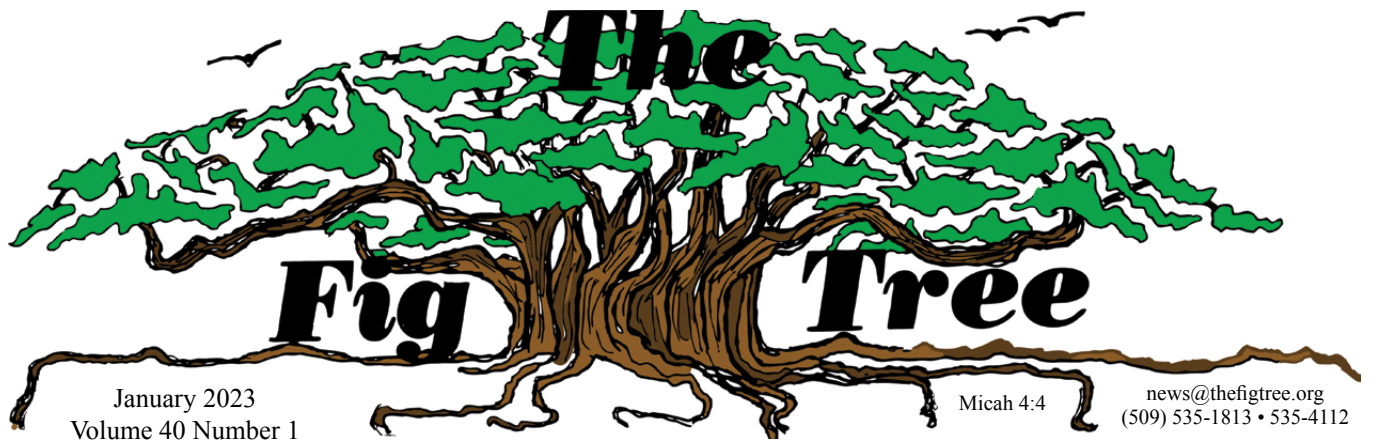


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- Food supplies for food banks are low - p. 9
- Bishops issue call to care for creation - p. 12

CALENDAR ON PAGE 11  
FEATURES 40+ EVENTS



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# University educates Hispanic, Yakama

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

On Nov. 3, the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce awarded the former president of Heritage University, Kathleen Ross, SNJM, the annual Ted Robertson Award, which honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the greater Yakima area.

Her service in the Yakima Valley has had a tremendous impact. Forty years ago, at the instigation of two Yakama Nation women—Martha Yallup and Violet Lumley Rau—and with the support of regional leaders from the tribes, the business community and the Catholic Church, Kathleen became the inaugural president of Heritage College, now Heritage University, in Toppenish.

The story of Heritage University inspires dreamers who see a need and act to fill that need.

In the early 1970s, the only local access to four-year higher education was through satellite education programs in the Yakima Valley and Okanogan Valley, operated by the Sisters of the Holy Names' Fort Wright College in Spokane.

Because of ongoing enrollment and financial problems at Fort Wright College, in 1980 the Sisters announced they would soon



Kathleen Ross, SNJM, served as president of Heritage University in Toppenish.

Photo Courtesy of Kathleen Ross

close the Spokane college.

Violet and Martha came to Kathleen Ross, who was Fort Wright's vice president for academic affairs, and insisted they couldn't lose their college program.

Kathleen, a Seattle native, joined the Sisters of the Holy Names in 1960. She graduated from Fort Wright College with a bachelor's degree, from Georgetown University with a master's degree, and from the Claremont Graduate School with a doctorate.

At Claremont, she gained skills in managing an institution of higher learning and learned principles of successful financing—the kind of funding Heritage's educational programs would need.

"One reason I chose the Sisters of the Holy Names was that they were good educators and well-known in Seattle," Kathleen said, "and I wanted to be an educator."

When Violet and Martha came to her, their request touched that motivation. They told her, "You brought hope to the Valley and you can't take it away."

When Kathleen's efforts to find another university to take over the programs failed, the two returned.

They suggested, "We have a  
*Continued on page 4*

## Program helps church leaders discern new ways to be the church in the world

By Mary Stamp

The Whitworth University Office of Church Engagement (OCE) partners with churches and ministries to discern how to be the church and do ministry in Spokane, the region, nation and world.

Its programs include grant-funded programs like the Calling Communities and the Resilient Church Initiative, the Academy of Christian Discipleship, the Whitworth Ministry Summit and more.

As the OCE director, Mindy Smith invites churches and

ministry leaders to explore challenges and opportunities related to 1) church planting initiatives, 2) church resiliency, 3) young adults and 4) congregations' calling in the world.

Whitworth networks with churches to offer resources and access to faculty experts and student volunteers. In a recent conversation, Mindy described three programs: Calling Communities, Academy of Christian Discipleship and Resilient Church.

**The Calling Communities** are networks of churches meeting monthly to focus on their

commitment to grow and learn.

The program began with six Calling Communities—1) formational worship, 2) youth ministry, 3) the city and the church, 4) creation care, 5) refugees and immigrants, and 6) reconciliation. In 2022, the final year of the initiative, youth ministry, the city and the church, and refugees and immigrants continued their work.

As part of the program, churches applied for grants.

Ministries like First Presbyterian's Feast World Kitchen, the Cathedral of St. John's Hope for Creation Conference and Shadle Park Presbyterian's Growing Neighbors received funding through the Calling Communities.

Since 2018, about 150 churches have participated in the communities with 21 projects funded with \$352,000 of grants.

Mindy described an effort of a group meeting on "The City and the Church."

Boris Borisov, pastor at Pacific Keep, was an urban planner with  
*Continued on page 6*

## Legislative Conference explores 'Caring for Our Common Earth'

The 2023 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference features Gen Heywood, pastor of Veradale United Church of Christ (UCC) and convener for Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC), addressing the theme, "Caring for Our Common Earth Now and Forever." It will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday Jan. 21, at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, 115 N. Raymond, and online.

**Gen will share insights** from the 11th World Council of Churches Assembly in September in Germany, where representatives from churches, faiths and no faiths gathered to reflect on issues facing the faith communities around the world.

**Three plenary sessions** include "Legislative Briefings by Advocates in Olympia," "Housing Is a Human Right," and "Indigenous Voices for Environmental Justice."

**The briefings will be presented** by Kristin Ang, policy engagement director of the Faith Action Network of Washington, Donna Christensen of the Washington State Catholic Conference, and Jessica Zimmerle of Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light.

**Workshop leaders and topics are:** Mark Finney of Thrive International, "Spokaine: Geopolitics and Local Impacts"; representatives of Spokane Community Against Racism and the NAACP Spokane, "Racial Justice" and "The Power of Diverse Education"; Aaron Czyzewski of Food Lifeline, "Food Security" and Jessica, "Faithful Advocacy."

Registration is \$32 in person with lunch or \$25/person for a group of five+. Online is \$20 or \$15/person in a group. There are scholarships. The Fig Tree seeks sponsors and displays.

For information, call 535-4112, email [event@thefigtree.org](mailto:event@thefigtree.org) or register by Jan. 13 at [thefigtree.org/donate.html](http://thefigtree.org/donate.html) or at [secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/2023-legislative-conference](http://secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/2023-legislative-conference).

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### Around the World

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

#### Peace-building in Colombia includes women

In a letter to Colombian president Gustavo Petro Urrego and to the high commissioner for peace Danilo Rueda Rodríguez, the World Council of Churches (WCC), World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and ACT Alliance congratulated Colombia's government for appointing four women to the negotiation team for a peace agreement with the National Liberation Army. Half of the government delegation are women.

"Most peace negotiations have ignored or marginalized women," the letter reads. "They are consistently a minority of participants in peace initiatives; receive less attention than men in peace policies, and gender analysis rarely informs peace-building strategies.

"We are happy to see that challenged in your decision to establish a gender-equal delegation," the letter says, affirming women make a difference and congratulating Nigeria Rentería, Mabel Lara, María Jimena Duzan and Adelaida Jiménez—a pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Colombia and a member of the WCC, WCRC and ACT Alliance. The letter concludes: "We reaffirm our commitment to accompany the Colombian people in their search for lasting peace in the region."

#### Webinar on food crisis gathers people

A webinar on the global food crisis, responses and innovations brought voices of people from across the world in a frank assessment of the human face of the crisis, and why the world needs a fundamental shift in the way it manages food.

The hybrid event on Dec. 14 in Rome updated civil society and faith communities on the food crisis and the need for local, national and global policy responses. The meeting was organized by WCC, the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism for Relations with the UN Committee on World Food.

Kenneth Mtata, incoming WCC director of public witness and diakonia, said: "The most vulnerable communities have been battered by increasing inequality, poverty and hunger globally. This crisis has been in the making for a long time and begs for shifts in the way we manage the world's resources."

David Nabarro, co-lead of the UN Global Crisis Response Group, named interconnected challenges of food, energy and other insecurities, urging "a more coordinated global response to the ongoing multidimensional crisis."

André Luzzi, co-coordinator of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism Global Food Governance, said consultations across the world include more people in learning about the current situation of hunger, impacts of COVID-19, conflicts and crises on the right to food and food sovereignty.

#### WCC promotes social cohesion in Iraq

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has been engaged since 2017 with churches and religious leaders in Iraq to promote social cohesion as a means towards sustainable peace. After several interfaith consultations, representatives of Iraqi religious and ethnic components identified education, media and the constitution as pillars of a nation-building process to provide equal rights to all—including the freedom of religion and belief.

The WCC, its member churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, CAPNI (the Christian Aid Program in Northern Iraq) and a local interreligious civil organization began revising educational curriculums so they reflect the country's religious and ethnic diversity and promote equal citizenship.

"Iraq is considered a cradle of civilizations. The diversity of its religious and ethnic components is a heritage to all humanity," said Carla Khijoyan, WCC program executive for Peace Building in the Middle East, at one workshop. "Protecting this diversity implies establishing solid inclusive systems in social, political, legal and cultural disciplines. Through collective efforts, and with the indigenous Iraqi communities, we can promote models of inclusive citizenship, paving the way towards reconciliation and unity."

## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

### Benefit celebrates directory's 50th year

As The Fig Tree begins 2023, it is preparing for a 50th anniversary celebration of the annual Resource Directory, which began under the Spokane Christian Coalition.

It has grown from about a 30-page directory of congregations and ministries to a 200-page comprehensive directory of human services, health care, family and children's resources, senior services, justice, environment, human rights, arts and culture, and civic resources.

The Fig Tree will celebrate the directory at its 2023 Benefit Lunch, held 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Friday, March 3, at Gonzaga's Cataldo Hall and on Zoom, and from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m., Wednesday, March 15, on Zoom.

A video and speakers will share why so many service providers and service seekers consider it "gold." The theme is "Sharing Resources: Transforming Lives."

The Fig Tree is recruiting hosts for tables for the in-person

event and hosts for groups to gather while viewing the online presentation.

Guests will hear the stories and be invited to donate to The Fig Tree's work of sharing stories of people who are bringing hope by making a difference and sharing resources that really do transform lives, said Mary Stamp, editor.

For information and to volunteer to host and assist, call 535-4112 or email [kaye@thefigtree.org](mailto:kaye@thefigtree.org).

### Jewish Film Festival will be Jan. 28 to 30

Spokane Area Jewish Family Services is presenting its 19th annual Spokane Jewish Cultural Film Festival Jan. 28 to 30 in person at Gonzaga University's Jepson Center and Jan. 28 to Feb. 5 online.

This year the festival features five feature films, three mid-length films and two shorts that offer glimpses into the diversity

of Jewish culture, life and experiences.

Spokane's Jewish Cultural Film Festival enhances the cultural life of both the local Jewish community and the region as a whole, said Neal Schindler, director of Spokane Area Jewish Family Services (JFS), which is supported by festival proceeds.

JFS provides human services

that uplift seniors, low-income clients and people with disabilities through consultations, resource referrals, advocacy, home visits, food assistance, rent and utility assistance, transportation services and a medical lending closet.

For information, call 747-7394, email [director@sajfs.org](mailto:director@sajfs.org) or visit [sjcff2023.eventive.org](http://sjcff2023.eventive.org).

### Group seeks services in more languages

Mujeres in Action (MiA), which advocates for local government systems and services to be available in more languages, plans *Cultura y Lenguaje* to celebrate cultures and languages from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 7, at West Central Community Center, 1603 W. Belt.

To celebrate "Three Kings Day," there will be food boxes for the first 50 people, photos with three wise men, arts and crafts, and gifts for children.

Mujeres in Action works to end domestic violence by breaking the power and control that systems have over the immigrant community, which does not have language to access services, said Ana Trusty, director of communication.

Spokane's immigrant community is experiencing growth of eight percent, according to the 2020 Census. In the county, Latinos and Hispanics are 6.6 percent of the population. From 2010 to 2020, 14,090 people of Latino ancestry moved to the county, an increase of 66 percent, the most of any ethnic group.

Eight percent of Spokane

residents speak a language other than English as their first language, she reported.

While the main languages in the Spokane area are Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, Marshallese, Arabic and Vietnamese, few agencies offer services in a language other than English.

"Eight percent may seem like a small number, but it is more than 40,000 people," Ana said. "The number may be higher."

"When we envision the future here, we think of a city that is welcoming and equitable in providing services," Ana said. "We envision a city with access to courts, police, city and community services no matter how well English is spoken or understood."

"We envision a city where the rights of all are respected regardless of where they come from," she added.

"By not having access to services that legally require language access, the system oppresses immigrants. It is our responsibility to raise our voices and demand to be heard," Ana said.

"The systems can be difficult to navigate for people who speak English fluently, let alone people with limited English," she said. "This year we established good relations with many officials to try to improve the situation. We collaborated with the city for a language access plan and with the Superior Court to increase the number of informational signs and translation services."

The group has also worked with the police, sheriff and prosecutor to improve services for people with limited English.

For information, call 869-0876 or email [atrusty@miaspokane.org](mailto:atrusty@miaspokane.org).

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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### 350 Spokane sponsors conversation on climate

350 Spokane is sponsoring a Climate Policy Conversation at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 10, at the Community Building, 35 W. Main. Speakers from 350 Spokane and related organizations will describe climate and environmental-related bills that provide a better future for the planet. The organization is advancing several bills in the upcoming Washington State legislative session.

For information, visit [350spokane.org/events/climate-policy-conversation](http://350spokane.org/events/climate-policy-conversation).

### Chinese group celebrates Lunar New Year

The Spokane Chinese Association will present the 2023 Lunar New Year celebration Sunday, Jan. 15, at the Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox.

From 1 to 4 p.m., there will be a free culture fair with family activities, including Chinese calligraphy and painting, a Lunar New Year photo booth, cuisine sampling and cultural booths.

The evening ticketed show at 5 p.m. includes traditional Chinese folk dances, a Chinese choir, Tai Chi, Chinese martial arts, Peking Opera, Lion Dance and Chinese music.

There will also be drawings of Chinese red envelopes with prizes inside, ranging from \$25 to \$50.

For information, visit [secure.foxtheaterspokane.org/583/766](http://secure.foxtheaterspokane.org/583/766).

### Way to Justice hosts open house in new office

The Way to Justice is hosting an Open House Party from 3 to 6 p.m., Monday, Jan. 23, to celebrate another year of "Doing Justice" and to invite people to its new office at 321 W. Boone.

After three years, they have five full-time staff members, two interns and plan to hire a legal assistant.

The new office space is centrally located near city bus lines and the courthouse where they can offer programs and services to justice-impacted individuals across Washington State.

For information, visit [thewaytojustice.com](http://thewaytojustice.com).

### Sister Madonna Buder speaks at EWU

Sister Madonna Buder will speak about her running in marathons and triathlons as the "Iron Nun" at noon, Wednesday, Jan. 18, at Showalter Auditorium at Eastern Washington University in Cheney. She seeks to inspire students, employees and the community to have grit to persevere through adversity. A philanthropist, she invites people to contribute to health, wellness and sustaining Native Americans.

She started running at the age of 48, has completed more than 45 triathlons and was inducted into the USA Triathlon Hall of Fame in 2014. She was the featured athlete in the 2016 Summer Olympics Nike ad at the age of 86.

For information, call 359-6081, email [lmoodyl@ewu.edu](mailto:lmoodyl@ewu.edu) or visit [inside.ewu.edu/news/announcements/iron-nun-to-visit-eastern-on-jan-18](http://inside.ewu.edu/news/announcements/iron-nun-to-visit-eastern-on-jan-18).

### LDS Spokane Stake celebrates 75 years

From small beginnings in 1947 to a regional membership of over 50,000 strong, the Spokane Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recently celebrated 75 years in Spokane during December with music by the Spokane Stake Choir, a sing-a-long of Christmas songs and awarding donations to The Salvation Army and Teen and Kid Closet.

A pre-event presentation was given on the "Inland Northwest LDS Centennial," a film that documents the first 100 years of Latter-day Saints in the region.

## Homeless Connect offers services under one roof

The 11th Annual Homeless Connect will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 25, at the Spokane Convention Center, 202 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

The 2020 Spokane Homeless Connect saw 1,100 attendees seeking help from more than 100 service providers. Based on the 2020 Point-In-Time Count—1,559 individuals experiencing homelessness in Spokane—the 2020 Spokane Homeless Connect served 70 percent of them.

That year, Spokane Homeless Connect found more than a third of attendees were living outdoors or on the streets. Nearly half reported seeking food, clothing and assistance with housing.

With recent economic hardships, the 2023 Spokane Homeless Connect expects to serve as many or more than past years.

"After more than two years of COVID restrictions, the need for direct contact and services in the homeless community is greater than anything we've seen," said Connect chair, Kari Stevens. "We're working to build community and make sure individual service providers are connected to each other to maximize effectiveness and serve more unhoused and at-risk neighbors. Our homeless friends desperately need the help and hope that this event offers."

Sponsors, vendors and volunteers are three groups and individuals who make Spokane Homeless Connect possible:

Sponsors financially underwrite it. Vendors offer their services to attendees. Volunteers serve on the day of the event.

The Spokane Homeless Connect moved from the Salvation Army campus on East Nora to the Spokane Convention and Expo Center for the 2020 Connect, because more attendees and service

providers meant there was need for a larger facility.

The Spokane Convention Center became the logical choice because of its size and the convenience of its location downtown, along with being on a bus line and its proximity to many service agencies.

Traditionally, the timing of each year's Connect is coordinated with the City of Spokane's Community Housing and Human Services (CHHS) Office to coincide with the City's annual

"Point-In-Time" (PIT) Count of Spokane County's homeless population. The Connect serves as a way to count individuals who might otherwise be missed.

For information, visit [spokanevalleypartners.salsalabs.org/HomelessConnect2023/index.html](http://spokanevalleypartners.salsalabs.org/HomelessConnect2023/index.html).

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### SAVE the dates • HOST a group

## 2023 Benefit Events

### Lunch - Friday, March 3, 2023

Arrive: 11:30 a.m. • Program 12-1  
Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University

### Breakfast-Time - Wednesday, March 15

Program: 7:45-8:45 a.m. - Zoom  
Featuring recent stories of people whose lives have been transformed by the directory.

There is no charge to attend the event.

Guests are asked to donate to The Fig Tree

To R.S.V.P. email [event@thefigtree.org](mailto:event@thefigtree.org)



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# Women persisted to form university

Continued from page 1  
 new idea. Why don't we just start our own college?"

Kathleen replied: "You're crazy."

Martha replied, "Tell us one thing we can't do."

Kathleen tried to convince them this was impossible. She asked them to find a board of directors with influential, experienced, affluent people.

Martha and Violet worked their magic and came back with a list of people who committed to the board—important people from the Valley: the bishop, business and tribal leaders and more.

The process of beginning a college in Toppenish began in earnest with a feasibility study to design its programs.

The college opened in 1982 with 85 students in the empty McKinley Elementary School near Toppenish.

Its 1984 mission statement said the new institution was to provide quality, accessible higher education at the undergraduate and graduate levels to a multicultural population, which has been educationally isolated.

"Its unique educational programs are specifically tailored to the needs of a rural constituency consisting of approximately one-third Caucasian, one-third Hispanic and one-third American Indian students," Kathleen said.

The first board of directors chose the name Heritage College because they wanted it to be a name students from diverse cultures could identify with, she said.

According to Kathleen, the ensuing 40 years of growth and development has included "some minor miracles."

With the closure of Fort Wright College and Heritage purchasing its satellite programs, she was able to leverage status from the U.S. Department of Education to have students eligible for financial assistance.

After the Rajneeshpuram religious compound was closed down in Oregon in 1985, Heritage College acquired their portables to expand the campus classroom and office space.

In financial hardship, when Kathleen applied for a loan of several hundred thousand dollars

from the Intersharing Fund of the Sisters of the Holy Names, she received a grant.

She became a MacArthur Fellow in 1997 and used the financial award for research and development of programs at what was named Heritage University in 2004.

The university, where Kathleen was president until 2010 and with which she is still associated, has provided significant service to the Yakima Valley.

Heritage offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in more than 40 programs. It has awarded more than 10,000 degrees, with more than 85 percent of them to first-generation college students.

Now at 70 percent Hispanic and 11 percent Native American, it is identified federally as a Hispanic-serving and Native American nontribal-serving institution.

Its graduates have entered more than 50 areas of work, including as Spanish-speaking school social workers, business entrepreneurs and managers, and researchers on endangered species in Washington.

Historically, the university was founded as a nonsectarian institution, not affiliated with any church or religious institution.

However, given the role of more than 12 Sisters of the Holy Names, the Catholic religious congregation that has been part of Heritage since its founding, its educational values have been influenced by them, Kathleen said.

The Sisters of the Holy Names Congregation was founded in rural Quebec in 1843 to start schools in isolated towns where the poor had no educational opportunities.

Kathleen said they emphasized high academic standards that enkindled the mind in a personalized learning environment. They envisioned education as the full human development of each student—intellectually, professionally, spiritually and morally—while creating community and inspiring service to others. Over the years, they embedded these values in educational ventures pursued worldwide, with respect for various cultures.

Today Heritage has a director of spirituality on its staff.

Because of this background,

the tradition at events like graduations is to begin with a prayer and sacred song, most often led by a Yakama tribal member.

Since retiring as president, Kathleen continues to help the university serve the Yakima area. She and others at the university established the Ross Institute for Student Success, produced a video series to assist faculty and wrote a book, *Breakthrough Strategies*, published in 2017 by Harvard University Press. The book helps teachers of low-income families who haven't had the opportunity to go to college.

"They are exactly the kind of students that Heritage has become an expert in dealing with and really caring about," Kathleen explained.

"There's tremendous untapped genius and talent that is important for our society in the next generations," she added. "Heritage will continue to be a small institution that will do a good job."

"We continue to learn from our students the best ways to reach them, pull out their potential and motivate them to develop. Then we share that with other institutions around the nation," she said.

For information, visit [heritage.edu/about-heritage-university](http://heritage.edu/about-heritage-university).

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# Stumbling stones, street museums help nations face past injustices

Gen Heywood, pastor of Verdale United Church of Christ and convener of Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience, set out on a sabbatical last fall to learn about how other countries own the crimes of their past.

In Iceland, Germany and New Zealand, she found outdoor markers or museums, panels with photographic images that were exciting and surprising.

She shares reflections on stumbling stones and outdoor museums that remind people what happened on a spot in history.

**“We are a visual culture. People read pictures before we read words,”** Gen said.

Outdoor museums are simply saying, “This is what happened here.”

These “museums” are photographic or artistic panels that are as much as four- or five-foot tall by two-foot-wide.

For example, in Reykjavik there are photos on signs across the street from a church by the ice cream parlor. They are signs about the origin of the name of Reykjavik for the city and how streets were named.

A building that used to salt fish was painted white with black line drawings of fish that included a photographic display of several panels telling the history of its importance to the community. Photos are embedded in weather-protecting material. They show how people lived. Five plaques describe the fish salting industry that is no longer there.

**“I am interested in the idea of outdoor museums in contrast to the metal plaques on posts beside U.S. roads, identifying a battle site or home of a historic leader,”** Gen commented.

In Iceland and Germany, the plaques are public art, telling a piece of the history of a town. They are public art with a message about what happened at the spot, why and how it happened.

In addition to varied outdoor museums in Germany and Europe, there are stumbling stones or Stolpersteine.

One can take a pilgrimage through a city to find the stumbling stones, which commemorate victims of National Socialism before and during World War II.

More than 70,000 stumbling stones are scattered in streets and sidewalks of 1,200 cities in Europe. They honor all victims



**Stolperstein once were about accidentally stumbling over something to be forgotten. Now they have been reused to mean to remembered something important.** Photo Courtesy of Gen Heywood

of the Nazi regime—Jews, Sinti, Roma, the disabled, dissidents, blacks, gays and others.

**The stones, which are** about four inches square and made of polished brass, were the idea of Gunter Demnig of Cologne, originally as part of a 1992 art project to remember Roma and Sinti victims of the Holocaust. He installed the first one in 1996 in Berlin and has personally worded and installed each one.

Organizers started small, but the stumbling stones movement is now in 20 languages in 24 countries. People apply to install a stumbling stone and local groups research biographies of local victims, usually contacting relatives.

The words read, “Here lived” followed by the person’s name and birth year, and the place and date the person was arrested, Gen explained. Then it says what happened to the person: deported, died, murdered, escaped, fled, caught, liberated, sent to a mental hospital, Theresienstadt, Auschwitz or other concentration camp. Then it has the date the person was killed or died.

**Everyone knows about** the stumbling stones. People step over them every day or may stop, look, read and reflect.

The idea behind them is: “Don’t forget! Remember what happened.”

Germany also has many outdoor museums, Gen said.

“Near the Berlin Wall, half a block of panels in German and English describe what happened at the wall. There is also a museum on the Berlin Wall. One exhibit’s description of pre-Nazi Germany tells a story that sounds

To be fully human, we need to name the crimes of our national past precisely because these hurt and help us maintain that this shall never happen again.”

Some plaques are multimedia. Eight panels near the Berlin Wall are like a graphic novel, telling of a family who escaped from an office building tethered to a zipline. Another tells of people who died trying to escape and plunged to their deaths or were shot by guards.

“The presentations are factual. There is no shame or blame. This happened” Gen described.

**“Even if it hurts,** it is important to remember, reflect and find reconciliation. For example, people in the U.S. need to think about what happened during the enslavement of African Americans or the genocide of Indigenous people,” she said, repeating for emphasis, “Some things need to hurt.”

“The outdoor museums are a community’s expression of repentance, owning the crimes of their past,” Gen pointed out.

In Berlin, city leaders dedicated one block for a Jewish memorial. It consists of large pillars of many sizes. A person walking through the display can disappear among the pillars. The ground is rough, creating a tactile experience. Below this is an underground museum that continues the factual accounting

for the truth of the crimes that happened, she said.

In Leipzig, people had burned down a synagogue. In the open space left, the town has set up chairs where the sanctuary previously was, each chair waiting for someone who is missing.

Words in Hebrew, German and English tell how the townspeople, not just the Nazi officials, were compliant and drawn into the crimes, Gen said.

**“In Karlsruhe, I heard** that there was a four-foot-high, two-foot-wide panel at the railroad station, saying it was a place of deportation,” she continued. “I couldn’t find it. The mayor assured me it was there, and with more searching, I found it off to one side.”

Gen wondered why it was more hidden than other sites she had visited.

**“The stumbling stones and outdoor museums are means for Germans to call people to remember the names of victims and commit to never again engage in such an atrocity,”** said Gen. “We can learn to own the national crimes of our past. That requires touching our humanity and the anger and hurt it provokes so we can truly assert that we will never allow such an atrocity to happen again.”

For information, call 926-7173 or email genheywood@gmail.com.

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# OCE incubates tangible new ministries

*Continued from page 1*  
the City of Spokane.

He observed that while pastors may think of ways the church can work with the city, “often the city does not work with churches, assuming churches may be rigid.”

“Churches take space with large buildings and parking lots used once a week,” Mindy said.

Meeting with city leaders, church leaders asked how they could help the city on homelessness and other areas. When asked what the greatest need was, leaders said it was afternoon or evening childcare for single mothers.

Pacific Keep decided providing childcare was a good way to use their building. They started SMILE (Single Moms in Life Empowerment).

**Other projects are listed** on the website. A few include:

- The Gathering House requested funds to redevelop its parking lot for a farmers’ market and neighborhood garden.

- World Relief started a Friendship Center on the first floor with a \$25,000 grant matched by eight partner churches. The drop-in center engages refugees and immigrants in sewing, meals, classes, drivers’ education and learning English. Started in 2019, it just reopened after closing for COVID.

- Addressing Colville’s housing crisis, several small churches received a grant to partner with Hope Street, a housing project. They set up a center where homeless people could come for food and clothing. They will build tiny houses.

- A Whitworth alum at Mosaic Fellowship applied for \$5,000 to start music (guitar) lessons and an urban workers outreach.

- The City and Church Calling Community applied for \$25,000 for a Common Good Summit in February to gather people on opposite sides of an issue for a peaceful conversation. After two people present, participants will converse around tables.

“The summit will introduce a model for people to learn to talk with each other on issues that divide them,” Mindy said.

Other projects include Comunidad Cristiana de Spokane’s Family Orientation Center for immigrant families, Side by Side outreach for individuals with developmental disabilities and Spokane Chinese Christian Church’s Worship Formation and Cultural Festivals.

Details on projects are at whitworth.edu/cms/administration/church-engagement/calling-communities.



**Mindy Smith**  
Photo Courtesy of Whitworth

**The Academy of Christian Discipleship** provides study guides and videos for groups to engage on topics, such as church history, theology, Bible study and missional churches.

It trains members to move from being consumers to being disciples as “lifelong apprentices to Jesus” to strengthen churches. Beyond study, participants are to put their learning into practice and to live their faith.

Details are at whitworth.edu/cms/administration/church-engagement/academy-of-christian-discipleship/

**Resilient Church cohorts** meet regularly to discover their past and identity through stories of their community, to discern the present in terms of their neighborhood and other contexts, and to design a resilient future for themselves.

“Is the church denominational or nondenominational? Did it start recently or does it have a long history?” These are some of the questions asked to help churches reflect on their church’s story.

Groups talk with sociologists, urban planners and neighbors to learn who and where they are now, as well as their mission, involvement and impact.

Professors help churches find how their past and present can flow into a resilient future.

“We recognize that churches are in difficult times,” Mindy said. “How can they be significant in the next 10 years? We want churches to thrive.”

“As we organize groups, we are sensitive to issues of women in leadership and the varying church structures,” she said. “Conversations may be hard, so participants must be committed to come regularly.”

**Her ministry with OCE** flows from her life and professional journey.

Mindy’s family moved from San Diego to Colorado Springs with her father’s work on the

national staff of Young Life. Her family knew Terry McGonigal, who became dean of spiritual life at Whitworth, serving from 1994 through 2021.

In 1994, Mindy came to study theology at Whitworth, where she was active in Young Life (YL). She served on YL staff after graduating in 1998. Called to ministry, she went to Princeton Theological Seminary and earned a master’s in divinity in 2006.

**In 2008, she returned** to Whitworth as campus pastor and was ordained through the Inland Northwest Presbytery. For 10 years, she developed ministry programs, taught pastoral care and ministry training and preached at weekly chapel services, working with Terry, who began the OCE in 2016. Mindy earned a doctorate in ministry in 2018 at Portland Seminary, returned as associate of the OCE and then succeeded Terry as director when he retired in 2021.

“Through our programs, we remind churches that many have faced struggles to keep going, but God is a God of resources, life and hope,” she said.

“It is a gift to be part of this work serving churches and encouraging pastors,” Mindy said.

For information, call 777-4434 or email oce@whitworth.edu.

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## SPOKANE 2023 LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

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Presented by Spokane Chinese Association

# Latah Books founder-publisher respects its authors as partners

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

Latah Books is named for “the creek that staff have lived, worked, recreated and meditated beside and fallen in love with for many years,” said Jon Gosch, founder, publisher and executive editor.

His inspiration since starting the publishing house in 2018 has come from the writers who apply to have their books published, even though on average just one to two percent of submissions are among the six to eight books Latah Books publishes each year.

**Jon’s background** as a writer and author wanting to get his own work out into the world has led him to see authors as partners who deserve respect.

“There is a sense that our books are our babies. We’ve been gestating them for months or years. It takes care to get them into the world,” he said. “So, I am honored to be part of the process.”

From his perspective, many people in the publishing industry are introverted.

“I love the collaborative aspects of the job and the synergy to work with authors to make their books better,” he said. “I know this and have seen with our own books how impactful a book can be on someone’s life.”

“I preach the gospel that books can influence and can literally save a person’s life. One of our books has made a difference helping veterans, as one author told of the demons that led him to consider suicide,” he said. “The story in *From Survivor to Surgeon*, about a former refugee from Vietnam, is another model for that.”

“Nothing is more meaningful or impactful than the value of publishing. That drives me to keep doing it,” Jon said.

In divisive times such as these, he believes Latah Books, at 331 W. Main, can build bridges to help bring people together.

Part of its mission is to represent, as much as possible, authors from blue-collar and working-class backgrounds, and writers from rural communities.

“Often those authors are overlooked,” Jon said. “People in rural areas do not have as much access to publishers, but they have important stories to share.”

“It’s important to represent values and be apolitical. We see people as people, and humans from all spectrums need to be able to share their stories,” he continued.

In Jon’s life, one thing has naturally led to another. He studied creative writing and wrote for the school paper at the University of Washington.



Jon Gosch Photo Courtesy of Latah Books

He wanted to write books and help others with books since he started writing books as a second grader.

“A teacher distributed my book to students. That’s where I got my first fix,” he said.

**In his 20s, Jon wrote** two novels. One was *Deep Fire Rise* from his experience growing up in Longview, near Mt. St. Helens.

While looking for a publisher, he began editing books for other authors, including Michael Gurian and Terry Trueman.

Knowing several authors who were seeking a publisher, he decided to start his own publishing company. As he was launching this venture, he had another job, but found book publishing went better than expected.

**The venture grew** over the last five years, so even though Latah Books is relatively young, they publish six to eight titles a year.

“While we focus on authors from this region, we pick authors from anywhere in the country if we are excited about what they write,” said Jon.

The focus is on narrative-driven works with a great story, more than just information. They publish fiction, nonfiction, historical fiction, narrative and mystery thrillers.

In nonfiction, Latah Books concentrates on memoirs, anthologies—like one on the Community Building—and narrative nonfiction—like Michael Gurian’s books on childhood development.

They had success with *Freaks of a Feather: A Marine Grunt’s Memoir*, in which Kacy Tellessen from Spangle shared his

trials and tribulations during the Iraq War and his struggles with post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD).

“It is used by area veterans’ groups to help other veterans recover from PTSD,” Jon said.

**Another memoir is** *Spy Daughter, Queer Girl: In Search of Truth and Acceptance in a Family of Secrets*, about a woman whose father was a CIA spy, and her quest to unearth secrets about his role in the CIA during the Cold War, Cuban Missile Crisis and coup in Greece, as well as secrets about her mother’s mental health and her identity as a queer woman.

A recent biography, *The Boy Who Fell to Shore: The Extraordinary Life and Mysterious Disappearance of Thomas Thor Tangvald* by Charles Doane, recounts how the author lived his whole life at sea and thought only weird people stayed on land. He suffered many tragedies in the community of blue water sailors who are always at sea.

“We print fairly eclectic material, and we are locally rooted,” Jon said.

Other genres include an outdoor adventure coming out in March as a collection of essays in a memoir format: *All the Things: Mountain Misadventure, Relationships, and Other Hazards of an Off-Grid Life*, by Ammi Midstokke, a columnist for the Spokesman-Review. She writes about living as a mom off the grid in rural Idaho, and the challenges of fixing up a house in the boonies with little knowledge.

*From Survivor to Surgeon: A Refugee’s Memoir of Perseverance and Purpose* was co-written with Paul Luu, M.D., and Christopher Maccini, who shares Paul’s experience coming to the U.S. as a refugee from Vietnam among the “boat people.” He learned

English, earned a GED, studied in college and medical school, and eventually became a surgeon.

Christopher earned a master’s in fine arts from Eastern Washington University, worked with Spokane Public Radio and is now working for National Public Radio and living in Spokane. Their book is used in ESL classes at the Adult Education program in Spokane Community College and at North Central High School.

**Jon said it helps** young refugees and immigrants move from a mindset of just taking readily-available jobs to support their family to realizing there are other paths if they want professional careers.

*A Shrug of the Shoulders* shares stories about Japanese internment, by Elaine Cockrell, who lives in Longview. Her grandparents owned a beet farm that hosted Japanese workers during World War II as an alternative to the internment program. Rather than being cooped up in an internment camp, they were gainfully employed members of U.S. society.

“*One Block Revolution: 20 Years of the Community Building*, the story of the development of the Community Building Block on Main Street in Spokane, reveals the neighborhood life that the Community Building campus has fostered, its green energy, food co-op, nonprofit office space, a food court and more,” said Jon.

**Summer Hess compiled** first-hand accounts of contributors sharing what this type of community project takes.

The number of copies per print varies. Some titles sell more than 10,000 copies and others print 2,000. Typically, the runs are small. Many books are also sold as digital or audio books.

“With so many demands on

people’s attention, a book needs to be beautiful to hold attention to the story. People judge a book by its cover, so we make it sharp and appealing,” said Jon.

Kevin Breen, a graduate from the Eastern Washington University master in fine arts program, is the lead designer.

**Latah Books arranges** for its authors read at the Get Lit Festival.

“Our authors are always looking for opportunities to share their stories,” he said.

Typically, authors reach out to community groups. Some opportunities to read come through word of mouth or friends.

“We have built respect. Authors are interested in submitting their manuscripts because they trust us. Seeing reviews and endorsements helps them recognize that their books will be given the same level of respect and love as we give our other authors,” said Jon.

For information, call 394-4740 or email [jon@latahbooks.com](mailto:jon@latahbooks.com).

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## LCSNW holds January event on Human Trafficking Month

At the 2023 Human Trafficking Awareness Month Training and Reception, Lutheran Community Services Northwest's certified crime victim advocates will answer questions about human trafficking and what is being done in the community to combat and prevent it.

The training event starts at 3 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 11, at the Spokane Central Library, 906 W. Main Ave., followed by a 4:30 reception at nx<sup>w</sup>yx<sup>w</sup>yetk<sup>w</sup> Hall.

LCSNW lists the following questions the event will address:

- What is human trafficking?
- Why is this happening in Spokane?
- Legalities of Human Traf-

ficking: Act, Means, Purpose

- Red Flags
- The Inland Northwest Human Trafficking Task Force: who are they and what do they do?

There will be a candlelight moment of silence for survivors of human trafficking, sharing local successes in addressing and preventing it and visual storytelling such as the Silhouette Project and art created by refugee trafficking survivors.

For information, email [adougherty@lcsnw.org](mailto:adougherty@lcsnw.org), visit [lcsnw.org/Spokane](http://lcsnw.org/Spokane) or register at [eventbrite.com/e/2023-human-trafficking-awareness-month-training-reception-tickets-464627371977](https://eventbrite.com/e/2023-human-trafficking-awareness-month-training-reception-tickets-464627371977).

## 'Care for Water' is 2023 theme

"Care for Water" is the theme for a second Hope for Creation Conference on Saturday, April 22, at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John. That topic is the second Expo '74 areas of focus: Land, Water and Air.

"Care of water is central to the care of creation," said organizer John Wallingford.

"The supply and purity of water in Spokane and the Columbia River watershed is a great treasure," he explained.

"Water is honored in many faith traditions," he added. "We will put faith and science together in looking at how we care for water."

The conference will include lectures, discussion groups, a

street fair with music, food and exhibitors, and an Earth Day vigil.

John said they are in the process of recruiting people to give presentations.

For information, call 484-919-4782 or email [jwallingford@gmail.com](mailto:jwallingford@gmail.com).




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# Safety in Layers

*Before braving the winter, don't forget to layer on the protection.*

A flu and updated COVID-19 vaccination is the perfect first layer to protect your immune system.



Next add some loose layers you can adjust to keep the core part of your body warm.



Add a water-resistant coat to keep moisture from cooling down the inside layers.



Finally, remember your nose, ears, cheeks, chin, toes, and fingers are at the most at risk for frostbite so consider wearing a hat, scarf, gloves or mittens, and some water-resistant boots.



When you take your child (ages 0-18 years) to a health clinic in Washington state, you might have to pay a small charge for getting the shot and for the office visit, but you will not be charged for the vaccine itself. Spokane Regional Health District assures nondiscrimination in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. To file a complaint or to request more information, reasonable accommodations, or language translations, contact 509.324.1501 or visit [srhd.org](http://srhd.org). Created: December 2022.



## Second Harvest food bank supplies are low entering 2023

In a normal month, Second Harvest Inland Northwest distributes between 2.6 and 3 million pounds of food to more than 200 partners in 21 counties of Eastern Washington and five counties of North Idaho, according to Eric Williams, community partnerships director of Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest.

"In January, we will be lucky if we can distribute between 1.8 and 1.9 million pounds, so we had to notify 80 of our partners that we wouldn't be able to distribute food to them until we can get more supplies," he said.

This disruption results from a combination of factors—high inflation, lower crop production and a decrease in donations all

at the same time.

"High inflation, particularly of food prices, means that people need us more," Eric said, "but at the same time with the decrease in food and the increase in gas prices, we simply can't afford to spend the \$1,000 or so it takes to put gas in our two semi-trucks for delivery when they are only a third or a fourth full."

The good news at this time for Second Harvest is that they are still able to continue food distribution for those partners who come each month to pick up their own food and continue the Mobile Market and Bite2Go programs as usual.

In the Mobile Market program, a refrigerated truck trans-

ports 8,000 to 10,000 pounds of food to community centers, church parking lots, businesses, and other locations. Volunteers can deliver food to as many as 300 families and usually operate in rural areas where there is less access to fresh produce and other perishable foods.

A second part of the program allows Second Harvest to deliver food directly to people facing hunger with a converted public bus transformed into a walk-through market. The bus can visit sites that larger food delivery trucks can't access and allows Second Harvest to increase the number and frequency of its food access points. The bus also targets specific populations like families with

children or seniors in retirement communities. Up to 75 families receive food at each distribution.

Second Harvest's Bite2Go weekend backpack program, in partnership with At The Core, provides nearly 6,000 elementary, middle and high school students easy-to-open, single-serving, nutritious, nonperishable food for meals and snacks during the school year.

Eric praised the generosity of the many people who make the program possible: farmers, grocery store managers and volunteers. At the same time, he acknowledged that they need more help and volunteers.

For information, call 534-6678 or visit [2-harvest.org](http://2-harvest.org) or visit [northwestharvest.org](http://northwestharvest.org).



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## Conference addresses challenges of hate

"The Challenges of Hate in the 21st Century" is the theme for the 7th International Conference on Hate Studies, Thursday to Saturday, April 20 to 22 at Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene St. and virtually.

The conference is an interdisciplinary academic forum on hate, related social problems and ways to create socially just and inclusive communities.

The goal is to help educators, researchers, advocates and others better analyze and counter hatred in its various manifestations to lead to communities committed to peace, human rights and justice, said Kristine Hoover, past and continuing director.

She pointed out that hate groups and their ideologies continue to evolve and repackage old prejudices in new ways, by exploiting changing technologies and forming alliances across borders.

"These evolutions pose new challenges for those seeking to counter hate in its many forms," she said.

The conference convenes academics, journalists, law enforcement, educators, civil servants, NGOs, human rights experts and community organizers in a dialogue about hatred, community engagement and justice.

Kristine sees it as important "to name the illness and problem, because we can't address

what we can't name."

As an example, she told of a video presented at the fall Kootenai County Task Force for Human Relations banquet, talking of the values of who North Idaho is and what defines it.

The point was that North Idaho is a community deeply committed to justice, equity and welcoming community. It is also a community where exclusion happens, and people have experienced harm.

"We have to name and address that as we partner with the region, nation and world," Kristine said.

On the West Coast, every even year, there is an international conference in the spring and in odd years, a U.S. conference.

Adding to that is the Global Summit to Eradicate Hate, which grew out of the 2018 extremist attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh that happens in the fall on the East Coast.

"All of us are working toward a vision of a safer, more beloved community," Kristine said.

Organizers of the Spokane conference anticipate an interdisciplinary, cross-section of participants from international, national and regional audiences, engaging in sessions to analyze and counter hatred in its various manifestations and lead to greater commitments to peace,

human rights and justice.

Registration fees are on a sliding scale, with a "living light" reduced rate for low-income attendees and free for college students.

Presenters are to register and submit proposals by Feb. 15.

For information, visit [gonzaga.edu/iochs](http://gonzaga.edu/iochs).

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## The Fig Tree draws readers into the journey to gender justice in media

In Afghanistan, women are denied access to higher education.

In Iran, protesters are jailed for challenging police killing a woman accused of improperly wearing her hijab.

Now gender cyberviolence seeps in with new ways to demean women.

Inequalities in the workplace throughout the U.S. and world continue to hire women part time for lower pay.

Women reporters need to out-compete men at doing media according to gender-biased values and news definitions.

Women still face barriers to advancement and various forms of micro-aggressions in the work place.

Entering journalism in the 1960s, I thought women's liberation had happened, but as a journalist I experienced bias in employment and in expectations of how to frame articles for newspapers.

The way we cover stories in The Fig Tree has been inspired by a Women in Media class in 1978 at the University of Oregon, by the 6th Assembly World Council of Churches (WCC) document on Credible Communication, by the WCC's Just Community of Women and Men, by participation in the Northwest Alliance for Media Literacy and by the World Association of Christian Communication (WACC), along with ongoing experience.

WACC works to enable people to be

seen and heard as it addresses gender-based violence in media content. WACC invites people of faith to join the gender justice movement.

A webinar on "Rooting out Gender Cyberviolence" was part of the Global 16 Days of Action against gender-based violence from Nov. 25 to Dec. 10.

WACC Deputy General Secretary Sara Speicher told of a framework for churches and groups to be trained in social media monitoring, to do research collectively and to find tools to raise awareness in their communities and make recommendations for change to policy makers and social media companies.

"Let us be mindful that overcoming sexual- and gender-based violence is a 24-hours-a-day event, every single day of the week. May we all find God's strength and grace to protect, to prevent and to accompany," said Sara.

In addition, the WACC and International Federation of Journalists (IJF) have collaborated to publish the "Learning Resource Kit for Gender-Ethical Journalism and Media House Policy" to address gender disparities in news media content.

The kit's introduction points out that "little progress has been made since the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action called for more gender sensitivity in the media and self-regulatory mechanisms to

eliminate gender-biased programming. Research such as the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) shows just how marginalized women remain in the news. In 2010, the GMMP revealed that women make up only 24 percent of the people heard, read about or seen in the news."

The IFJ launched the Ethical Journalism Initiative to "confront ongoing discrimination in the news and reconnect journalists to their mission of enforcing core ethical standards," which call for challenging sensationalism and stereotypes, checking facts, abiding by codes of conduct, supporting independent self-regulatory bodies to uphold media quality and rebuild trust in the news.

Fair gender portrayal is essential, the IJF says, if media—including social media and online news—hope to reflect the role women and men play in society and "avoid unfair and outdated stereotypes."

The kit explores the impact of the gender gap in news content and identifies gender bias. In it, Book 1 is on conceptual issues pertaining to gender, media and professional ethics, and Book 2 is on gender-ethical reporting guidelines.

The books do not replace current media guidelines or ethics codes about not discriminating on gender, but add practical guidelines including women's representation in media content and gender balance

in bylines and media structures.

"Gender portrayal is not a women's issue," the introduction asserts. "Portraying gender in a fair, ethical manner will only occur when it becomes a concern for everyone."

It adds that "the media content production environment is fraught with structural, ideological and practical complexities" that generate gender disparities and ways they influence perceptions of and relationships between women and men.

Our readers have been part of the journey to gender justice in media. The Fig Tree newspaper seeks to model coverage that fosters a just community of women and men in churches, faith communities, in society and the world. We have written about it through the years, and highlight the wisdom of women and men in editorials, articles, bylines and subjects, as well as in inclusion of diverse faith, racial, cultural, generational communities.

We invite people to be partners to experience a model of solidarity in doing justice journalism, peace journalism, solutions journalism, inclusive journalism, faithful journalism that covers oft-neglected, overlooked, sidelined, misrepresented, stereotyped communities, including religion itself. We seek to embody those values in our organization, as well as on our pages.

Mary Stamp - Editor

Plenary

## Sounding Board

Comments

## Delegates reflect on 'God's Love in Christ for the Whole Creation'

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

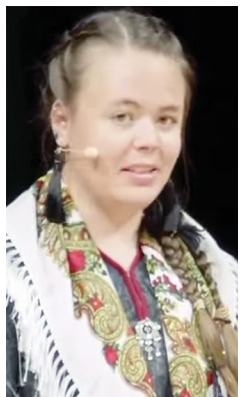
The plenaries at the World Council of Churches (WCC) merge concerns of the people of churches today with theological reflection on God's word in Christian and Hebrew scriptures.

"The Purpose of God's Love in Christ for the Whole Creation" was the theme of the initial plenary of the WCC's 11th Assembly, held on Sept. 1, in Karlsruhe, Germany.

Leading the session was Agnes Abuom of the Anglican Church of Kenya. She has served as moderator of the WCC Central Committee and the 11th Assembly business plenaries. She is the first woman and the first African to hold this post.

The session focused on the role of churches in the climate crisis and the situation in the Middle East. It was threaded together by a conversation with two young delegates reflecting on the issues from their perspective guided by questions Agnes asked.

The first of young delegates was Julia Rensberg, representing the



Julia Rensberg

indigenous Sámi Council in the Swedish Church. She works for the Sámi youth association and for Indigenous rights in Sápmi. The second was Bjorn Warde, a delegate and pastor from the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, who collaborates

with mission groups in the Caribbean consulting on gender-based and family violence outreach and youth empowerment.

Agnes began by asking Julia and Bjorn what the assembly theme said to them.

Bjorn reflected that in the Caribbean there is reckless exploitation of natural resources, causing flooding, pollution and deforestation.

"We hear this earth as she cries out to us, especially to the youth. She cries out for reconciliation," he said.

From the perspective of an indigenous youth, Julia explained, "Today we indigenous live at the border of the climate crisis. We are the firsthand witnesses of the ice melting, the sea rising, the forests drying out and becoming infertile. We need to live and protect Mother Earth."

Following these reflections, Agnes invited Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon from the Greek Orthodox Church in France to reflect theologically on the theme.

Metropolitan Emmanuel echoed the concerns of the young people, emphasizing that the challenges of ecological degradation and climate change are not solely the consequence of globalization, made manifest in geopolitics and economics, but they have also been justified by misguided philosophy and theology.



Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon

He asked: "Are we not misled in seeing ourselves as masters and possessors of nature, just as we are misled in seeing ourselves as masters and possessors of the faith? Just as nature is not to be exploited for self-gain, our faith should not be either."

Emmanuel concluded his reflection, explaining that "to reconcile is above all to heal the evils of history, the scars of time, mutual misunderstandings, conflicts of memory and fratricidal hatreds. In this sense, the division between Christians to which we intend to respond by praying for the unity of the Churches is a spiritual wound, with shared responsibilities—whether accepted or not."

Agnes asked the young people to continue the conversation: "How does this keynote relate to your context?"

Julia reiterated that for indigenous their existence relies on Mother Earth, and "she is ours to protect," while Bjorn affirmed that the paradise that is the Caribbean is part of their identity and they feel the responsibility of taking care of creation.

Again, Agnes returned with a question: "How would the ecumenical cooperation of churches foster the concerns of young people and amplify your voice?"

Julia replied that "ecumenical cooperation can unite us and this has given

her a spark of hope," while Bjorn acknowledged that we haven't been good stewards and "our work for a better future involves looking at innovation and technologies that embrace clean energy so that we can reduce the impact of the injustices that we have wrought on the planet."

The second half of the plenary centered on a theological reflection on reconciliation and unity in the Middle East, as presented by Archbishop Angaelos, the first Coptic Archbishop of London. Although currently living in London, the Archbishop is Egyptian and brought that perspective to his reflection.

Using the metaphor of a tree with many branches, leaves and strong roots, Angaelos reminded the assembly that "the mission of the church is to be one." He spoke specifically of the context of the Middle East, saying "Christianity was never exported to the Middle East. It is the source of the church from which our richness today is derived, but the source is a historical reality."

He also sees that the mission of the church is "to reconcile as we have been reconciled and to be vehicles of that reconciliation." He sees that the sisters and brothers of the church are a reconciling force today in Iraq, Syria, Israel-Palestine, Egypt and even as far as Armenia. "There is a transformation from a time of conflict and persecution to a time of presence, transfiguration and witness."

He cautioned the assembly to be careful not to caricature our brothers and sisters in the Middle East merely from the perspective of victims because they are also witnesses.

He drew on the images of Coptic iconography, saying that "martyrdom in our church is never depicted in a state of suffering but in the glory of paradise awaiting the kingdom."

Finally, Agnes once again questioned the young people, referring to their participation in a justice and peace pilgrimage that occurred before the 11th Assembly.

"How in your listening today and in the pilgrimage, does the theme of reconciliation resonate with you and give you hope?" she asked.

Julia ended the session by calling for truth-telling about the action of violence through colonization, which continues today: "Christ's healing is needed for both humans and nature."

Bjorn finds that voices of youth arise above other voices when there is injustice, and said it is important that these voices lead to action.

For information, visit [oikoumene.org/assembly/assembly-live#thematic-plenaries](http://oikoumene.org/assembly/assembly-live#thematic-plenaries).



Coptic Archbishop Angaelos of France



Bjorn Warde

# Calendar of Events

Area codes are (509) unless otherwise listed.

- Feb 1-25 • Thrift Store Art Show**, The Liberty Gallery, Historic Liberty Gallery, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., 327-6920
- Jan 5 • Faith Action Network (FAN) Legislative Preview**, 6 p.m., online, fanwa.org
- Jan 7 • Cultura y Lenguaje: Los Tres Reyes Magos Llegan a Spokane**, Three Kings event, Mujeres in Action, West Central Community Center, 1605 N Belt, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., 599-5527, atrusty@miaspokane.org
- Great Masterpieces for Cello and Piano**, Kroc Center, 2 p.m., krocda.org/kroc-cda/events
- Jan 8 • FAN Advocacy 101**, 2 p.m., online, fanwa.org
- Art History Lecture Series: Impressions of American Diversity**, Meredith Shimizu on Robert Henri's portraits of individuals from diverse backgrounds, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 2316 W 1st, 2 p.m., 456-3931
- Jan 9 • Nonprofit Association of Washington Legislative Kick-Off**, 1 to 2 p.m., online nonprofitwa.org/nawa-events/
- Jan 10 • Peace and Justice Action Committee**, PJALS, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., jarcher@pjals.org
- Climate Policy Conversation**, 350 Spokane, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 6:30 p.m., 350spokane.org/events/climate-policy-conversation
- Jan 11 • Hispanic Business Professional Assn Sabes Qué? Monthly Meeting**, Fiesta Mexicana, 1227 S. Grand Blvd, 6 to 7:30 p.m., hbpaofspokane.org
- Skate for a Cause: Odyssey Youth Movement**, Numerica Skate Ribbon, 720 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, 4 to 8 p.m., 625-6600
- 2023 Human Trafficking Awareness Month Reception**, training and vigil, Spokane Public Library, 906 W. Main, 3 p.m., reception 4:30 p.m., adougherty@lcsnw.org or lcsnw.org/Spokane
- Jan 12 • 36th annual MLK Kids Program** with 5th Graders from Coeur d'Alene at North Idaho College, Schuler Performing Arts Center, Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations, 9:30 a.m.
- Jan 12, 13, 14 • Free Bookfair**, Northwest Community Center, Page 42 Book Stores, 4001 N. Cook, Th-F 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., 487-1603
- Jan 12, 26 • Showing up for Racial Justice**, PJALS, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., slichty@pjals.org
- Jan 13 • Living Voices: Within the Silence**, impact of Executive Order 9066 that imprisoned Japanese Americans in WWII, Panida Theater, 300 N. 1st, Sandpoint, 208-263-9191
- Jan 15 • Lunar New Year Celebration**, culture fair and performances, Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 1 to 6:30 p.m., 280-0889, secure.foxtheaterspokane.org/583/766
- Jan 15, 16 • Martin Luther King Jr Day Celebrations**, Watch for announcements on the Commemoration Service Sunday and the Unity March and Resource Fair, Monday, 868-0856, mlkspokane.org
- NAACP General Membership Meeting**, Community Building, 35 W. Main, or virtual, 7 p.m., spokanenaacp@gmail.com
- Jan 17 • Humanity in Print: Literature and Human Rights**, Richard Middleton Kaplan, CWU Liberal Studies Program, 3 p.m. online, humanities.org
- Jan 18 • Dean's Speaker Series Unplugged**, Sister Madonna Buder the "Iron Nun," EWU Showalter Hall Auditorium, 12 to 1 p.m., 359-6081, lmoody1@ewu.edu
- Skate for a Cause: Spokane Shakespeare Society**, Numerica Skate Ribbon, 720 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, 4 to 8 p.m., 625-6600
- Jan 20 • Nonprofit Association of Washington Nonprofit Office Hour: Policy and Advocacy**, 12 to 1 p.m., online nonprofitwa.org/event/online-office-hour-policy-advocacy
- Jan 20, 21 • Banff Mountain Film Festival**, Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague, 7 p.m., 227-7404
- Silent Weekend Retreat for Men and Women**, "Work Out Your Salvation!", Fr. Wade L.J. Menezes, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr, ihrc.net
- Jan 21 • Eastern Washington Legislative Conference**, "Caring for our Common Home," Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, 115 N. Raymond, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., 216-6090, thefigtree.org
- West Valley Outdoor Learning Center Open House**, 8706 E. Upriver, Spokane Valley, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 340-1028
- Jan 21, 22 • Spokane Symphony Masterworks 5: Slatkin**, Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, Sat 7:30 p.m., Sun 3 p.m., 624-1200
- Jan 24 • Free FAFSA Completion Night** for students and returning adults, Northeast Community Center, 4001 N. Cook, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 209-7227, info@necommunitycenter.com
- Jan 25 • Silent Day of Prayer**, The Trouble of Anger, Sr. Mary Eucharista, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., ihrc.net
- Spokane Homeless Connect**, Spokane Homeless Coalition, Spokane Convention Center, 202 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., spokanevalleypartners.salsalabs.org/HomelessConnect2023/index.html
- Skate for a Cause: Generation Alive**, Numerica Skate Ribbon, 720 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, 4 to 8 p.m., 625-6600
- Jan 27-29 • Silent Weekend Ignatian Retreat** for Men and Women, Experiencing God, Our Interior Movements Understood Using IFS and St. Ignatius' Rules for Discernment, Fr. Jeff Putthoff, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6 p.m. to 1 p.m., ihrc.net
- Banff Film Festival**, Kroc Center, 7 p.m., krocda.org/kroc-cda/events
- Jan 28 • Friends of the Moran Prairie Library Book Sale**, Moran Prairie Library, 6004 S. Regal, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 893-8340
- Batik Art Workshop** with Nicholas Sironka, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 2316 W. 1st, 10:30 a.m., 456-3931
- Jan 28-30 • Spokane Jewish Cultural Film Festival**, Spokane Area Jewish Family Services, Gonzaga University Jepson Center, in person, online to Feb. 5, 747-7394, director@sajfs.org or sjcff2023.eventive.org
- Spokane's Lunar New Year**, celebration of the Lunar New Year, ANHPI Business Expo, Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, 1 to 7 p.m., 928-9664
- Jan 29 • Spokane Youth Symphony: Celebration**, Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 4 p.m., 624-1200
- Feb 1 • The Fig Tree Distribution and Mailing**, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 535-4112
- Feb 2 • The Fig Tree Benefit and Board Meeting**, 12 to 3 p.m. 535-4112, mary@thefigtree.org
- Feb 3-4 • Silent 24-Hour Retreat** for Men and Women on the Power of Prayer, Trust and Power: Conversations with God, Sr. Mary Eucharista, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 4:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., ihrc.net
- Weds • Open Meditation**, Spokane Buddhist Temple, 927 S. Perry, 5:30 to 7 a.m., 206-979-5570
- Fris • Prayers for Racial Justice**, interfaith gathering, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1 p.m. and hybrid, 863-4461

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deb.bisenius@gmail.com  
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# Bishops issue statement for care of creation in Lower Snake River

The five Catholic bishops of Washington State developed and signed, "Caring for Creation and the Common Good in the Lower Snake River Region," this fall, reported Sr. Jessica Zimmerle, advocacy director at Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light (WA IPL)—who supports this project with the intertribal nonprofit Se'Si'Le—and the Washington State Catholic Conference.

The Most Rev. Paul Etienne, Archbishop of Seattle, Bishop Thomas Daly of the Diocese of Spokane, Bishop Joseph Tyson of the Diocese of Yakima, and Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Frank Schuster, auxiliary bishops of the Archdiocese of Seattle, have signed the statement, which is informed by Catholic social teaching and Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, *Laudato si'*.

They were acting in solidarity, inspired by conversations with Native leaders from Se'Si'Le, who are bringing Indigenous spiritual law into the mainstream environmental movement.

The 2022 statement builds on the 2001 international pastoral letter, "The Columbia River Watershed: Caring for Creation and the Common Good," by Catholic bishops of the region.

It also follows promises in the Letter of Apology from Northwest Christian Leaders to Native Nations, signed in 1987 and again in 1997 by bishops and denominational leaders. The letter was organized by the Church Council of Greater Seattle and proposed by tribal leaders seeking solidarity in protecting their sacred land and waters.

"We are the salmon people," said Jay Julius of the Lummi Nation and president of Se'Si'Le. "Our spirit and soul would be crushed if we had no salmon."

JoDe Goudy of the Yakama Nation and vice-president of Se'Si'Le, added that "all Salmon Nations and Peoples hinge on a right and respectful relationship with the salmon. Survival of Indigenous identity and culture depends on the salmon."

In the statement, the bishops

write, "We acknowledge that the decline of salmon and loss of their original habitat poses a threat to the spiritual life ways of the Original Peoples of the Northwest. In response to requests for solidarity with Indigenous leaders, we recognize that deliberate action is necessary to find ways to restore the health of the salmon of the region."

They call on "federal and state policy makers to develop and implement a holistic plan for the Lower Snake River region that seeks input from the Original Peoples of Washington as principal dialogue partners, as well as input from farmers, community members and concerned citizens."

The archbishop presented the statement to Native leaders at the International Indigenous Salmon Seas Symposium on Sunday, Oct. 30.

The event featured Indigenous leaders from the three last great salmon seas sharing ceremony, storytelling and knowledge about salmon stewardship.

Earth Ministry/WA IPL is mobilizing the faith community to support tribally led and endorsed salmon recovery efforts on the Lower Snake River.

It seeks to bring a moral message that holds the U.S. government accountable to uphold promises to Native Nations, invest in community-centered solutions and restore abundant salmon and orca runs.

The bishops write, "We must all come together to care for our common home," said Jessica.

She reported that the Columbia-Snake River Basin was once one of the world's most productive salmon habitats. Historically, the entire basin was home to 10 to 16 million salmon a year. As recently as the 1950s, nearly 130,000 wild salmon returned to the Snake River alone.

Within a lifetime, salmon runs have plummeted below 10,000 and all four salmon and steelhead populations in the Lower Snake River are at risk of extinction, she said.

Native Nations, the People of the Salmon and sovereign fishery co-managers have suffered loss of their livelihoods and culture.

With construction of four dams on the Lower Snake River came hurdles for wild fish: turbines to survive and increasingly warm slack water reservoirs to traverse. Scientists have said for many years that restoring the Lower Snake River by removing its dams may be the only way to save endangered salmon and steelhead, feed starving orcas and

restore the these fish to deliver to people and ecosystems in the region.

"The Northwest only receives four percent of its energy from these dams. A recent study by the Northwest Energy Coalition shows that we can easily and cost-effectively replace this electricity with renewable sources such as wind, solar and energy efficiency," she said. "Farmers and growers use river barges to move their products to market, but for less money than what we now spend to subsidize barges, we can develop alternative transport, updating rail and highway infrastructure."

Jessica said Earth Ministry/WA IPL seeks solutions that redirect tax dollars and bring a more prosperous future for all. They promote collaborative solutions that prioritize treaty promises while ensuring investment in Inland Northwest agriculture and all communities along the river.

"Faith communities care as much about people—our neighbors—as we do for creation," Jessica said.

This is why Earth Ministry/

WA IPL brings Native leaders, farmers, fishermen and people of faith together to discuss the region's future.

"Faith leaders play an important role in reconciling differences and creating a path forward that honors everyone's needs while restoring the Creator's great gift of salmon," Jessica said.

For information, visit [wacatholics.org](http://wacatholics.org) or [earthministry.org/snake-river-salmon](http://earthministry.org/snake-river-salmon).

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