boone, 313-5896
- Feb 22-26** • **"Embracing the Artistic Call,"** Spirit Center, Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, 208-962-2000
- Feb 23** • **"Why Black Perspectives Matter,"** Kellie Carter Jackson, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4572
- Feb 24** • **Meet and Greet Information Session** on application and funding, Gonzaga's Online M.A. in Theology and Leadership, Hemmingson Center 2nd floor faculty lounge, 5:30 p.m., 313-6224, gustafson@gonzaga.edu
- Feb 26-27** • **7th Annual Peace and Economic Justice Action Conference**, Panel on 40 years of Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane leadership plus three education action workshops, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr., 838-7870, http://pjals.org/2016conference
- Feb 27** • **Meet the Neighbors**, Spokane Interfaith Council with Native American community, Northwest Museum of Arts and Cultures, 2316 W. First, 2 to 4 p.m., spokaneifc.org
- **Hermanas Spokane Dinner/Auction**, All Saints Lutheran, 314 S. Spruce, 5 to 7 p.m., 481-5157
- Mar 1** • **Eve of Prayer**, "Suffering and Self-Sacrifice in Marriage," Fr. Jeff Lewis, pastor of parishes of Chewelah, Springdale and Valley, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224
- Mar 2** • **The Fig Tree mailing** and delivery, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 535-1813
- **"Science, Theology and Pope Francis' Ecological Vision,"** Spring Flannery Lecture, John Haught of Georgetown University, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 6:30 p.m.
- Mar 3** • **The Fig Tree Benefit and Board meetings**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon, benefit, 1 p.m., board, 535-1813
- Mar 4** • **"Advancing Ethics for Rivers,"** Winter Waters 2016, Patsy Clark Mansion, 2208 W. 2nd Ave., 5:30 p.m., 939-1290, john@waterplanet.ws
- Mar 6** • **Jam for Bread Benefit Concert** for Crosswalk, Westminster UCC, 411 S. Washington, 3 p.m., 624-1366

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Spokane women build community library in El Salvadoran village

As an outgrowth of 14 years of supporting education in Huisi (Huisisilapi), El Salvador, the nonprofit Hermanas Spokane now seeks to build and equip a sustainable (green) library there.

"The goal is to promote literacy in Huisi through a library that will be centrally located near the grade school, high school and community plaza, where it can be used by students and community members, said Phyllis Andersen, who organized Hermanas Spokane out of her connections with the village.

To help raise funds for this project, Hermanas Spokane is hosting a Salvadoran Dinner and Auction from 5:30 to 7 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 27, at All Saints Lutheran Church, 314 S. Spruce. Dinner will be served at 6:15 p.m. All proceeds will go to the community library project.

The circle of Spokane professional women have worked in solidarity with women leaders in Huisi since 2002, based on mutual respect, support and collaboration, Phyllis said.

"We have raised money to support education in the village, because it's a priority of villagers," she said. "We have also educated Spokane's high school students by facilitating exchanges through a program known as Camp Salvador."

The summer of 2005 was the first high

school youth exchange between Spokane and Huisi.

Twelve high school youth and six adults from Spokane visited Huisi. Families of high school students in Huisi hosted the 18 visitors. It was the first time the village had hosted international visitors.

"They had confidence to do so because of the solidarity established between their women leaders and Hermanas Spokane," Phyllis said.

The visitors took computers donated by St. George's School to set up a computer lab.

For the next four years, Hermanas Spokane, Rotary clubs and youth from Lewis and Clark High School raised more than \$40,000 to help establish a high school program, financing a classroom, buying some internet connections, hiring teachers, and buying curricula and novels.

Four Huisi high school graduates also graduated from university in 2014, which Phyllis said is "a phenomenal accomplishment given all the obstacles the students had to overcome."

Several families who have visited

Huisi throughout the years have consistently donated money to help the young people pursue a university degree.

Since the initial exchange in 2005, there have been seven exchanges and another is planned for the summer of 2016, which is also when architectural plans for the community library will be presented.

Now the Spokane group will help build a library, providing curricula, books and internet connections for students to read and research online.

The women already have \$31,000 of the \$50,000 they need to build the library and provide it with internet.

"Local community leaders have agreed that building a library is the next necessary step to improve education and quality of life. They and we believe that literacy is essential to an individual's capacity to explore the world and contribute to society," said Phyllis. "Increased access to books and technology in a library setting adjacent to the school will provide an invaluable tool in helping Huisi students and all residents shape the course of their lives.

Women in Spokane partner with women in El Salvador to educate children.

"In El Salvador, the cost of living is much lower than in Spokane," she explained. "A typical Salvadoran household in the rural areas makes an average of \$362 per month, but the cost of books is comparable to U.S. prices.

"Hermanas grew out of a research project on seven women leaders in Huisi, but it has come to be much more," said Phyllis.

She met the women in Huisi while living in the community to conduct interviews and observe daily life. It was part of her study of the change of consciousness of seven women from pre-civil war to post-civil war years. All were older than 30 when the war began.

The women's stories and lives became Phyllis' doctoral dissertation, "Life Stories and the Change of Consciousness of Seven Rural Salvadoran Women, 2006."

The women said what they wanted most was education for their children and grandchildren.

"We in Spokane continue to have meaningful exchanges with the community of Huisi," said Phyllis. "From the visits, we gain much understanding and compassion and, in turn, we are better citizens of Spokane and of the world."

For information, call 481-5157 or visit hermanasspokane.org.

Retreat center offers four events

Fr. Michael Maher SJ, will reflect on "Lent Seen through the Eyes of St. Ignatius" at a Silent Day of Prayer from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Ash Wednesday, Feb. 10.

Deacon John Ruscheinsky, director of Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), will lead a Lenten Dinner/Study Program from the Bishop Robert Barron Series: on "The Mystery of God: Who God Is and Why He Matters" from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesdays, Feb. 17 and 24, and March 2, 9 and 16.

For the Coffee and Contemplation at 11 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 17, Jerry Sittser, professor of theology at Whitworth University, will discuss "God and Virtue or Self and Vice: Our Capacity to Reflect the Image of God." The spiritual discussion and prayer event is for people of all denominations.

The center will host an Eve of Prayer from 5 to 8:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 1, on "Suffering and Self-Sacrifice in Marriage: What the wedding feast at Cana and Christ on the Cross can teach us about Holy Matrimony" The speaker is Fr. Jeff Lewis, who is pastor of parishes of Chewelah, Springdale and Valley.

These events are at Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd. For information, call 448-1224.



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