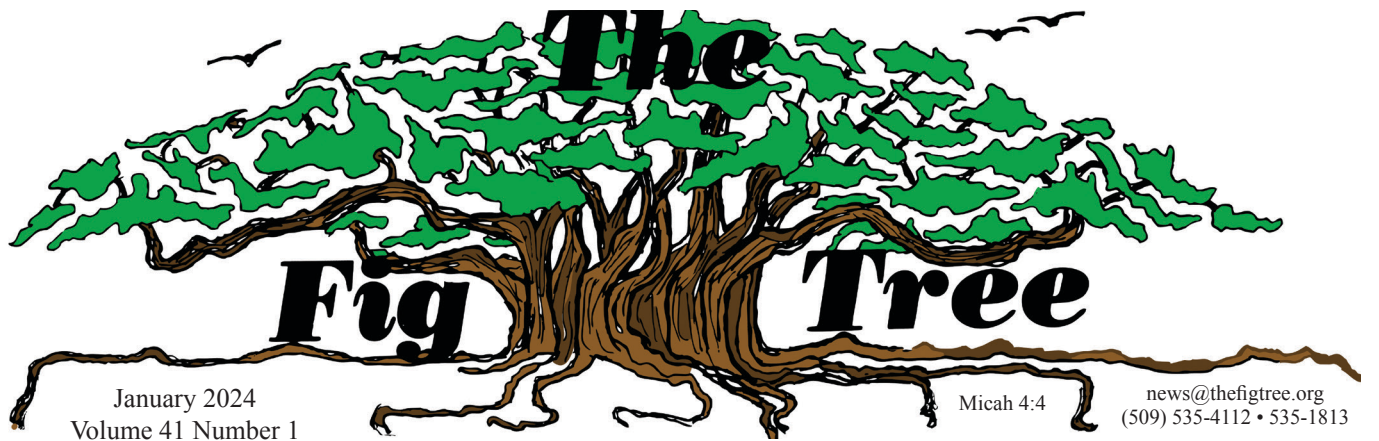


40TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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- Church creates anti-book banning quilt - p. 11
- CDAIDE assists service workers - p. 12
- Guatemalan was resident artist - p. 13

CALENDAR ON PAGE 15
FEATURES 70+ EVENTS



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

Salish centers around the heart

By Mary Stamp

In the “critically endangered” Spokane Salish language, the status of one’s heart is the focal point for communication among people, said Sulustu (Barry Moses), who founded the Spokane Language House in 2018 in Wellpinit.

In October, with a grant from the Spokane Tribal Business Council and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), he started a two-year Salish language immersion program, beginning with 17 people ages 25 to 55 who are intermediate-level Salish speakers.

The participants are paid a salary plus benefits to spend 40 hours a week to learn Salish through classes and immersion. With few other opportunities for immersion, the class is the immersion setting.

“The students’ full-time job is achieving language fluency,” Sulustu said.

As with all language learners, especially those living in two cultures, participants face many pressures—economic, educational, social and political—that push them in different directions, Sulustu said.

“Modern society pushes us out



(Sulustu) Barry Moses is teaching more people to be fluent Salish speakers.

of balance with our desire to take time for ceremonies, language and culture,” he observed. “Pressures on our time are intensive, making it hard for Indigenous people to maintain our culture.

“So we removed those obstacles by paying participants,” he said.

“Research shows that language recovery is healing for Indigenous people, improving mental health, wellbeing and high school/college graduation rates,” he said.

“Our language talks about being in right relationship with people, ecology and the world,” he said. “Our worldview is based on relationships with one another and the natural world, rather than on being consumers.”

Sulustu knows the importance of immersion in learning a language.

It’s how he learned his first language, English, in his family and community.

It’s how he learned his second language, Spanish, on a high school Rotary exchange in Mexico, and while living in Guatemala two years after graduating from Rogers High School in 1989.

It’s how, over time, he learned
Continued on page 4

Presbytery will use Lilly grant funds to help churches change their culture

The Presbytery of the Inland Northwest has received a \$754,487 grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. Thriving Congregations Initiative to establish its Ezra 3:13 Project.

Katie Stark, the presbytery’s missional expeditor and cyclical co-director since 2018, wrote the grant and will oversee its use.

As missional expeditor, she works with existing congregations to help them be outward focused. As cyclical co-director, she helps leaders form new ex-

pressions of the church.

“In both roles, I seek new ways for congregations to be the church in our radically changing culture,” she said.

The grant project grew out of that commitment. From March to mid-June in 2023, she spent 10 to 15 hours a week doing research and writing the grant.

The presbytery proposes to expand its four priorities: 1) reconciliation with the Nimiipuu, 2) supporting congregations to be outward focused, 3) support-

ing leaders called to start new expressions of church and 4) encouraging land stewardship.

They will begin with the focus on land stewardship and use of buildings in ways that address the other priorities.

The project name comes from Ezra 3:13, a text the presbytery began using in 2021. It tells how after the first temple built by Solomon was destroyed and Israelites spent decades in exile, they returned and built a new temple foundation. What should have been a joyful celebration was interrupted by the weeping of the older generation who had seen the first temple and, according to the prophet Haggai, the foundation looked nothing like the first temple.

“However, the Israelites continued building the new temple as a unified community made up of both those who were weeping and those shouting for joy,” said Katie, anticipating how God will be doing something new in presbytery churches.

While Christian churches
Continued on page 7

‘Renewing Our Hope’ is 2024 Legislative Conference theme

The 2024 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference on the theme, “Renewing Our Hope for the Future,” will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 27, at the Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, 115 N. Raymond Rd., and on Zoom.

After an opening prayer led by Jeremy Press Taylor of the Jewish Social Action Committee, Karen Stromgren of Muslims for Community Action and Support, and Anastasia Wendlinger of Gonzaga University Religious Studies, there will be a plenary panel of young adults will address the theme from the perspective of their faith, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The young adult participants are Ellis Benson of PJALS; Jasper Willson, Jewish, Washington State University; and Gonzaga students, Taylor Licon, spiritual but not religious, Mayssa Peunemany, Buddhist, and Rachel Muhr, Roman Catholic.

A plenary panel will explore environmental justice and climate change issues affecting the region today. Panelists are John Wallingford of the Cathedral of St. John’s Hope for Creation, Naghmana Sherazi of The Land’s Council, Tom Soeldner of the Upper Columbia River Sierra Club and Sarah Robinson of Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light (WA IPL).

Participants will then attend one of six workshops:

- “Understanding Hate Crimes and Legislation to Address Them,” led by the NAACP Spokane;
- “Voting Rights” with the League of Women’s Voters and the Spokane County Auditor’s Office;
- “Refugee and Immigration Issues” with Liliana Fausto of the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network;
- “Indigenous Issues and Restoring the Salmon Runs” with DR Michel of Upper Columbia United Tribes and others;

Continued on page 2

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Religion News Briefs

Around the World

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WCC sees reason to hope from COP28

Although the Conference of the Parties (COP28) failed to produce a credible plan to phase out fossil fuels, World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Jerry Pillay said there is still reason for hope that the world can move toward climate justice. "We, as people of faith, must continue to nurture hope," he said.

"While the operation of the Loss and Damage Fund was secured at the start of the global conference, the pledges on the table can only be described as measly, falling far short of what is needed to respond to the devastating impacts of climate change in poor, climate-vulnerable nations," said Jerry. "These let-downs demonstrate a dearth of solidarity that, ultimately, harms us all, both poor and wealthy nations."

At COP28, he saw interests of the billion-dollar fossil fuel industry prevail over science and ethics. "To limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and prevent the most catastrophic climactic effects, greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2025 and fall sharply thereafter. This means absolutely no new fossil fuel extraction," he said. "By blocking an agreement to forge a timely global transition away from fossil fuels to economies founded on already available and increasingly affordable renewable sources of energy, a handful of governments have held hostage the health, well-being and future of entire communities and the planet. This is morally reprehensible."

While he said there is much to lament, "somehow, despite the grim science and frustrating political realities, there is also much from which to draw hope," he said. "COP28 saw developing countries like Colombia leading the way in endorsing the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. Other countries like the Netherlands agreed to cut subsidies to the fossil fuel industry.

"These are successes to be celebrated and followed through. Notably, faith voices have strongly campaigned for these critical initiatives," said Jerry, adding that COP28 united scientists, labor unionists, organizations representing farmers, women, youth, Indigenous peoples and communities of faith.

"Reaping the fruits of intentional dialogue and trust-building over the years, ecumenical, interfaith and civil society cooperation was significantly strengthened at COP28," he said. "We, as people of faith, must continue to nurture a hope that demands us to choose life over death."

Lent resource addresses modern slavery

A Lent resource helps communities respond to modern slavery, which affects around 50 million people globally. According to Anti-Slavery International, the number of children in modern slavery is over 12 million, with an increase of 2 million in 2022. Climate-induced disasters, such as flooding and droughts, raise children's vulnerability to trafficking and other forms of modern slavery.

"This resource is an important contribution from the WCC in partnership with the Church of England's Clewer Project in addressing the challenge of modern slavery," said Kenneth Mtata, WCC program director for Public Witness and Diakonia. Based on Galatians, it offers weekly Bible reflections, discussion questions, modern slavery facts, global case studies and actionable points that can be tailored to national and regional contexts worldwide.

The project is inspired by successful pilot runs in Ghana, Tanzania and Italy with national councils of churches.

"The resource deepens awareness of Christians' responsibilities to address root causes of injustices and vulnerabilities that push people into modern slavery. Churches, congregations and individuals need to understand how the prevalence of modern slavery is also increasing as a result of global warming," said Frederique Seidel, WCC program executive for Child Rights, who is directly involved in facilitating the work on the resource.

For information, email churchesforchildren@wcc-coe.org.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Fifteen groups sponsor Jan. 27 conference

Continued from page 1

- "Public Health and Environmental Concerns in Fire Response and Recovery" with John Hancock of the West Plains Water Coalition, Chandra Fox of the Spokane County Emergency Management and a representative of the Spokane Regional Health District and, and

- "Housing Issues" with Terri Anderson, Tenants Union, Ben Stuckart, Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium (SLIHC), and Duaa-Rahemaah Hunter, Resident Action Project.

At 1 p.m., faith leaders will

discuss the day and theme. In addition to Jeremy and Karen, they are Gen Heywood of Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience, Sr. Pat Millen of Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Rob McCann of Catholic Charities and Liv Larson Andrews of the Northwest Inter-mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The final plenary will be briefings on issues before the state legislature and priorities with Kristin Ang of the Faith Action Network (FAN), Jean Welch Hill of the Washington State Catholic Conference and Sarah of Earth

Ministry/WAIPL.

Organizers and sponsors include The Fig Tree, Catholic Charities, FAN, Earth Ministry/WAIPL, ACLU Washington, Inland District United Methodist Church, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, NAACP Spokane, Upper Columbia River Sierra Club, SLIHC, Tenants Union, Transitions, Thrive International, The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints Greater Spokane Region and the Washington Budget and Policy Center.

For information, call 535-4112 or email mary@thefigtree.org.

Episcopal Diocese receives Lilly grant

The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane has received a \$1.24 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to fund "Building Bridges; Healing Divides" as part of Lilly's Thriving Congregations Initiative to encourage congregations to flourish by helping them deepen their relationships with God, enhance their connections with each other and contribute to the vitality of their communities and the world.

Building Bridges; Healing Divides is designed to advance the diocesan strategic priority

of creating a culture of listening, learning and development, emphasizing each of these practices to strengthen relationships among individuals and groups who differ from one another.

The program emphasizes 1) listening for the purpose of action, 2) learning about the congregation itself, Episcopal/Anglican theology and tradition and the cares and concerns of the people in local communities and 3) developing new practices of ministry and relationship that heal rather than ignore or ex-

acerbate the wounds caused by the social, cultural and political divisions of the current time and context.

The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane is one of 105 organizations that have received 2023 grants.

Caroline McCall is responsible for coordinating the Building Bridges; Healing Divides project for the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane.

For information, call 624-3191 or email carolinem@spokanediocese.org.

World Relief offers apartments to refugees

World Relief in Spokane is working with the owners of the Imperial, at 120 W. 3rd Ave., to place many of their new arrivals. The owners are leasing apartments primarily to World Relief clients, but also to the public.

Eighty people came to Spokane from all over the world during one week in December.

They are fleeing violence, persecution and hardship in their home countries, said Barbara

Comito, development director.

Area congregations, agencies and individuals are helping welcome refugees to their new home in Spokane and providing wraparound services to help them rebuild their lives.

One new refugee, Nazir, brings his skills to Spokane, having been forced by conflict in Sudan to flee to Kenya as a refugee in 2006, she said.

In February 2023, Nazir ar-

rived and was hired as a landscaper at Rockwood Retirement Communities. He quickly worked his way up to a supervisor position and looks forward to buying a house, she said.

Barbara reported that World Relief Spokane seeks funds and volunteers to help welcome more than 700 new arrivals in 2024.

For information, call 232-2818 or email wrspokane@wr.org.

GU recognized as environmentally friendly

Since it established an Office of Sustainability in 2014, Gonzaga has been making its campus environmentally friendly and addressing challenges to take advantage of new opportunities.

Jim Simon, director, said the university's mission statement "has pillars of sustainability in it. We are called to care for the

planet and steward the human, financial and ecological gifts we have. That drives what we do."

Students consider how colleges and universities do or don't integrate sustainability into their operations, activities and curriculum, he said.

From its survey of 683 colleges, the Princeton Review's 2024 "Guide to Green Colleges" ranks Gonzaga number eight among the Top 50 Green Colleges.

Gonzaga reduces waste through recycling and composting programs and promotes bicycling and public transportation with Spokane Transit City Line's electric rapid-transit bus line.

Schools in the Top 50 Green Colleges use energy from clean and renewable sources, and divert waste from incinerators or solid-waste landfills. They offer sustainability-focused undergraduate degrees or majors and have sustainability officers.

As Gonzaga works to fulfill its mission to care for the planet, the Office of Sustainability will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2024 with an updated campus Climate Action Plan, aiding sustainability investments and activities into the next three to five years.

For information, call 313-5368.

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Feed Spokane continues to grow its outreach

Feed Spokane has grown since the pandemic. It is on track to rescue and distribute one million meals of rescued food from 165 restaurants, caterers, hotels, grocers, wholesalers, farmers and event centers to help 40 nonprofits fight hunger among families with children and seniors.

Because it rescues food every day in two refrigerated vans, the expansion has an impact on the vans and expenses.

Feed Spokane also plans its Winter Warm-Up Dinner Friday, Jan 19, at Corbin Senior Center. In March, it will again invite businesses to join in the Dine Out to Feed Spokane by contributing a percentage of sales that month.

For information, call 855-222-2199 or visit feedspokane.org.

Four Roots Farm does truck-to-trunk delivery

Four Roots Farm, a woman-veteran-owned small business in Spokane, seeks to build resilience of the local and regional food system by procuring food from local and regional farmers, ranchers and producers. They warehouse and transport the products to community partners for distribution.

Contracting the last two years with the Washington Department of Agriculture's We Feed WA Pilot Food Box Program, they distribute more than 2.5 million pounds of food in 18 counties of Eastern Washington, said Emily Gewoek, director.

For information, call 230-4733 or email brittany@fourrootsfarm.org.

Meditation group meets at Buddhist Temple

Spokane Mindfulness Meditation Community meets from 5:30 to 7 p.m., Wednesdays at the Buddhist Temple at 10th and S. Perry. Using teachings that are primarily, though not exclusively Buddhist, the group is seeks to develop loving kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity by creating opportunities for mindfulness meditation and fostering each person's practice," said Chris Nerison, organizer.

For information, call 206-979-5570 or email cnrison@yahoo.com.

Fifth graders honor Martin Luther King Jr.

Since 1986, fifth graders in the Coeur d'Alene School District #271 and Post Falls School District #273 have gathered near Martin Luther King Jr's birthday to honor him and his work to promote civil rights and equal treatment for all people.

Students have been learning about civil rights and wrote essays on, "What Would Be Your Dream for Making the World a Better Place?" The top essays will be read at two events. Fifth graders from seven Post Falls schools meet at 9 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 11, at the high school auditorium. Coeur d'Alene School District fifth graders meet at 9:45 a.m., Friday, Jan. 19, at the North Idaho College Schuler Performing Arts Center, where their art will be on display.

Jewish Film Festival is Jan. 27 to Feb. 8

Spokane Area Jewish Family Services will hold the 20th Annual Spokane Jewish Film Festival (SJFF) in person Jan. 27 to 28 and Feb. 3 to 4, and online Jan. 28 to Feb. 8.

The opening night is 6 to 9:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 27, at the Montvale Event Center, 1019 W. First.

"Since 2005 SJFF has shown international films that share Jewish life and culture with the community," said Neal Schindler Spokane Area Jewish Family Services director.

In-person screenings are at Gonzaga's Jepson Center, 502 E. Boone. The online festival includes new films and films from the last 20 years.

For information, call 747-7394 or visit sjff2024.eventive.org.

PJALS holds candlelight vigil for peace



Candlelight vigil participants line Division St. Bridge to call for a ceasefire in the Holy Land.

The Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) held a candlelight vigil as an opportunity for local people to express their grief and anger about more than 20,000 Palestinian and 1,147 Israeli civilian lives taken in the conflict in Palestine/Israel. They called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire.

The vigil was held on Dec. 14, beginning at the Community Building. Participants then walked to the Division Street Bridge.

"We condemn and mourn the extensive loss of civilian life in the past few months from actions by the Israeli military and by Hamas. The current escalation must be viewed in the context of decades of Israeli military occupation and campaigns in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," said Union Carter, PJALS organizer.

"To end the violence, its root causes must be addressed. Military attacks only exacerbate human suffering," Union said. PJALS has joined other hu-

manitarian and human rights organizations to call for a permanent ceasefire, an end to Israel's blockade of Gaza and the 16-year siege and the return of all hostages and political prisoners by Hamas and Israel.

These are first steps to prevent loss of more lives and lay groundwork for comprehensive negotiations to end Israel's occupation and recognize Palestinian's right to self-determination.

For information, call 368-7604 or email ucarter@pjals.org.

2024 Homeless Connect will be Jan. 25

The 12th Annual Homeless Connect will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 25, at the Spokane Convention & Expo Center, 220 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

Homeless Connect is the largest annual homeless resource fair in Eastern Washington. The 2023 Connect, its first post-COVID event, brought together about 1,200 attendees and nearly 100 service vendors, said Kari Stevens, chair.

Given the 36 percent increase in homelessness, according to the 2023 Point-In-Time Count,

the organizing committee expects record attendance in 2024.

Innovia Foundation will serve as the fiscal agent for this year's Connect, receiving sponsorships and vendor registration fees.

The Department of Social and Health Services will increase participation with more staff, a new mobile truck and services such as personal interviews, ID vouchers, EBT cards and onsite processing of applications.

Homeless Connect will serve attendees, vendors and volunteers a hot brunch.

There will be metal detectors

and heightened screening for the first time.

Spokane Homeless Connect is made possible by sponsors who underwrite the event, vendors who offer services to attendees and volunteers at the event to help everything run smoothly.

To celebrate its history and give an overview of Connect, Rising River Media has produced a new video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWXdGKIsSss>.

For information, call 458-2509, ext 338, or email kari.stevens@dshs.wa.gov or visit spokaneconnect.org.

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Barry Moses discusses nuances, understandings in Salish language

Continued from page 1
to speak Salish.

His great aunts and uncles, his grandmother, Norma McCrea, and other extended family spoke with him in Salish when they were alive. He visited them in the summers after his parents, Ed Moses, who was Spokane, and Shelly Marie, who is white, divorced when he was six.

After his father became clean and sober and had a spiritual awakening, he took Sulustu to ceremonies throughout the Northwest.

In addition, most Fridays for 30 years, he has gone to sweat lodges with his uncle, Pat Moses, a spiritual leader and his only living relative who is fluent in Salish.

At Eastern Washington University, where Sulustu earned a bachelor's degree in secondary education in 1999, he studied two terms of Salish with the late Pauline Flett, Salish language preservationist and scholar.

That helped in his first job as a teacher and cultural specialist at the Medicine Wheel Academy, from 1999 to 2003. Many of its 25 students were from various tribes—plus a few European and African Americans.

When the Salish teacher retired because of health, Sulustu took over to teach Salish to 10 to 12 students. So, three hours on Sundays he was on the phone with his grandmother, who gave him lessons he taught during the next week.

“As Salish began to stick, I became an avid student of it,” he said, noting that the oldest of his biological children, Dakota, 29, and McKenna, 26, know beginning Salish, and Whitney, 25, has intermediate skills.

From 2003 to 2015, Sulustu taught adult basic education at the Community Colleges of Spokane. In February 2015, he gained tenure, but in March had a massive stroke from a chiropractic injury.

Three months of medical leave was not enough. He couldn't stand or walk. He needed to rest often. On a year of leave, he began to work as a curriculum expert with the Kalispel Tribe language program in Cusick, which let him take naps and work from home.

That opened the door for him to teach Salish. From 2015 to 2018, he shared an office with Johnny Arlee, a Flathead elder from Montana who was a fluent

Salish speaker, and Stan Bluff, Kalispel tribal chairman for 30 years and also a fluent speaker. That was an immersion experience for him.

Sulustu said a 1950s study of 175 common words in Salish languages found that 96 percent of Kalispel and Flathead Salish were similar, and 85 percent of Kalispel and Spokane words were similar.

The Spokane Salish School teaches the Salish spoken by the Colville Confederated Tribes.

Sulustu likened his understanding of that Salish to his “sort of” understanding Portuguese and Italian because he knows Spanish.

“The accent and words are different. I ‘sort of’ understand, but I can't respond in Colville Salish,” he said. “Salish is an umbrella term, like European Romance languages.”

There are 20 Salish languages. All are critically endangered, meaning most of the last fluent speakers are/were in generations of grandparents or great grandparents. Some stopped because of trauma from boarding schools, he said, adding that there are fewer than five fluent speakers in the Spokane Tribe.

Sulustu, who considers himself high intermediate or low advanced in fluency, said that there are about 25 intermediate speakers, because the tribe has offered some adult classes. It also has an immersion learning preschool.

When he first started the Spokane Language House, he contracted to write curriculum and teach adults on the reservation.

“Salish is more than words, accents and conversations,” he said. “It bears the essence or heart of the people and their culture, spiritual understanding and way of being.”

“Salish is not about verb tenses, but it is about verb aspects. Time exists in the language, but not through verbs. In Spanish, we say, ‘I went, I am going and I will go.’ Salish expresses time with helping words that imply something is done, is ongoing or is an intention,” he said.

“One aspect conveys the intention to do something. It's not about the future. It's about my

will to do something, but my will may change,” Sulustu explained.

The focus in Salish is on the condition of the heart. It invites people to look at their hearts.

The Salish greeting, “stem a spuʔús?” means “What is your heart?” said Sulustu, who uses Unicode to represent the Salish phrases.

As a conversation starter, an elder may say to a child, “stem a spuʔús?” which means “What is your heart?”

“As skilled observers, elders can sense something is going on in a grandchild's heart. They ask, not because they do not know, but can sense if the young person is upset,” he said.

“čpléne? lu? spuʔús” speaks of a person's heart being obscured by spiritual debris, such as hate, envy, anger or jealousy.

“ʔesél lu? i spuʔús” means “my heart is two, or I am ambivalent,” he said.

When pressured to sign treaties, Chief Spokane Garry said that in response to Governor Isaac Stevens. Sulustu guesses he was saying, “Partly, I think it may be good for us to have peace and go to a reservation, but partly, I believe we will lose our culture and identity, and lose where we pick berries, dig roots, hunt and fish.”

“kʷlkʷulnt a spuʔús” means fix your heart and is said to people

to remove the ‘debris’ from their hearts.”

“We value having a clean heart, free of anger, worry, anxiety, pettiness and strife,” he said.

“If our heart is cluttered with debris, it's hard for our spirit to be in tune to collaborate, and it's hard to cross into the other world when we die.”

There is no word for “justice,” but many Salish words relate to interdependence or collaborating. The nearest concept is honesty, for people to approach each other with honesty in their hearts.

“i toxʷ lu? spuʔús” or “his or her heart is straight,” implying honesty, justice or fairness, and “i xʷukʷ lu? spuʔús” means “his or her heart is clean,” implying the person has no anger, jealousy or envy, he said.

“We make life work well by cooperating,” Sulustu said. “There is no literal translation for ‘hecyalʷis,’ which describes the ethic of living, working and doing everything together.”

Sulustu said “the idea of making the world better presupposes the world is broken or fallen, which is part of the Judeo-Christian theology of western society.”

“God created the world and placed people in the Garden of Eden. People were tempted to eat the forbidden fruit and were

cast out into a world with weeds, briars and thistles,” he said. “Western culture lost paradise and strives to get it back. The abolition and civil rights movements were part of that.”

In Salish creation stories, the world was dangerous, filled with monsters, beasts, pestilence and disease. Creator put people on earth after Coyote defeated the dangerous threats.

Then people were put in a world filled with fruits, berries, fish and animals that cared for the people, and people cared for them.

“Our role is to maintain the balance,” Sulustu said.

“qe člkʷenxʷcnwéxʷ” means “we answer one other,” describing the spiritual agreement between humans and nature.

For information, call 599-4789 or email barrymoses@hotmail.com.

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Holy Names sister carries on global, interfaith interest with Fig Tree

For The Fig Tree's 40th anniversary in 2024, we will be featuring some of the people who have been part of our history as a means to tell our story over the coming months.

After 15 years of teaching, Catherine Ferguson of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) traveled the world to do international research, for an internship and in leadership roles.

Now she connects with global, ecumenical, interfaith diversity as she writes and edits feature stories for The Fig Tree, carrying on 40 years of commitment by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, who helped found it and continue to play a role in its production and leadership.

In 1984, Bernadine Casey SNJM co-founded The Fig Tree newspaper with Mary Stamp, now publisher and editor. Bernadine worked as associate editor with a team of staff, freelance and volunteer writers, editors and others who raised support through advertising, sponsors and community partners.

"The Fig Tree is important because it inspires people to act. Its stories are good news that encourage people to have hope and to commit to do things for the good of the community," Catherine said.

"I have enjoyed interviewing and writing the stories of many people—from stories on hospice workers to a group of men who make wooden wagons for children who have lost limbs," she said. "Each story is interesting for different reasons, and doing interviews and writing fits my energy level at this point in my life."

"Working with The Fig Tree has opened me to the ecumenical community here as we cover people of diverse backgrounds," Catherine remarked.

In 1961, right out of high school, Catherine entered the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary Convent at Marylhurst near Portland, Ore.

A year later, the Oregon and Washington provinces split.



Catherine Ferguson SNJM continues Holy Names involvement.

She came to Spokane, but she returned in 1964 to Marylhurst to make her first vows. Then she returned to Spokane to study for a bachelor's degree in math with a minor in chemistry and courses in education on her path to become a high school teacher.

After graduating in 1966, she taught for two years at Holy Names Academy near Gonzaga.

She then taught for two years at Immaculate High School in Seattle, with a break to earn a master's in math, followed by teaching math, French, literature, religion, bookkeeping and social studies in Catholic high schools in the Northwest until 1983.

Concerned that high school students focused on Friday night football games and had little sense of the U.S.'s power in the world, Catherine decided to teach social studies. So she earned a doctoral degree in international studies at the University of Denver.

For her dissertation, Catherine visited Latin American Christian base communities among the poor. After six weeks of learning Spanish in Mexico, she had extended stays with base communities in Santiago, Chile, in Lima, Peru, and in Mexico City, Mexico, from 1986 to 1988.

Catherine returned to Seattle to write her dissertation, but her plans changed in 1989, when she was elected to serve as provincial superior in Spokane.

"That was during the early years of The Fig Tree. I was aware of Bernadine's role writing and editing," she said. "She was so meticulous."

After Catherine's term ended in 1995, she served a year with Pax Christi as English language intern in Brussels, Belgium, which included being a liaison for Latin America with the United Nations in Geneva.

During that year, she traveled with peace delegations to the Philippines, Columbia, and Central America, making use of her Spanish.

Returning to the U.S. in 1998, she served at Inner City Law Center in Los Angeles focusing on housing law and with homeless people.

In 2001, she spearheaded Holy Names Sisters' efforts to form an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) to lobby the United Nations on immigrants, refugees, children's rights, women's rights and the environment.

"We formed a coalition of women's religious communities, UNANIMA International, that grew from six congregations to 23 by the time I left," Catherine said. "I visited congregations all over the world, giving workshops on environmental issues, HIV-AIDS and human trafficking."

From 2011 to 2016, she served as leader of the Sisters of the Holy Names at their headquarters

at Longueuil on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, across from Montreal. In that role, she traveled around the U.S. and Canada, and to Peru and Lesotho, to visit Holy Names Sisters.

She returned to Spokane in 2016. Fig Tree editor Mary interviewed her in December 2018 and, in the process, learned she wanted to write. By February 2019, Catherine completed training for writers and editors, and since then, has written articles and helped edit each issue.

When Mary Ann Farley SNJM, who was on the board, moved to Portland, Catherine joined the board in January 2020.

"Holy Names Sisters for a long time primarily worked in education, teaching in grade school, high school and at Fort Wright College. Vatican II opened up opportunities for us to work in parishes and volunteer community services," said Catherine, who also volunteers as a board member of NETWORK, a Catholic Social Justice Lobby and has recently been chosen as the NETWORK Lobby board chair and serves as a co-chair with Leslye Colvin of Network Advocates.

In Spokane, sisters have been involved with Transitions. Two helped found Miriam's House and another the Women's Drop-In Center, now the Women's Hearth. Others have taught at Gonzaga University and been hospital chaplains.

When sisters retire, many find volunteer work, such as Karen Conlin who volunteers at Our Place ecumenical outreach center and Marianne Therese Wilkinson with the Jesuit Volunteers and SCRAPS.

Two sisters still teach at Holy Names Music Center, a traditional part of the Holy Names ministry, encouraging liturgical musicians as well as teaching many who are now in the Spokane Symphony.

Today, 20 Holy Names Sisters

and about 20 associates live in the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene area. At its peak, the Washington Province (Seattle, Yakima and Spokane) had 450 sisters, with 100 in Spokane.

In 2016, they sold the convent they built in 1968 on Fort Wright property on the south bank of the Spokane River near T.J. Meenach. The larger part was sold to Catholic Charities for its Rising Strong affordable housing in partnership with the Empire Health Foundation. The rest—31 acres of the forested riverbank—was sold to Spokane County Conservation Futures to be preserved as a natural area.

By then, many of the aging sisters moved to what is now the South Hill Village for their housing and health care needs.

Funds from the sale assures care for sisters and enables them to support ministries of education, social services and financial assistance to poor and marginalized women and children, Transitions and the Holy Names Music Center.

"Our charism—or gift—has been to serve as 1) elementary and secondary educators, 2) music educators and 3) justice advocates, particularly on water as a human right, on ending human trafficking and on immigrants and refugees," said Catherine.

"Our associates, which started 45 years ago, also have a strong sense of justice," she added.

The Fig Tree not only has been a beneficiary of the Holy Names ministry grants most years since 2002, but also has benefitted from the volunteer work of Holy Names Sisters, carrying on Bernadine's legacy.

For example, Rose Theresa Costello and Mary Louise Di-Julio joined volunteer mailing teams for many years.

Many mentioned in this article have also been subjects of Fig Tree feature stories.

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

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Sister comments on Holy Names' involvement with The Fig Tree

Story related to page 5

Mary Ann Farley SNJM, who served on The Fig Tree Board nine years and now lives in Portland, Oregon, has always spoken of Fig Tree stories being the "good news."

"The stories are modern day Gospel stories," she said recently. "Each of us is a Gospel story, so each person featured shares their Gospel story. Unlike other media that look for sensational stories to stir people up, The Fig Tree looks for stories of people who are making the world a better place."

"For weary travelers in this world, it's good to know that many people are working for good," Mary Ann said.

"Good will win," she said.

"The Fig Tree keeps us on the side of faith and hope, and it will never run out of stories of people who keep trying to make a better world," she explained.

"While other news media look for scandalous sound bites and news that divides us, we look for stories that bring us together, stories of hope that keep us hoping and fostering good," she said. "The Fig Tree energizes us to see what unites us."

Mary Ann sees The Fig Tree's perseverance for 40 years as "a huge accomplishment, particularly of Mary Stamp, but that would not have happened without the strong level of sup-

port it has had.

"There is no perseverance without the support of stories, readers and advertisers. I acknowledge Mary's ability to persevere, but I know she depends on people of faith to share their stories, on people who serve on the board and on the many volunteers," Mary Ann said.

"I know over the 40 years that The Fig Tree has fed Mary, too, one story after another," she said.

"I am also so thankful that Catherine carries on the Holy Names Sisters' involvement. I have huge admiration for her. She brings a world-wide perspective to local stories that adds strength and vision to The Fig Tree. Her lifelong pursuit of justice at every level is a gift—from the large issues of immigration to genocide to the use of everyday words to be inclusive."

"Her antenna is geared for faith and justice," Mary Ann

observed. "I'm glad she chose to pair her interest in writing with The Fig Tree after serving in leadership at all levels of our community."

As a note on Bernadine, Mary Ann remembers when she was dying: "I don't feel like I am dying," said Sister Bernadine, sitting in her recliner. She picked up her pen and continued editing an article for The Fig Tree. I thought she would die with a pen in her hand. She nearly did!"

Newly-elected Disciples region minister will begin in March

On Saturday, Dec. 9, a Special Regional Assembly of the Northern Lights Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) voted to call Paul Allen IV to be the next regional minister and president.

He will begin his official work in March 2024 and will be installed by the Disciples of Christ General Minister and President Terri Hord Owens at the Northern Lights Regional Assembly in May at Wenatchee.

Paul is currently serving as the pastor of the First Christian Church in Huntsville, Ala., and he has previously served churches in North Carolina and Kansas.

Paul is a graduate of Barton College and Lexington Theo-

logical Seminary.

His parents previously served in Disciples congregations and regional ministry.

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GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

Churches will discern their mission to serve needs of neighborhood

Continued from page 1
 may be declining, they formed the faith of many, she pointed out. The pandemic accelerated changes that were happening in the culture and churches. So, the church needs to look different.

The project seeks to guide churches to recognize that the church of the past no longer exists, so they can now dream of what it could be, she explained.

Katie said that four cohort groups will each meet for a year over the next five years. The first in spring 2024 is for congregations with 50 or fewer members. The second is for churches with 100 or fewer members. The third is for churches of any size. The fourth is for Nimiipuu congregations, which may meet separately or with other cohorts.

“Cohorts will practice spiritual disciplines, clarify their mission and values related to the community, deepen their relationships with God through Christian discernment and hospitality, and align their building use to their mission,” she said. “At the end of the year, they will propose a project to change their building use to align with their mission to the community.”

“We are asking: If the building helps its neighborhood flourish, how does that impact the congregation? We suspect it would have a positive impact,” she said.

Congregations may propose projects and apply for a \$10,000 seed grant.

For example, they might upgrade their kitchen to be a commercial kitchen to offer cooking and canning classes, or they might open their kitchen for community groups to use. Rural churches might host a monthly dinner.

Katie said Bethany Presbyterian plans to tear down its building to build affordable housing on their property. Other churches may upgrade building spaces to rent to nonprofits that align with their mission.

The key is for churches to listen to their neighbors to learn what they need, not to assume they know what their neighbors need.

“Church building projects are to grow out of relationships and out of listening to neighbors,” Katie said.

“**Our hope is that**, instead of looking for ways to survive financially, churches will look for ways to thrive in today’s cultural context that has shifted dramatically from when the churches were founded,” Katie said. “We want churches to be share the gospel in new, compelling ways.”

That vision came from 20 years in youth ministry and grew into her role with the presbytery and the grant.

Katie grew up in Oak Harbor and Longview and came to Spokane to study theology at Whitworth. In 2000, she earned a bachelor’s in theology. From



Youth ministry led Katie Stark to want to retain young people.

2001 to 2017, she was youth minister at Hamblen Park Presbyterian Church. In 2018, she earned a master’s in theology at Whitworth, and a master of divinity at Portland Seminary with George Fox University in 2020.

“I had a clear call to ministry. When I was in community college, the pastor of our small church invited me to do part-time youth ministry,” said Katie.

“**Youth ministry informed** my sense of calling, but I realized that young adults were generally missing from churches. Most did not continue to go to church after being in youth group,” Katie said. “I long for the church to welcome people from a variety of backgrounds. I want it to be inviting so my 16-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter will want to continue to be involved.”

“I long for the church to find new ways to reach out to younger persons rather than expecting them to come to us,” she said.

She knows some reasons why young people are missing, so she wants the church to find new ways to be the church that will

draw more to connect with Jesus.

At Hamblen, she usually worked with 25 high school and 15 middle school youth. They met on Sundays, beginning with the middle school group meeting, followed by dinner with high schoolers, and then the high school group.

“We created space for conversations at the dinner table,” she said.

Youth went on mission trips, she said, aware that some question if trips harm more than help people.

“They were good for the spiritual formation of youth, and we sought to listen to and learn from those we encountered,” she said.

Youth did projects on the Navajo Reservation at Ganado, Ariz., where they built a long-term relationship with the pastor and congregation.

Other years, they went to Washington, D.C., to learn how faith, politics and social justice weave together. They visited the denomination’s advocacy office, worked in soup kitchens and participated in workshops on

faith and politics.

Sometimes youth helped with disaster recovery such as after Hurricane Katrina and tornadoes in Oklahoma.

The goal was for youth to explore how to live their faith and help them see their faith could make a practical difference in their lives, Katie said.

Nonetheless, few young people continued to connect with the church, even after marrying and having children.

She knows there are different reasons why Catholics, Evangelicals and Latter-day Saints leave their churches, but most mainline Protestants say they left because they were not hearing a compelling message, according to the book *Non-Verts*.

“We must be sure we are preaching the Gospel, which is compelling,” said Katie, whose work with congregations on mission and seeking new ways to be church is compelling for her.

“**Some connect** with the church as it is, but some will not walk through the doors of a church. Our job is to reach both,” she said, expecting the Ezra 3:13 Project to help.

Katie said her call to ministry and others seeing gifts in her helped her stay connected to the church. She, her husband and their children attend regularly.

She knows that for some, sitting in church for an hour on Sunday is not compelling, but new expressions of church like Feast World Kitchen and Growing Neighbors are compelling ways to express their faith.

In its request for proposals, Lilly recognized that COVID has had an impact on church attendance. It wants churches to find new ways to thrive.

In recent years, the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest guided congregations through changes to adjust to the new social and cultural contexts. In the process, many congregations have strengthened outwardly focused ministries that serve their communities, Katie said.

That led to creating her position in 2018.

Five years ago, the presbytery began Cyclical Inland Northwest to support leaders called to start new expressions of church for the unknown future.

The Presbytery of the Inland Northwest is one of 105 organizations—mainline Protestant, evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox, peace church and Pentecostal traditions—receiving grants in 2023 through the Thriving Congregations Initiative.

For information, call 924-4148, email katiestark@presby-inw.org or visit presbyinw.org.

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Faith Action Network announces priorities and events for 2024

The Faith Action Network (FAN) of Washington is planning its Interfaith Advocacy Day in-person on Thursday, Feb. 8 in Olympia, as an opportunity for advocates from faith communities to bring their voices to the state legislature.

The day includes opportunities to attend plenaries and workshops to explore the issues on FAN's 2024 Legislative Agenda.

The 2024 Legislative Session that starts on Monday, Jan. 8, is the short, 60-day session.

"Our network has broad interests, and we know there are intersections for justice everywhere among our categories of work to make our state a more just and equitable place to live," said Elise DeGooyer, executive director.

FAN shapes its legislative priorities with more than 25 coalition partners, its statewide network, its Policy Committee and the FAN Governing Board.

"We seek to advocate for and implement policies that advance our values grounded in faith and spirituality: belonging and hu-

man dignity, justice and equity, interconnectedness, collaboration and pluralism," according to the FAN agenda.

The FAN legislative agenda is at <https://fanwa.org/advocacy/legislative-agenda>.

FAN has eight priority areas for legislation.

1) Promoting economic justice includes such proposals as the working families tax credit, a guaranteed basic income and an extreme wealth tax.

2) Protecting and expanding the social safety net includes funding for food banks, free school meals and senior nutrition.

3) Addressing climate change and environmental justice involves recycling, packaging, clean school busses and holding oil companies accountable.

4) Increasing safe affordable housing and preventing homelessness are part of proposals to increase the real estate excise tax, limit rent increases and protect tenants.

5) Advancing immigrant and refugee rights includes propos-

als for unemployment benefits, health equity, and legal and emergency services.

6) Reforming the incarceration system will address solitary confinement, sentencing emerging adults, jail-based voting and legal financial obligations.

Two other priorities are 7) fostering public safety and civil rights and 8) expanding access to health care.

In response to requests for more orientation before Interfaith Advocacy Day, FAN will offer an online Legislative Briefing/Preview from 3 to 4:15 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 7, to give an overview of issues on the legislative agenda.

At 7 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 10 and at noon, Thursday, Jan. 11, FAN will provide Advocacy 101 online to train people in advocacy skills.

FAN is also collaborating on planning the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 27, at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church and online.

FAN urges early registration for the Interfaith Advocacy Day 2024, because the capacity is limited to 200 people at United Churches of Olympia. Registration closes Monday, Jan. 29.

Three regional organizers are assisting FAN in Central and Eastern Washington.

• Brianna Dilts, FAN's Eastern Washington regional organizer, brings experience in organizing related to economic justice, housing justice and equitable decision-making. She grew up in Spokane and graduated in social work from Eastern Washington University.

• Eric Don Anderson, the South Central Washington regional organizer in Yakima, served as a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pastor until 2014 and has worked in community organizing and as a hospice chaplain.

• Jess Ingman, North Central Washington regional organizer, has a background in pastoral ministry and faith-based organizing. A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with Jesuit formation, she is also coordinator for Wenatchee for Immigrant Justice.

For information, call 206-625-9790 or visit fanwa.org.

Presbytery surpasses goal in Nez Perce drive

The Presbytery of the Inland Northwest surpassed its \$200,000 goal for the Nimiipuu Building Capital Campaign.

"This milestone is a testament to the generosity of our presbytery members and other supporters," reported Katie McKinstry, communications director.

"The outpouring of support underscores our dedication to preserving the cultural and historical legacy of the presbytery's six Nez Perce Indian churches," she said.

"While we are thrilled by what

the Spirit is doing, our journey is not complete," she said.

The Nimiipuu Capital Campaign accepted donations until Dec. 31, extending the opportunity to contribute to the restoration and preservation efforts.

Organizers realized the \$200,000 goal was based on estimates from 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Costs have increased since, so more funds are necessary to meet the evolving needs of restoration.

The six churches have stood for more than a century. First

Indian Presbyterian Church was chartered in 1871. As the oldest active congregations in the presbytery and Idaho, these churches hold historical and cultural significance, but they require significant repairs and renovations to continue for the next 100 years, Katie said.

The presbytery's Leadership Team initiated the Nimiipuu Capital Campaign to raise funds, working in collaboration with the Nez Perce congregations.

For information, call 924-4148 or email katie@presbyinw.org.



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Whitworth offers a new approach to lifelong learning for professionals

Whitworth University has launched Whitworth LEARN as a new approach to lifelong learning and professional development for busy professionals.

LEARN blends the flexibility of online learning with coaching so participants can log in when it is convenient for them but benefit from accountability, peer-learning and instructor guidance.

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"I designed Whitworth LEARN in response to my disappointing experiences with professional development programs that left me wanting more," said Brooke. "I wanted a way for people at all stages of their lives and careers to be able to learn skill sets and mindsets that lead

to success and fulfillment."

Whitworth LEARN has several non-credit programs.

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- "Managing Innovation" teaches basic innovation methods and tools, principles for leading adaptive change, and design thinking.

- "Navigating Change" guides participants through workplace circumstances, helping them discover the benefits of change and build a workplace culture that embraces change.

- "Flourish" is a health and wellness course teaching participants to identify their strengths, build a sphere of support and set

goals to help them realize mental and emotional wellness.

- "Career Compass" is a career discovery program to help people plot their course, identify possibilities and land jobs.

- "Leading Across Difference" teaches practical skills of intergroup dynamics, communication across differences and intercultural competence.

Those who finish a LEARN

course or certificate will receive a digital badge that verifies the completion of the program and the skills taught.

For information, call 777-4703 or visit learn.whitworth.edu.



Book on WCC waterfall tapestry continues challenge to violence

A new book, *Waterfall of Solidarity and Resistance—sharing the stories*, brings to life the waterfall tapestry displayed at the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Karlsruhe in September 2022.

With images of panels, stories of creators and quotes from those who are hurting and helping, the book depicts women's fragility and resilience.

The six-meter wide by five meter tall tapestry on which the book is based has more than 180 panels made by people around the world, sharing their personal pain and hope to overcome sexual and gender-based violence.

As Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, former WCC vice moderator, noted in the foreword, in carrying the powerful message of the tapestry, the book can change lives.

The WCC published the book with support from the United Church of Christ (UCC), Finn Church Aid, Church of Sweden, and World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women.

"We are thankful to be partners in this important global ministry, as we continue to educate and advocate for women's rights via the Thursdays in Black campaign," said Karen Georgia

Thompson, a Thursdays in Black ambassador and the general minister and president of the UCC.

Antti Laine, head of unit, Church and Ecumenical Relations, Finn Church Aid, welcomes creative ways to address the issue gender violence, adding, "it is good to remember that through Thursdays in Black we have 52 Thursdays of activism against rape and violence through the year. It is important to attain visibility for sexual and gender-based violence and grow international awareness of the problem.

"We celebrate the WCC's efforts to overcome gender-based violence," said Alison Judd, president emerita, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women.

"Violence against women is an almost daily item in our news media," she said. "We must continue to find new, creative ways of teaching our children, siblings, colleagues and leaders that such violence is always unacceptable. This initiative is a significant step towards raising awareness of the scourge of gender-based violence."

For information, visit oikoumene.org/resources/publications/waterfall-of-solidarity-and-resistance.

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Tammy Meyers draws together partners to provide homeless with IDs

Tammy Meyers, homeless outreach coordinator for the Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD), believes the best way to express her caring for “people who live outside” is to make sure they have identity (ID) cards.

To find a job, get a mortgage, rent an apartment, begin education, seek medical care, receive state benefits or open a bank account for their Social Security or disability benefits, people need to have an ID.

Talking with folks who are homeless, Tammy often hears they are on housing waiting lists. However, they do not have their ID or Social Security card, which are necessary to get housing.

Some have told her they lost

their ID when they had it in their backpack, fell asleep and someone stole it. So, she replaces it. Often, she holds ID cards for people so that won’t happen.

“It’s one of the first things people need to move to self-sufficiency. Not having an ID card sets folks up for failure. It’s easy for people with no ID to lose hope,” she said.

For the SRHD, Tammy teams up with the Department of Licensing (DOL), and they often partner with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or CHAS Health’s Street Medicine. The state Department of Commerce (DOC) and Molina Healthcare help fund the project.

With the DOL, she spent six

weeks at Camp Hope before it closed and restored 398 ID cards for folks there with funding from the DOC through Jewels Helping Hands.

“In October, we did an event with the DOL, Molina, DSHS, CHAS Health Street Medicine and SRHD’s Immunization Team at City Gate. In November, we were at House of Charities, and in December, we were at the Spokane Downtown Library,” she said.

One day while people were waiting in line to get birth certificates, IDs and Social Security cards, CHAS Health’s Street Medicine team provided health checkups for heart disease, diabetes, infections, abscesses,

weather-related illnesses and other health needs,” Tammy said.

DOL has piloted a program called DOL2Go, where they bring their services to folks living outside. Like anyone visiting the DOL office, they have to prove their identity. If they have had a state ID, DOL will verify this within their department. If they never had an ID in Washington then, before ID events, Tammy helps them get the necessary documents to prove identity—such as a birth certificate, medical records, school records or marriage/divorce certificates.

Tammy walks alongside people living outside to make sure they have the documents they need to get a state ID card.

“I adore the people who live outside. I want the best for them. I want them to feel good about themselves and know someone cares about them,” she said.

Along with partnering monthly and quarterly with CHAS, Molina, DSHS, DOL and SRHD to provide IDs, the SRHD now plans to provide other health prevention services such as methadone, needle exchanges and Narcan to reduce harms from substance use, like spreading HIV, Hepatitis C, Shigella infections.

“A disease prevention team also tests folks for STDs, then treats and educates them to increase access to care,” she said.

For information, call 216-8455 or email tmeyers@srhd.org.

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Set a goal for nightly dinners (vegetables included) around the table with no screens.

Quilters create social justice message to challenge banning books

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

During a worship service last summer, members of Community Congregational United Church of Christ (CCUCC) in Pullman put faith into action by stitching together pieces of cloth to make a quilt with a message against banning books.

Lisa Carloye had the idea last summer when interim minister Gary Jewell invited parishioners to experiment with summer services when many are away.

Now this congregation attuned to social justice shares the quilt and its message with other churches, libraries and groups in Pullman and Moscow to spread awareness about the concern.

Lisa, who grew up in Pullman, left for 25 years to go to school and work. When she moved back in 2005, her parents were attending CCUCC.

Lisa began attending when the pastor was Kristine Zakarison, who has now retired. She was a year ahead of Lisa in school.

"I liked her preaching and messages. She helped me get out of my head and think about more than my work teaching biology at Washington State University," Lisa explained. "She gave the historical and cultural context for biblical stories."

Like other congregations, Community Congregational UCC experiences challenges in attracting younger people.

"Social justice issues are key to my faith. We are an open and affirming church, especially for those harmed by other churches. We want to be a community that helps people live their faith and address injustice. I think younger people are restless and want to do something about issues," Lisa said.

"With Pullman a college town, social justice issues are pertinent," she added.

Growing up in the 1970s during the civil rights movement, Lisa expected people to work, as Martin Luther King Jr. said, so "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

"It's shocking that we seem to be going backwards, unraveling what was done in my lifetime," she said. "We are all God's children. Traumatizing people is anti-Christian. Marginalizing people is anti-Christian. Jesus reached out to marginalized people, legitimized their existence and was revolutionary at the time."

Lisa believes liberal Christians need to claim Jesus' teachings as their own and challenge those who use Jesus' name as they hurt and exclude people.

"**Feeling helpless** in the face of these changes, I wondered what I could do to make an impact," she said.

Lisa suggested making a banned book quilt.

"The quilt idea spoke to me



Lisa Carloye had congregation quilt a message during worship. Photo courtesy of Lisa Carloye

because quilts symbolize comfort, warmth and embracing, and making a quilt is a way people, especially women, come together, like for a quilting bee," she said.

Lisa felt a quilt would be a more powerful way to address the issue than a poster.

"**Quilts have been used** to communicate," she explained. "Slaves used quilts to communicate information about the underground railroad."

In social justice history, she said quilts have also brought people together in community. They are pieces of art that symbolize more than being a blanket.

"We picked fabric colors for artistic representation, such as the color orange representing fire," she said.

"I had been thinking about banned books for quite a while. As a college teacher, I believe banning books on people of color and LGBTQ+ people creates a dangerous world. Children can grow up without understanding other people's lives and experiences. It whitewashes slavery and the civil rights movement," said Lisa.

Banning books has happened throughout history. Google's list of banned books includes old books like *Fahrenheit 451*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Charlotte's Web*.

"We should not just look at those books, but highlight books targeted now, books people are less familiar with," she said.

"Targeting books is targeting people. People wrote the books to tell their experiences. I am shocked how quickly things have degraded. It speaks to the fact

that we haven't stood up strongly enough," said Lisa.

"It marginalizes people and narrows understanding of what has happened in our culture and country. I'm alarmed how book banning has spread to banning talk about critical race theory, cutting out honest discussions on slavery and experiences of Black people and cultures," she said.

Lisa is concerned that generations of students could lack context for why society is where it is today, how terrible slavery was, and be unaware of any information that might make them feel uncomfortable or ashamed.

"If kids don't feel uncomfortable about slavery, what are we teaching?" she asked.

With her experience in quilting by hand and the machine quilting skills of Nancy Mack, another member, they discussed whether the congregation could hand piece and sew the sections. They decided "Of course they can."

Lisa and Nancy chose background fabric. Nancy bought printable quilting fabric they could use to print pictures of the spines of books on the quilt.

"**Seeing the spine of the book** makes it more tangible and clear what books are being challenged and banned now," said Lisa.

One Sunday, worshippers sewed pieces as the heart of the service.

They started the service as usual, with special music, while Lisa gave instructions. People could talk and ask for help.

They set up an assembly line. Lisa taught participants how to stitch, provided them with pre-threaded needles and put cloth

strips on the table.

"Some people pinned the strips together. They passed the pieces to someone who drew a stitching line with a ruler. Next, the pieces were passed to stitchers to sew the strips that were the same size.

"My mother was ready with an iron and ironing board to press the seams open," said Lisa.

The pile of fabric grew from strips for two books to four, until the 24 book strips were sewn together.

Nancy added appliqued letters to the quilt, so it said, "We're with the Banned!"

It was the first time the congregation quilted together. Some have quilted banners that decorate the church, but those quilts were not issue-focused.

Nancy put a back and border on it. Then she added old-fashioned library card holders, three on the front and one on the back.

They made library cards with the name of the church and returned the completed quilt the next Sunday.

Sharing the slogan, "We're with the Banned," they invited people to sign the cards.

That Sunday, another church member Bill Condon, who is retired from the WSU library and a retired literature professor,

talked on the value of books as a means to understand other people's experiences and empathize with them.

He explained how the library decided what books go in the library and state guidelines on how to handle requests to ban books.

Then the organizers invited churches, libraries, bookstores and organizations to share the quilt and sign cards.

The banned books quilt has visited Trinity Lutheran, Sacred Heart Catholic and Refuge Church in Pullman, the Unitarian Universalist Church in Moscow, Book People of Moscow, Neill Public Library, Washington State University Library as part of a Banned Book Week event, Moscow Friends of the Library Book Sale.

"In sharing with other churches, I talk about the project and what it means to us. Typically, the quilt stays at a site for two weeks, to give people an opportunity to see it and sign cards," said Lisa, who has felt welcomed and appreciated when she has spoken.

In this way, Lisa has given opportunities for others who share her anger and frustration about book banning to do something.

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CDAIDE provides emergency assistance for workers in hospitality

By Kaye Hult

CDAIDE steps in to provide emergency relief to hospitality workers, said Jason Nye, its executive director.

He offered some examples of how the nonprofit has helped.

- A young mother, who is a hospitality worker, had a drunk driver plow through the rental unit she shared with her young son. She didn't have the funds to find a new place to live.

CDAIDE paid the first and last month's deposit on a new apartment.

- A restaurant had to close because of an electrical fire. The employees were out of work and unemployment insurance would not come in time to pay the next month's rent.

CDAIDE helped employees pay rent while the restaurant was being repaired.

- A woman service worker experienced extreme tooth pain from an infection that required dental surgery. She did not have the funds to pay for it.

CDAIDE helped her pay for the surgery, so she could return to work pain free.

"We help people who have worked in hospitality for at least three months," said Jason. "As part of our Christian background, our focus is showing our neighbors love by helping them through life crises, with no strings attached."

CDAIDE's mission is to "serve Coeur d'Alene-area hospitality workers by meeting their immediate needs, connecting them with resources for long-term self-sufficiency and ensuring they feel valued, respected and loved."

"They must live in Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls or Hayden," Jason said, "and they must be referred by another person, a sponsor who is aware of their need, preferably a supervisor or coworker."

Not long after Jason, his wife and four children moved to Coeur d'Alene from the Seattle area in 2020, he decided to leave the for-profit world, where he had worked with Microsoft and Amazon.

"I wanted to do something that made a difference in the world," he said.

He randomly found an ad for the CDAIDE position. Although he had not worked in a nonprofit organization before, he read through the job description and decided he could do that work.

"I have a heart for helping those in hospitality. I worked in large restaurant chains to put myself through college," he recalled. "The minimum wage for



Jason Nye finds niche in helping hospitality workers.

servers here in Idaho is \$3.35 an hour. When I was working in the Old Spaghetti Factory in Utah, I was making \$2.30 an hour.

"Working my backside off to pay for school, I understand just how difficult hospitality work is. Even though I was doing my best, there was much I couldn't control. Always, in the back of my mind, I worried about how to meet financial challenges," he said.

Jason explained that in many states, like Idaho, there is a separate minimum wage for hospitality workers because they are expected to receive tips.

In CDAIDE's end-of-the-year thank-you letter to sponsors and donors, Donna Brundage, board president, commented on tips.

"It is still legal in Idaho to pay a server \$3.35 an hour," she wrote. "The remainder of the salary is hypothetically to be paid by the customer. In fact, servers are taxed on eight percent of their sales, whether they make that or not. So, if someone chooses not to tip at least eight percent, the server actually pays to wait on that table."

Because of his college jobs, Jason understands that servers' lives are precarious.

"Hospitality workers are an under-served population," he said. "When I began working with CDAIDE, I didn't know any other organizations that were doing this. That's what steered me to this position."

"I have empathy for service workers, such as servers, cooks, maids and bartenders. I am doing this out of a passion to serve, to help others," he said.

Jason works with two other staff. Cindy Ackland is the program manager and software expert. Candice Randall, the care counselor, meets recipients.

CDAIDE, which is now putting together an events committee for their April Charity Gala, relies on volunteers.

In 2014, CDAIDE came into being as a mission of First Presbyterian Church in Coeur d'Alene. Church members were

seeking a way to show love for neighbors in the community, living out their mission to Love 1st.

As they studied the downtown, where their church building is located, they realized how many restaurants, hotels and motels Coeur d'Alene has, all of which require hospitality workers.

Big Table in Spokane similarly helps those in hospitality who struggle. That group was instrumental in helping this new mission get up and running.

By 2016, the church realized that its mission had grown large enough that it needed to become a nonprofit. CDAIDE was born. By 2018, it had become a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

"We are trying to prevent the slide into homelessness for an at-risk group of people," Jason said.

"Most hospitality workers are part of the ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population here. We are able to help these folks who are just getting by, but whose lives can be disrupted by financial crises or unexpected money hurdles."

Jason grew up in Bothell, Wash., a place that was then like Coeur d'Alene, with woods and streams through which to roam. Since his youth, he has been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which instilled his value of loving his neighbors.

After graduating from high school in 2000, he attended Brigham Young University for a couple years before becoming involved in an e-commerce start-up and dropping out of school.

"I soon realized my mistake," he said. "I returned to school in 2013, to further my career and, by completing my education, to encourage my two daughters to go to college."

He studied communications at the University of Washington full time, worked full time, was raising his children and was a Scout leader. He graduated summa cum laude in 2015.

"Going back to school later

in life, I gained understanding of time management and dedication. I understood the value of being prepared vs. procrastinating," he said. "College was easier the second time. I found time to do what needed doing."

Moving into the nonprofit sector with his work at CDAIDE, he has found that a major concern is to raise enough funds to carry out the mission.

"It can be stressful," he said. "Stories of the challenges some community members face daily are heartbreaking, but they hide their struggles behind a smile while at work."

"I worry about receiving enough from grants, sponsors and donors to provide help for them," he said. "The possibility of any hospitality worker slipping into homelessness is real. It's one financial burden away."

In October, CDAIDE held their third successful Chef Challenge, in which local chefs compete to win a championship belt and the title of 2023 Chef Challenge winner.

"It is growing," he said. "Tick-

ets were sold out two months early in 2023. Chefs and restaurants are already reaching out and planning for 2024."

CDAIDE is preparing for a spring event, the Sixth Annual Care Affair, April 11, at the Coeur d'Alene Resort.

"With ties to the service industry, many restaurants help, donating chefs or gift cards to support their neighbors," he said.

"Restaurants live with slim profit margins," Jason added, "but providing a chef or a gift card is a great way to offer CDAIDE support as we support them."

"When people support us, they are helping their family, friends and neighbors who are struggling with inflation, increased housing costs, reduced work hours in the winter and other area financial hurdles," he said.

"At the end of the day, I want to feel like I've made a difference. Helping people improve their situation makes me feel like I'm doing something that matters."

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Guatemalan painter finds Spokane a home away from his home

Guatemalan artist Benedicto Ixtamer, who came on extended visits in 2014, 2018 and 2023, now feels at home in Spokane and considers the people and community to be his family. He has displayed his work at various U.S. communities since 2004.

He told of ties with some of his Spokane friends and family.

With Barry Moses (Sulustu) of the Spokane Tribe, he shares a commitment to preserve his Indigenous language.

Benedicto met Brian and Sandi Thompson-Royer of Bethany Presbyterian in his hometown when they were learning Spanish. Their Resilient Threads fair trade enterprise takes them to Guatemala. He stayed with them in Spokane.

Maria Cuc and Felipe Gonzales of Maya Color and Maya Coffee in Spokane work with many coffee growers in the area where Benedicto's family is in the coffee business.

Benedicto has participated several times in Spokane's Fair Trade Festival Thanksgiving Weekend at the Community Building with Kizuri, Ganesh Himal, Conosur Imports, Trades of Hope, Resilient Threads and Maya Color.

He was artist-in-residence from mid-November to mid-December at the Community Building, which commissioned him to create a painting depicting the building's Blueprints preschool.

From mid-November through the end of December, his paintings were on display and for sale at the Community Building foyer, where he demonstrated his painting techniques and visited with those coming and going.

Benedicto, who has come several times for four to six weeks in Spokane, also toured and sold his art in Portland, Ore., Santa Fe, N.M., and Telluride, Colo., except during COVID.

His art not only offers a different perspective of his Mayan culture, history and people, but also builds connections on the issues people face.

"My art gives a bird's-eye view and fish-eye view, as well as a normal view of people and their lives," he said. "I paint my town, San Juan Laguna, Guatemala, which is on the shore of Lake Atitlan, because I want to rescue its stories as a way to teach and share through art about the lives of people there and my life."

From talking with elders and people in town, and from his own observations, he captures stories of the culture, history and everyday life in vibrant colors and textures of oil paint as "the best way to share my culture," he said.

"I am a visual historian. I bring to life stories of people visually," said Benedicto, who is a self-taught artist, beginning by drawing on cardboard and school notebooks as a child.



Benedicto Ixtamer shows "Reverberation," a painting on families.

"It's important to share with people in Spokane and in the Spokane Tribe information about Mayans as the Indigenous people in Guatemala, comparing our cultural and language experiences with their experiences.

"I feel at home," he said.

With Sulustu, Benedicto met participants in the Salish language immersion program in Wellpinit and shared about his efforts to preserve the Mayan language and culture.

"I found that the structure of our languages and some of the ways they sound are similar," he said.

He also feels at home because several people in Spokane speak Mayan.

Benedicto also described several paintings and how they tell stories about people and issues they face.

• **One painting is of a woman** holding the world. Her arms stretch around the top of the glowing circle representing the globe. At the bottom, her feet are bound. It expresses that women do not have many opportunities for education and jobs even though they hold the world together with their talent, knowledge and committed lives.

"In our country, women do not have the same opportunities as men, but I know women hold the future of the world. Their spirit keeps them going even though they hurt," Benedicto said. "We should work together to give more opportunities to women and girls. With their feet bound, they cannot walk, speak freely to raise their voices.

"Here people have more freedom to speak than in my country and women have more opportunities," he said.

• **A second painting** he described is "Reverberation," showing a family of three, two

parents and a child at the center of the painting, which is made from a fish-eye view.

His message with this painting is that "if we can exist as family in love and peace, that love and peace will reverberate everywhere," he said. "If we show our love, who we are and where we come from, there will be deeper reflection through the world.

"I have a great experience here with people. I know that sense of family. I feel I am a brother. I feel at home here," he said. "The Spokane community is my community."

Benedicto said that is also the spirit he finds among those who work at and visit the Community Building at 35 W. Main in downtown Spokane, a hub of nonprofit agencies serving the community and region.

• **The Community Building** commissioned him to do a painting to hang on the wall near the entrance of the building.

"I taught a few classes to the kids, coloring and putting together forms from paper to create the bird's-eye view, while I paint as an artist in residence. Their parents visited when they came by to drop them off and pick them up," he said.

The bird's-eye-view painting shows children flying kites that represent the colors of flags of the different countries of their parents. The flags include the Spokane city flag, flag of the Spokane Tribe of Indians, and flags from Canada, Italy, Burkina Faso, Japan, Peru, Georgia, Guatemala and the United States.

"It is beautiful that children of different backgrounds are learning together," he said.

• **Other paintings** showed women weaving, because weaving is important for Guatemalan women. His canvases are woven by his mother and other moth-

ers in his town. Weaving is the primary job for women.

"One painting shows mothers weaving and children making the yarn into balls," he said. "I create texture with the oil paints."

• Another painting shows someone who learned healing from Mayan culture healing a broken bone. Still another painting shows mothers and children making tortillas, the main food in Guatemala.

"Paintings are how I share my ancestral knowledge," said Benedicto, who believes it is important for people of different nations and cultures to learn each other's languages and visit each other.

"Being an artist-in-residence is a good strategy for building relationships with people in another country, to share and teach

knowledge from my culture," he said.

• **Finally, he spoke on** the painting, "The Innocence of the Water," sharing the message that it's sad there is less water and humans are damaging water that runs in lakes and rivers. He said, "While we have traded in it and contaminated it, water is innocent. Water gives us life, but we do not take care of it. We dump trash in it. We need to work together to protect water, because it is key for life for humans, plants, animals and the world."

Benedicto and his wife, Maria, share income from art sales with people in need in their community, so "a buyer becomes part of the story and life of our community," he said on his website.

For information, visit benedictomayanartist.org.

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We are already a multicultural-multinational-multiracial nation

As we start a new year, let us consider how we might see each other and our world with new eyes. What is God's eye-view for those God created?

As a shy, but curious person, I'm glad I'm a journalist, because I can ask questions to come to know people I interview and give voice to their stories. In training writers, I encourage them to assume the person they interview is from another faith, culture or language, so they ask questions to go beneath the surface.

I relish inviting people to recognize their similarities and celebrate the nuances of their differences so they can enter and be enriched by the current and future multicultural, multifaith, multilingual, multinational and multiracial world.

What do we see when we look at someone of another culture, nation or race? What do they read into our glance of wanting to know them? What expectations have we internalized from media of choices being either/or, black/white, racist/anti-racist, oppressed/oppressor, as if there are no other choices, colors, voices or relationships.

Some assume Eastern Washington is white supremacist, because there are some white supremacists here. There are white supremacists everywhere. In the 1980s and 1990s, media gave disproportionate coverage to pockets of extremist, violent white supremacists. They were/are here and are dangerous. We need(ed) to know. Awareness spurred powerful human rights efforts that had *much* less media coverage. Those efforts continue. We need(ed) to know.

The Fig Tree continues its commitment to give voice to the multicultural, multifaith, multilingual, multinational, multiracial voices in the region—to en-

courage and to build solidarity with them.

We internalize "isms" from media images that speak to our fears, creating prejudices and stereotypes.

While some are stirring a backlash, I embrace our nation becoming a majority people of color by 2045.

In reality, we are already a multicultural, multifaith, multilingual, multinational, multiracial nation. We just close our eyes because the black/white mindset keeps us from seeing what already is.

For example, I grew up in the 1950s in what seemed to be an "Anglo" New York State—except for the cultural diversity brought by Italians, Germans, Swiss, Dutch, French, Puerto Ricans, African Americans, the Haudenosaunee and Méti who intermarried and many more who became "invisible."

Beyond meat and potatoes meals, I was introduced to pizza, spaghetti, Indian and Chinese food. After moving in the 1960s to Oregon, I encountered Mexican, Central American and Asian people and foods, and international students. Then I studied in Vienna, immersed in Viennese language, culture, history and cuisine.

Pivotal was living six months 1969-70 with 60 people from 40 nations with the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute outside Geneva, Switzerland. That and attending WCC assemblies in Vancouver, BC., Australia, Zimbabwe, Brazil, South Korea and (online) Germany immersed me in diversity. As people of many races, ethnicities, classes, confessions and ideologies, we gathered as equals.

I gained insights into their lives, struggles and perspectives. Now when I see news about their countries, I see it through the lens of knowing and loving people there,

and wondering how they are affected by and affecting policies and lives. My prayer life is busy. My ties continue through phone calls, letters, emails and Zoom.

I sought out cross-cultural/racial relationships with Scandinavians and Clatsop in Astoria, a Nigerian international student in Fresno, and bringing international students to farm families and the Coeur d'Alene reservation when I was in Tekoa.

Since starting The Fig Tree and through family friends, my multicultural, multilingual, multifaith, multinational, multiracial ties have blossomed. With each interview, I gain new eyes. With sharing in cultural events, I continue to learn. I have traveled as my children studied and worked in Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and China. Sharing in the lives of my part-Tongan grandchildren immerses me in the language and insights of that culture—enriching my life.

I relish living in the diversity that has filled my life, allowing me to build relationships, challenge injustices and promote equal opportunities for the people in our nation and around the world.

Without equal opportunities in education, jobs, pay, housing, healthcare and access in democracy, just having more people of color won't make the difference we need. When policies allow people who are excluded to participate and benefit fully, all of us will benefit.

So, if some see me as *just* a gray-haired white woman, they miss seeing my heart, my essence. They miss the nuances of my lived experiences, my fears and loves, my risks and losses. They miss seeing me.

If some see anyone only by their color, race, religion, language, culture, class or any other difference, they may miss the

person and succumb to stereotypes that play into divisions those in power promote to hold onto their power and wealth.

Let us value nuances beyond either-or perceptions. The varied African, Asian, Australian, European, Latin American, North American, Pacific Islander and Indigenous nations and ethnicities there are unspoken understandings, perspectives and wisdoms that arise from their traditional cultures and lived experiences.

We cannot assume that divisions like those between Israel and Palestine are impossible to bridge, because we see unity between the Palestinian and Israeli mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, and friends who have lost children, siblings and friends in the war and ongoing oppression. For years, they have banded together to end the violence.

We who identify as multicultural, multinational and multiracial, in solidarity with all who are excluded, marginalized and stereotyped, have cause for horror when we hear a would-be dictator denounce people who are not white, who do not share his perspectives and who do want to celebrate that our nation is and is becoming more multicultural, multinational and multiracial—more colorful—than ever.

My life is enriched by my roots and identity being from more than one culture, nationality and race. So is everyone's.

Let us celebrate the diversity of our world, society and community. Let us see through divide-and-conquer politicians seeking power. Let us see beyond polarities and celebrities overlaid by some media for profit. Let us act together now.

Let us celebrate who we are. Let us find unity, equity and justice in our diversity.

Mary Stamp - editor

Today Jesus would likely tell 'The Parable of the Ford F-150'

If Jesus were preaching today, his parables might well rely on topics like the Superbowl, hazmat suits and frogs as an indicator species—or maybe a Ford F-150 pickup.

Why? Because he was a master teacher, who used pictures and stories that connected immediately and powerfully with his listeners. His parables about the good Samaritan and the prodigal son still capture our imagination today.

His parables drew on agricultural imagery, social events like weddings and banquets and masters and servants—all concepts close to people's ordinary lives.

Good preachers today do the same thing: sharing analogies that help convey theological truths, but in our quest for expanding our theological knowledge and inspiration, we needn't limit ourselves to what our pastors and priests, rabbis

and imams come up with. They have no monopoly on creative insights into our respective faith traditions.

It doesn't take much to look around for spiritual lessons. Take, for example, the idea of the fridge door, which may well be decorated with photos of children, grandchildren or other loved ones. I believe that God cares so much about each of us that God would do the same with our photos: They're pasted all over God's fridge.

Jesus' listeners were smart enough not to take him literally. For example, when he spoke about taking the plank out of your own eye before helping someone with a speck in his. So, too, with the fridge analogy. Of course, we know that God doesn't need a fridge because nothing can spoil in heaven, but the point of this modern analogy is God's care for each of us.

Think how many more ideas Jesus

could draw upon today. From the world of science, for example, there's the idea of entropy. That is the concept that in the long run everything either breaks or runs down. Compare that with the opposite, negentropy: the idea that in the long run, everything comes together—not a bad image to help us envision how God's will and purposes will ultimately prevail.

What spiritual lessons, encouragement or comfort can we draw from concepts like the pilot light in gas fireplaces and the drug Pitocin to speed up labor in expectant moms? Do we dare try to hasten God's activity in our lives by saying, "I've waited long enough, God, please hurry up and show me what you want me to know or do?"

These potential parables and analogies are all around us. So, when I'm opening my fridge door, I often think of God's love for all of us.

In *Your Photo on God's Fridge Door*, I compiled 101 devotional reflections, from a Christian perspective, using analogies and parables I think Jesus might draw upon today.

As we enter 2024, consider this exercise: Once a week, we might look around the familiar settings we encounter in a new way: our home, workplace or favorite coffee shop. Then we might ask, "What simple lesson might Jesus have drawn from what I see in front of me?"

Who knows what parables or other teachings God might share with us today?

One of these might very well begin, "There was a man whose neighbor bought a Ford F-150 pickup..."

Gordon Jackson, who worked in South Africa as a journalist, taught journalism at Whitworth University in Spokane for 32 years before retiring in 2015.

Column

Sounding Board

Commentary

Cameron Conner's grandfather taught him to stand up for what is right

My grandfather, Wayne Attwood, was the one who taught me the importance of caring for others. From a young age, I can remember how strangers with remarkable regularity would react when they saw my mother's last name and ask: "Are you related to Wayne Attwood by any chance?" My mother, Denise, would laugh and explain that she was indeed his daughter. "Dr. Attwood was the best doctor I have ever had," they always said.

My grandfather taught me to uncompromisingly stand up for what I believed to be right, and he led by example. He chaired the Physicians for Social Responsibility as they campaigned to shut down nuclear testing at Hanford, walking miles to work along the road with a sign on his back that read, "No Blood for Oil," during the invasion of Iraq, waking up before dawn every morning to check on

the patients under his care and donating blood every month like clockwork.

I don't think it would be much of a reach to say that it was his example that drove nearly all my cousins and me into careers of service as teachers, nurses and a community organizer.

Last week, Wayne passed away peacefully in Spokane. He was with family and surrounded by love.

His passing will leave a void for all of us. We are all better for having had him in our lives.

Abraham Lincoln once confided to a friend that his greatest ambition in life was to be "truly esteemed of my fellow men, by doing something worthy of their esteem."

In all the time I knew my grandfather, his greatest ambition never seemed to sway from the clear goal of loving his

family and caring for his community. In doing this, however, he became one of the most loved and highly esteemed men I have known.

He saved lives, loved unconditionally and healed people.

I returned to the U.S. from England in December to support my family and help arrange next steps. To do so, I will be taking a step away from work until after the holidays.

There are many incredible stories to share from the past month working in England, crossing the country from Birmingham to Brighton, but they will have to wait until early in the new year.

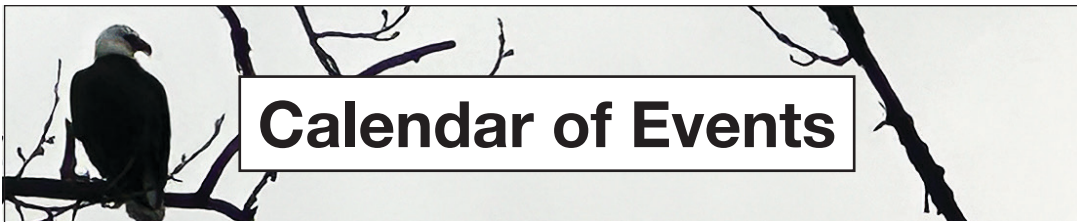
Until then, hold your loved ones close and remember the people who have made you who you are.

Cameron Conner
Fig Tree Columnist



Wayne Attwood

Photo courtesy of Denise Attwood



Calendar of Events

Area codes are 509 unless otherwise listed.

To add listings, email development@thefigtree.org

- Jan 3, 17** • **Spokane Folklore Society Contra Dance**, Woman's Club, 1428 W. Ninth, 7:15 to 9:30 p.m., 838-2160
- Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31** • **Spokane Community Against Racism Meeting**, Community Building/Saranac Commons 19 W. Main, 12 noon, scarspokane.org
- Jan 4** • **Spokane Homeless Coalition Meeting**, The Gathering House, 733 W. Garland, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
- **The Fig Tree Benefit and Board Meeting**, 12 to 3 p.m. 535-4112
- **Lawyer in the Library**, free legal clinic with Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program, Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 E. Front, 4 to 6 p.m., (208) 769-2315
- **RAP Monthly Meeting**, Carl Maxey Center, 3114 E. 5th, 4 to 5 p.m.
- Jan 4, 11** • **"You've Got This" Vaccine Event**, Aging and Disability Vaccination Collaborative, Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW) and Tri County Health Department, 4th - 240 E. Dominion, Colville, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., 11th - 605 Hwy 20, Newport, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., 562-8027
- Jan 5** • **Reuse Workshop with Art Salvage**, Mobius Discovery Center, 331 N. Post, 10 to 11 a.m., 321-7133, mobiusspokane.org
- To Jan 5** • **Illumination**, Third Street Gallery, City Hall, 206 E. Third, Moscow, M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., (208) 883-7026
- Jan 5, 19** • **Riverfront Market**, Pavilion, 574 N. Howard, 6 to 9 p.m., (888) 929-7849, rfinfo@spokanecity.org
- Jan 6** • **MET Live in HD: Nabucco**, The Kenworthy, 508 S. Main, Moscow, 9:55 p.m., (208) 882-4127
- To Jan 6** • **Forest Wisdom Watercolors**, Annette Durking, Jacklin Arts and Cultural Center, T-W 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Th-F 1 to 5 p.m., (208) 457-8950, director@thejacklincenter.org, info@artcda.com
- Jan 7** • **Faith Action Network (FAN) Legislative Preview**, online, 3 to 4:15 p.m., fanwa.org
- Jan, 7, 14, 21, 28** • **Spokane Community Against Racism** Coffee, Saranac Commons/Community Building 19 W. Main, 9 a.m., scarspokane.org
- Jan 9** • **Eastern Washington Legislative Conference Planning Committee**, Zoom, 1 p.m., 535-4112 for link
- **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, Zoom, 5:30 p.m., ucarter@pjals.org
- Jan 9 & 25** • **Genealogy Drop-In Sessions**, Spokane Valley Library, 22 N. Herald, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 893-8400
- Jan 10** • **Sandy Williams Justice Center** - Racial Justice Clinic: BIPOC familylaw, DV, housing, discrimination, civil rights, general, Carl Maxey Center, 3114 E. 5th, 3 to 5 p.m., selfhelplegal@carlmaxeycenter.org
- **Human Trafficking Awareness Month** Training and Reception, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Spokane Central Library, nwyxwyetk Hall, 906 W. Main, 3 to 6 p.m., 343-5011, adougherty@lcsnw.org
- Jan 10, 11** • **FAN Advocacy 101**, online, 10th at 7p.m., 11th at noon, fanwa.org
- Jan 10, 11, 31** • **Getting Started with Medicare**, 10th - ALTCEW, 6 to 7:30 p.m., online, altcew.org/news-events/event-calendar; Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors, 11th at North Spokane Library 3 p.m., 31st - online 3 p.m., 893-8350, sclcd.evanced.info/signup/calendar
- Jan 10, 31** • **Genealogy Drop-In Sessions**, North Spokane Library, 44 E. Hawthorne, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. 893-8350
- Jan 11** • **Reuse Workshop**, with Art Salvage at Mobius Discovery Center, 331 N. Post, 10 a.m., 321-7137
- Jan 11, 25** • **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, Zoom, 5:30 p.m., slichty@pjals.org
- Jan 12** • **Memory Café**, persons living with Alzheimers or other dementias and loved ones, Coeur d'Alene Public Library, Community Room, 10 a.m., (208) 769-2315
- **Senior Tech Basics**, Salvation Army Kroc Center with the Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 1:30 to 3 p.m. (208) 769-2315 x 434
- Jan 12, 13** • **Winterfest**, Republic, Fri 6 p.m., Sat, 9 a.m. to 3p.m.
- Jan 13** • **New Year Self-Care Retreat**, Moran Prairie Library, 6004 S. Regal, TERRA, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. 893-8340
- Jan 14** • **"Sharing Stories, Empowering People,"** sermon, Marijke Fakasiieiki, Opportunity Christian, 708 N. Pines, 10:30 a.m., 535-4112
- **Death Café**, Spokane Public Library, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., Rubicon's Edge Consulting with Samantha Potter, deathcafe.com/deathcafe/17431, rubiconsedge.com/events
- To Jan 15** • **10th Annual Cup of Joy**, Trackside Studio, 115 S. Adams, W-F 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., 863-9904
- Jan 15** • **Martin Luther King Jr Day Celebration**, Annual Unity March and Resource Fair, downtown Spokane, TBA, 868-0856, mlkspokane.org
- **Children's Program Honoring Martin Luther King Jr's Works**, Schuler Performing Arts Center, 9:30 a.m. Coeur d'Alene, 11:30 a.m. Post Falls, (208) 765-3932
- **NAACP General Membership Meeting**, Spokane Public Library, 906 W. Main, or virtual, 7 p.m., spokanenaacp@gmail.com
- Jan 16** • **"Sharing Stories, Empowering People,"** Marijke Fakasiieiki, Spokane Central Library, 906 W. Main, 12:30 p.m., 535-4112, development@thefigtree.org
- **Chanticleer**, Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 E. Desmet, 7:30 p.m. 313-2787, mwpac@gonzaga.edu
- Jan 18** • **Financial Education (Grades K-3)**, Global Credit Union at Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 E. Front, 4 to 5 p.m., (208) 769-2315
- To Jan 18** • **EWU Faculty Art Exhibition**, EWU Gallery of Art, 140 Art Building, Cheney, M-F 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., 359-2494
- Jan 19** • **Senior Tech Basics**, Coeur d'Alene Public Library with Salvation Army Kroc Center, 10 p.m. (208) 769-2315 x 434
- Jan 19-21** • **Weekend Retreat for Men and Women**, "The Most Holy Eucharist: Gift and Sacrament," with Fr. Wade L.J. Menezes, CPM, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 6 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., ihrc.net
- To Jan 19** • **Holiday Food Fundraiser for Northwest Harvest** Food Bank, bring perishable food donations to participating businesses, 279-2982
- Jan 20** • **Healing Trauma in the Body, Mind, and Heart** Workshop, Harmony Woods Retreat Center, 11507 S. Keeney, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 993-2968
- **Saturday with the Symphony: A Children's** Program, Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 E. Front, 11 a.m., (208) 769-2315
- **Pacific Northwest Ballet**, Suzanne Ostersmith, Assoc. Prof and Chair of Gonzaga Dance at Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 2316 W. First, 2 p.m., 456-3931
- **Spokane Authors and Self-publishers Meeting**, St. Francis of Assisi, 4420 N. Jefferson, 2 to 4 p.m., 325-1321, stfrancisofassisispokane.org
- **KYRS Winter Concert Series**, Central Library, nx?yx?yatk? Hall, 7 to 11 p.m., kyrs.org
- Jan 20, 21** • **Spokane Symphony Masterworks 5: Holly Rachs**, The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, Sat 7:30 p.m., Sun. 3 p.m., 624-1200
- Jan 21** • **Brushed by Reiki** - Energetic Art Workshop & Journey, Souls Center Spokane, Ravens Nest Wellness, 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., soulscenter.com/brushed-by-reiki-with-raven.html
- Jan 23** • **Sustainable Commodities**, Hemmingson Auditorium, Gonzaga University 5 to 6:30 p.m., climateinstitute@gonzaga.edu
- Jan 24, 25** • **Spokane Symphony Barrister Chamber Soirees**, Barrister Winery, 1213 W. Railroad, 7:30 p.m., 465-3591
- Jan 25** • **Silent Day of Prayer on Patience** with Fr. Max Oliva, S.J., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., ihrc.net
- **Spokane Homeless Connect**, Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Financial Education (Grades 4 to 8)**, Global Credit Union at Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 E. Front, 4 to 5 p.m., (208) 769-2315
- Jan 26** • **Spokane Symphony: Rockwood Chamber Soiree**, Rockwood Retirement Community, 221 E. Rockwood Blvd., 7 p.m., 838-3200
- To Jan 26** • **North Idaho College Faculty Exhibition**, Boswell Corner Gallery at NIC, F 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., M-Th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., (208) 769-3276
- Jan 26-27** • **24 Hour Lenten Planning Retreat**, "How to Forgive with Christ as Our Model," Charles Finck, MS, IHRC, 4:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Jan 26-Feb 4** • **Winter Lights**, Downtown Coeur d'Alene, Sherman, M-Th, 4 to 8 p.m., F-Sat, 4 to 9 p.m., (208) 415-0116
- Jan 27** • **Eastern Washington Legislative Conference**, Spokane Valley United Methodist Church 115 N. Raymond and zoom, 8:30 a.m. to 3: p.m., 535-4112, secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/2024legislativeconference
- **Carl Jung: Engaged Journaling**, Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 E. Front, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., (208) 769-2315
- **El Mercado**, A.M. Cannon Park, 1920 W. Maxwell, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., latinosenspokane.org
- **Parenting for Caregivers Raising Children of Color**, North Spokane Library, 44 E. Hawthorne, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., 893-8330
- **Wishes and Wine- A TASTE of Spokane**, Wishing Star Foundation benefit, Historic Flight Foundation, 6 to 10 p.m., 744-3411, info@wishingstar.org
- **CDA Symphony: Storytime Adventures**, A Family Concert, Schuler Performing Arts Center, 880 W. Garden Coeur d'Alene, 7:30 p.m., (208) 769-7780
- Jan 27, 28-Feb 3, 4** • **Spokane Jewish Film Festival**, Gonzaga University Jepson Center, 502 E. Boone, Sat 6 to 9:30 p.m., Sun. 2 to 7 p.m., sjff2024.eventive.org
- Jan 28** • **Taizé Evening of Prayer**, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 6:30 p.m., ihrc.net
- **Spokane Youth Symphony: The Nature of Music**, The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, 524-1200
- **Spokane String Quartet, for Black History Month**, Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague, 3 to 5 p.m., 227-7638
- Jan 31** • **The Fig Tree Distribution and Mailing**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 535-4112
- **Self-Publishing Workshop with Rogue Treasures**, Coeur d'Alene Public Library Community Room, 4 to 6 p.m., (208) 769-2315
- To Jan 31** • **Palouse Women Artists Show**, 1912 Center, 412 E. Third, Moscow, M-F 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., (208) 669-2249
- Feb 1** • **The Fig Tree Benefit and Board Meeting**, 12 to 3 p.m. 535-4112
- Feb 2** • **Praise and Worship with Joe Wittwer: Forgive Everyone Always**, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. ihrc.net
- Thurs** • **Taizé Prayer**, Zoom, 4:15 p.m., bartletts@gonzaga.edu

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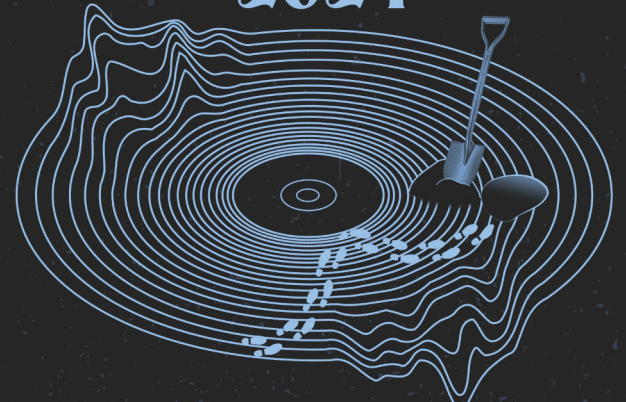
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Silver Lake Camp took on a role in fire relief and recovery efforts

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

On Aug. 18, 2023, fire swept through the Medical Lake area, burning more than 10,000 acres and destroying 240 homes before it was finally extinguished.

Since the fires, Kaye Peterson, the guest services manager and community chaplain at Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center, which is about two miles south of Medical Lake, has constantly felt Jesus' presence.

"We always end meetings with a prayer, asking not to be overwhelmed but always to be aware of the opportunities that arrive each day from God as blessings to meet the needs of the day," she said.

Two unusual happenings turned out to be blessings from God that kept the situation from being worse.

"Most often our contract for incoming groups indicates they will arrive at 2 p.m. On August 18, for some reason the contract for the new group's arrival indicated they would come at 3 p.m., so the other group had left but the new group hadn't come yet. If they had been there, we would have had so many more individuals and cars to evacuate with just the long one-way road coming into the camp. God is so good."

Usually when a group comes to Silver Lake Camp, they use the camp's boat so that in the time between the departure of one group and the arrival of the next, the boat is taken out of the water for maintenance and cleaning.

For whatever reason the group that had left on Aug. 18, hadn't used the boat while at the camp.

"The boat was still in the water and so it was saved," Kaye explained, "and Terry Andrews, executive camp director, used the boat to escape from the fire. Later it was used to shuttle others out of the fire to the other side—a blessing from God!"

Kaye described the efforts of the camp to assist.

"I am so glad the main building survived. It means we can be a beacon of hope for the community. Terry opened up the camp for anyone in need of help after the fire, from providing space in the parking lot, to parking a camper, to letting people grab a bite to eat. He freed me up to work with the community because he wanted to help our neighbors," she said.

"We are now partnering with the town of Medical Lake and Mayor Terri Cooper and Re*Imagine Medical Lake. The members of the community are coming together here to continue as a base for the restoration process," Kaye said.

"We hosted Team Rubicon, a veteran-led organization. For six weeks, Team Rubicon and other community volunteers helped remove hazardous trees from 85 percent of the homes that were destroyed," she explained.

Kaye is new to Silver Lake Camp, having just ended a career teaching high school math in Everett on the west side of the state.

The camp, which is affiliated with the Assemblies of God and follows its fundamental statements of faith, was purchased in the mid 1950s and began its operations in 1962.

It is open in the summer for

elementary and high school church student groups, in the late fall for college age retreats and in the fall and spring for men's and women's retreats.

"I feel God called me clearly into camping," Kaye asserted. "I was a Baptist preacher's kid and fell in love with Jesus as a child. My father helped start a Christian camp—Camp Judson—behind Mt. Rushmore. I have always loved Christian camps."

She previously worked as a lifeguard at Whidbey Island's Camp Casey, which was purchased from the army by Seattle Pacific University.

Then Kaye became chronically ill, suffering from thoracic outlet syndrome that caused her chronic pain, headaches and lower back challenges along with multiple allergies. This led her to teach math in Everett.

In the last several years, through a healing she attributes to God's power, Kaye recovered from these ailments and thought of working at a Christian camp again.

As things opened up after COVID, a friend kept encouraging her, "Call my brother and talk

to him."

That brother was Terry Andrews of Silver Lake Camp.

Finally, Kaye called. He invited her to the camp during her spring break to see the camp and to talk about possibilities.

"He had a series of questions for me: 'Can you work with kids? Can you do group scheduling and work on a computer? Can you be a liaison with a group and respond to needs as they come up?'" Kaye said.

"Answering yes to all of them, I was hired and began work after the school year ended," she said.

"I love the staff here. They are my family, and our volunteers are the coolest people ever," she said.

Before the fire, the facility could handle more than 700 people if needed. Some sleep in its 520 beds, and others sleep in tents. It welcomed about 6,000 campers each summer and about 4,000 the rest of the year.

Among her duties as guest services manager, Kaye was in charge of the student groups that staffed the kitchen, served as lifeguards, ran the café and

zip lines, and were responsible for clean-up.

She oversees about 30 to 35 students. She sometimes leads Bible lessons—"because everything we do is under the Lord"—and encourages the student workers as they clean up between camping sessions.

"As we clean up the messes at the camp, God is cleaning up the students' lives," Kaye said.

Since the fire, Terry reported that they do not plan to hold camps until January 2024.

In the fire, the camp lost five homes, five cabins, a yurt, their shop and outdoor equipment. Kaye's home was among those that burned down. The fire burned all the belongings she couldn't salvage quickly.

Immediately after the fire Kaye evacuated to a friend's house in Spokane. The next day she received word that her house was gone and that it would be five or six days before she could get back to the camp.

Once she returned, she sifted through the ashes looking for anything recoverable and was happy to find a piece of rose

quartz from South Dakota—only burned on one side—and her dad's brass whistle from his camp years.

"It was beyond gone, but I still have it!" she said.

Kaye praised the many who have helped the recovery efforts since the fire.

She mentioned several of those efforts.

- Lowe's provided pallets of water and Gatorade for the firefighters, as well as wheelbarrows, shovels and buckets for the community.

- The Salvation Army set up their canteen truck, providing lunches for those in the community.

- Samaritan's Purse and Westgate Chapel chaplains helped people sift through ashes.

Regardless of the trauma people are experiencing from the fire and all the work that still needs to be done, Kaye's faith in God inspires everything she does as she continually asks, "How can we help the greater community and show them God's love?"

For information, email kaye@silverlakecamp.org.

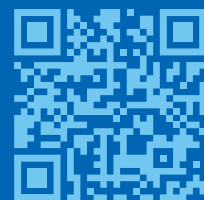


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