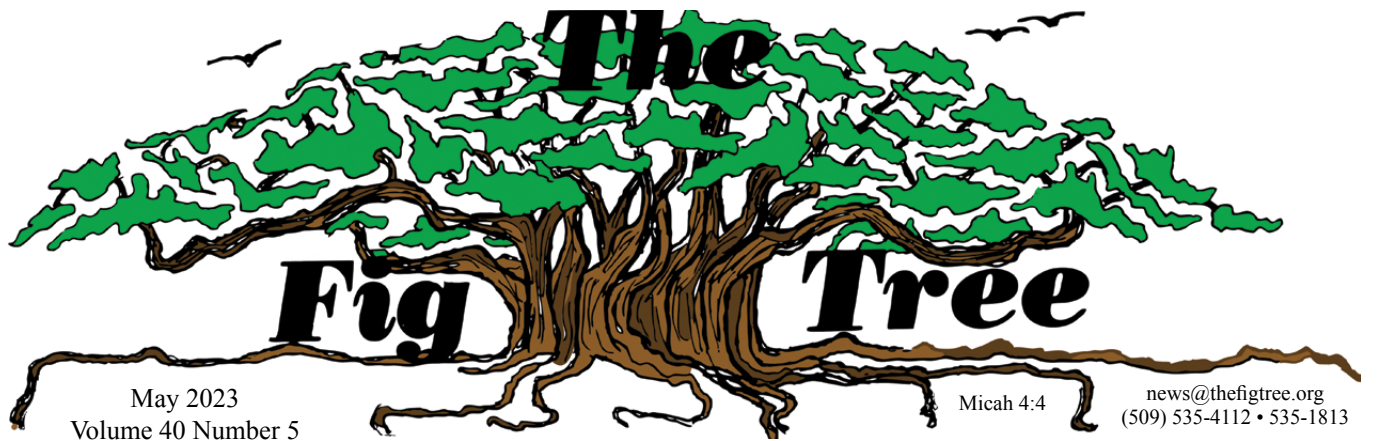


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- Woodworking pastor restores crucifix - p. 13

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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

Pastor diverts youth from gangs

By Mary Stamp

Knowing his ministry is with people who are broken, Pastor Shon Davis of Jesus Is the Answer (JITA) City Church in Spokane likens himself to a potter picking up clay pieces that fall off a pot to form a new pot.

A focus of his ministry is outreach to gangs on the streets and talking with youth in schools, mentoring them to manage their anger so they develop goals and see opportunities beyond their neighborhoods, gangs and drugs.

He knows from lived experience that being in gangs is a pathway leading to prison or death.

He understands the emotional trauma of angry young men caught up in the gang culture. He left home in Compton, Calif., at age 12, and lived on the streets or in friends' homes. He quickly learned how to survive and become part of "the lucrative infrastructure" within the culture of drug dealing.

That lifestyle was contrary to that of his parents who met in Hawaii during World War II and settled in California to raise their eight children in a disciplined Christian life. Even so, they lost two sons to gang violence.

His oldest brother was an origi-



Pastor Shon Davis' early years in gangs gives him insight in mentoring youth.

nal member of the Crips gang as it began to form in 1969.

Shon's father told him not to bring that lifestyle into his home and gave him an ultimatum. Shon chose to leave. As a teen, his identity and respect came from his success as a hustler, knowing the many ways of making money.

At 13, he was shot in the back and could have been killed or paralyzed from the wound. Even that did not deter him from the gang lifestyle and drug trafficking. Eventually he was back in the hospital from another gunshot wound.

In 1988, when he was 21, Shon said he was "turned from gangs through the saving grace of Jesus Christ." At that time, his second oldest brother was in the hospital dying, shot by a bullet intended for him. He wrestled with continuing the cycle of revenge and violence but, sitting alone on a pier in Long Beach, he cried in grief and anger: "God why did you let this happen?"

Shon was startled by fish splashing and jumping out of the water toward him. He felt as though God was answering, his cry through a small still voice and said, "because I will make you a

Continued on page 4

Experiences living in different cultures ingrains awareness that love can unite

From her childhood in a small Iowa farming community with Amish and Mennonite neighbors and from her experiences in short- and long-term missions in Japan and the Philippines, the Rev. Sheila Miranda connects ministry leaders and congregations, knowing they can work together to make a difference, even if their beliefs and cultures differ.

Sheila is the Inland and Seven Rivers Missional District associate for connectional ministries, a collaborative ministry with nine geographic, missional cohorts of

six to 10 churches.

In cohorts, pastors support each other. They share concerns with the cohort pastor, who offers ideas or talks with the district superintendent. Cohorts try to find ways to partner in ministry.

Sheila said COVID restrictions slowed the process. While some are hesitant to come back together, more churches are coming together now.

"Some have robust online worship communities. Others did less online. Some are seeing growth from their online pres-

ence," Sheila said.

Shaped by growing up in Kalona, Iowa—a town of 1,500 that is the largest Amish-Mennonite community west of the Mississippi—she values living side-by-side with people of different religions and cultures, rather than seeing them as a threat.

Her family's farm was next to an Amish farm. Her first best friend was an Amish preacher's granddaughter.

Sheila sang solos and in the choir at the local American Baptist-Disciples of Christ church. She learned piano from the pastor's wife. With no model of a female pastor, she wanted to be a minister of music. Her mother suggested she could earn a living teaching music, so she studied music education at the University of Iowa.

After graduating in 1981, Sheila taught junior high and high school vocal music for five years, while also doing music ministry at churches.

In 1986, she joined a group of
Continued on page 8

Just \$2,656 left to raise to reach '23 benefit goal

As we go to press, The Fig Tree's Spring Benefit, celebrating 50 years of the Resource Directory, continues to move closer to the goal of \$40,000, with \$37,344 raised in donations and pledges as of April 27. That leaves \$2,656 to raise.

"We have had so many comments enthusiastically endorsing the value of the annual comprehensive Resource Directory that we provide both in print and online," said Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp. "We do need to reach our goal to fund both the directory and the newspaper, as well as our educational programs."

The Fig Tree recently co-sponsored the Hope for Creation Conference with the Cathedral of St. John and Whitworth University, organizing an interfaith panel discussion with six faith leaders sharing the role and value of water in their faith traditions. A summary of their comments is on page 14. They offered fresh insights and reminders of the importance of caring for water as a resource and their uses of water in their traditions.

Preparations for the next edition of the Resource Directory are underway with many of the listings updated and ads placed on pages. Any agency with updates should immediately send the information to resourcedirectory@thefigtree.org so the most current data is included, said directory editor Malcolm Haworth.

"We have about \$15,000 more in advertising support to raise and are still inviting community partners to help underwrite the 2023-24 edition with gifts of \$500 to \$2,500," he added.

Meanwhile, this issue of The Fig Tree, one year short of the 40th anniversary of publication of the first issue in May 1984, has more advertising support than any previous issue.

"We continue to appreciate hearing how the newspaper and directory are making a difference in lives," Mary said.

For information, visit www.thefigtree.org/donate.html.

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Regional ecumenical leaders collaborate

The leaders of regional ecumenical organizations met on April 19 to 20 at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey near Geneva, Switzerland, to collaborate with each other and with the World Council of Churches (WCC). The meeting recognizes a shared experience of conciliar ecumenism and the polycentric nature of the one ecumenical movement.

The WCC and many regional ecumenical bodies had or will have assemblies in 2022 and 2023, making the meeting a moment to strengthen cooperation for justice, peace, human dignity, reconciliation and unity. Since the WCC 11th Assembly in Germany, the WCC has consulted with regional general secretaries on engaging member churches and ecumenical partners on a common pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation and unity.

Participants came away understanding the common and unique challenges facing churches in different regions. They fostered cooperation on programs and contributed to post-assembly planning on "How do we understand ecumenism today?" and "What are we called to do and how are we called to lead?"

WCC urges prayer for Sudan

WCC urges worldwide prayer for Sudan as conflict plunges the population into a critical situation. During an April 19 prayer, the WCC called for global solidarity as an escalating conflict plunges innocent people into a struggle to survive. WCC staff and partners prayed that the "people may live in unity, irrespective of religion or politics."

They also prayed for unity among religions and "that Islamic virtues of justice and way of peace may be fulfilled. We pray for meaningful, timely intervention from the international community to prevent civil war." Currently, the priority is survival, said Ibrahim Wushishi Yusuf, WCC program executive for peacebuilding in the African Region, who has been fielding reports from those in Sudan.

Little can be done without a cease fire, he said, adding that most humanitarian organizations have lost everything to looters. There is fear, a lack of food, and no electricity or drinking water. Hospitals have lost medical supplies.

Fighting broke out April 15 in and around Khartoum between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces.

WCC and ACT witness needs after quake

During a visit to Türkiye, WCC and ACT Alliance witnessed both great needs and great collaboration among the churches to respond. After returning from a solidarity visit to Türkiye, WCC general secretary Jerry Pillay and ACT Alliance general secretary Rudelmar Bueno de Faria said they saw churches working together. Accompanied by Laki Vingas, archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and former elected representative of minority foundations in Türkiye, they visited Mersin, Iskenderun and Antioch.

"The WCC and ACT Alliance's presence indicates we are concerned about what has taken place, and we want to find how we can assist," said Pillay, who was sad to see the devastation and damage left by the quake, which killed over 45,000 people in Türkiye alone. There is need for food, water and health care, and first responders continue to work under aggravated circumstances.

"What stood out to me was the impact of the earthquake on the infrastructure and people's lives," said Rudelmar, a survivor of earthquakes in Central America in 2001. "It's shocking the uncertain futures many people face."

He said ACT Alliance has raised almost \$8.5M. Churches play a vital role in humanitarian response as they are integrated in communities, able to provide key needs assessment to responders and move direct aid of food, shelter, cash and psychosocial support to families. Churches are working together to rebuild people's homes, churches and other structures.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

HBPA Foundation renamed Nuestra Raices

Hispanic Business and Professional Association's (HBPA) Inland Northwest Foundation changed its name to Nuestra Raices (Our Roots) to provide diverse services that promote Hispanic advancement in the community with Hispanic, Latino, Latinx, Latine, Chicano, Mexican American, Tejano and Indigenous people.

"We seek to provide a sense of belonging through wellbeing and holistic services to empower our communities and to promote

more equitable economy and vision for a communal space where we can gather, share and learn from each other's experiences including meeting educational, health, economic, social justice and cultural needs of our people," said Fernanda Mascot, HBPA executive director.

HBPA of the Inland Northwest Foundation has worked 28 years with the Hispanic/Latine community to provide Hispanic/Latine youth with education incentives, inspire and celebrate

their scholastic achievement and support the success of the Hispanic/Latine community and provide access to resources to address disadvantages.

It includes Esperanza (HOPE), a social service and mental health program; Latinos Unidos en Acción Alianza, a youth engagement program; Sin miedo al éxito (Success with Confidence), an economic development and cultural program.

For information email office@hbpaofspokane.org

Jewish Family Services sets benefit lunch

Spokane Area Jewish Family Services (SAJFS) is holding an in-person Benefit Luncheon for the first time since 2019 from noon to 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 31, at Gonzaga University's Hemmingson Center, 702 E. Desmet Ave., and livestreamed.

The theme, "L'dor V'dor: From Generation to Generation," reflects SAJFS's role maintaining Jewish values, such as *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, and *gemilut hasadim*, "performing acts of loving kindness."

Washington State Senate ma-

iority leader Andy Billig, a member of Spokane's Jewish community, will talk about the recent legislative session, focusing on instances of bipartisanship.

SAJFS will present its Outstanding Service Award to volunteers Judy Silverstein and Fran Snavelly, and posthumously to Julie Morris, who served as SAJFS vice president until her unexpected death in January. Beginning next year, the award will be renamed the Julie Morris Outstanding Service Award.

SAJFS helps seniors, low-

income individuals and families, and people with disabilities with needs such as visits, phone calls, consultations, referrals, advocacy, peer support, fall prevention, food, financial aid and transportation, said Neal Schindler, director.

SAJFS also offers cultural programs, the Spokane Jewish Cultural Film Festival, Jewish books, audiobooks, music and podcasts for Jewish and interfaith families.

For information, call 747-7394 or email director@sajfs.org.

Cardinal Blase Cupich visits for Gala

The 2023 Gala of Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington features an evening with Cardinal Blase Cupich of the Archdiocese of Chicago at 5 p.m., Friday, May 19, at the Davenport Grand, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

"Walk with Us" is the theme of the program celebrating the

legacy, history, service and generosity Catholic Charities has been able to share in the region.

Cardinal Cupich served two parishes in Omaha, Neb., and was bishop of Rapid City, S.D., before he served as the sixth Bishop of Spokane from 2010 to 2014, when he was appointed Archbish-

op of Chicago. He was elevated to the cardinalate in 2016.

As Cardinal, he has served in work related to worship and sacraments, migration and refugees, and dialogue with Muslims.

For information, call 459-6170 or email ccevents@cceasternwa.org.

PJALS Benefit introduces action plans

The Peace and Justice Action League (PJALS) Annual Benefit, "Weaving Connection: Building the Power of Community," will gather members, donors and new friends to learn about and support the movement for peace and justice, to expose and transform

systems of hate, violence, exclusion and oppression to build a just future for all.

Guests will hear how PJALS expands the number of people confident to lead more people into strategic action to expose and transform systems of hate,

violence, exclusion and oppression to build a just future for all.

The 2023 event will be an in-person luncheon from noon to 1 p.m., Wednesday, May 24, and a Zoom viewing from 6 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, May 31.

For information, visit pjals.net.

IHRC schedules Mother's Day Brunch

Immaculate Heart Retreat Center's annual Mother's Day Champagne Brunch will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sunday,

May 14, at the center at 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd.

It includes an all-you-can eat buffet, carving stations, omelets made to order, side dishes, dessert tables and a special gift for mothers.

There will be an opportunity

to walk the grounds of the retreat center after the brunch to enjoy the view and wildlife.

Before it, there will be a crowning of the Blessed Mother at the 8 a.m. Mass.

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

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APIC Spokane holds events for heritage month

APIC Spokane plans events for Asian and Asian American Heritage Month in May 2023 on the theme, "Healing is Resistance: Reclaiming Mental Health for Collective Liberation."

Events focus on Asian and Asian American stories through films, art, talks, panels, karaoke and celebrating graduates, said Frances Grace Mortel of APIC Spokane.

An art exhibit, "Persistence of Vision: Asian Diaspora Perspectives in Continuum," features works by Margaret Albaugh and Frances from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday, May 1 to 26, in the Chase Gallery, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., with a reception from 5 to 8 p.m., Friday, May 8. It closes with a panel on "The Asian American Experience: Spokane Colleges Perspective" from 5 to 8 p.m., Friday, May 26.

"Dear Corky" screening talk with filmmaker Curtis Chin is 6:30 p.m., Monday, May 1, at the Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main.

The Asian/Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander graduation is 11 a.m., to 1 p.m., Saturday May 6.

There will be a Karaoke, Crafts and Crochet Night, 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 31, at Niche Coworking, 25 W. Main 3rd Floor. For information, call 990-6164.

ANHPI Heritage Days are May 12 and 13

Asian Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Days will be Friday and Saturday, May 12 and 13, at Riverfront Park's Central Plaza. Both events will offer signups for the Working Families Tax Credit.

A luau with dancers and food trucks from 3 to 7 p.m., Friday, includes unveiling Spokane's Chinatown and Trent Alley markers, a historical exhibit of Spokane's Asian past, ANHPI Movers and Shakers Awards, Ukestra Spokane and a Hula Samoan Fire-Knife Show,

A Resource Fair from 1 to 4 p.m., Saturday, features performances, sumo wrestling, food trucks, interactive activities, craft stations and a petting zoo.

For information, call 928-9664, email charitydoyl@yahoo.com or visit spokaneunitedwestand.org.

SNAP and library host ALICE simulation

SNAP and the Spokane Public Library team up for "A Month in the Life of ALICE" simulation from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., Thursday, May 11, in Central Library, 906 W. Main. ALICE refers to Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed.

SNAP and the library hold the interactive experience as part of Community Action Month to help people understand challenges many face every day. Participants learn about living paycheck to paycheck as they are assigned family or service provider roles with tools to navigate such challenges as rent, food, jobs and transportation. Simulation roles show what some families face, but do not represent experiences of the most vulnerable. For information, visit events.spokanelibrary.org/event/8258824.

Covenant Homes hold Celebration of Mothers

Covenant Homes and Resources will hold a Celebration of Mothers, an annual event with speakers, dinner, music and an auction at 6 p.m., Saturday, May 13, at 1124 W. Sinto. This fundraiser will help house pregnant mothers learn life skills that include cooking, nutrition, budgeting, communication, parenting and Bible studies. For information, call 842-6516 or visit covenanthomesandresources.org.

Christ Kitchen benefit will be on May 22

Christ Kitchen is hosting its annual "One Life at a Time" luncheon from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, May 22, at True Hope Church, 1316 N. Lincoln. Captain Tracie Meidl of the Spokane Police Department will be the guest speaker.

This event celebrates the success of the job training programs at Christ Kitchen through testimonies and a video. Its products will be available for purchase. For information, call 325-4343 or visit christkitchen.org/events.

Partnering for Progress raises funds for Kenya

Partnering for Progress will share a night at the Spokane Civic Theater with a performance of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," beginning at 6 p.m., Wednesday, May 31, at 1020 N. Howard St., with snacks and a raffle. Curtain time is 7:15 p.m. Proceeds benefit Partnering for Progress' health, education, economic development and clean water projects in Kenya.

For information, call 208-720-8408 or visit partneringforprogress.org.

Step Team receives Chase Youth Award

The Washington Step Team Alliance was presented with the Governor's Choice award at the recent Chase Youth Awards ceremony. Step, a new program of The Learning Project Network, is launching public performances to share the artistry and multicultural experience of performances with the community.

In 2021, Stephaine Courtney, director of The Learning Project, started the program, after being approached by Pastor Shon Davis and Jaime Stacey-Perkins from Rogers High School to restart the school's step team.

"We took on the project because the program promotes health, mental health and culture," she said.

The Washington Step Team Alliance Project partners with four Spokane high schools—Rogers, Shadle, North Central and Ferris—to build

cultural-based step teams.

This year the 55 students enrolled started an entrepreneur program, did outreach in local schools, created lessons around awareness movement and music, offered lessons on peer groups and held their first mental health and movement leadership conference, said Stephaine.

Historically, step is a form of dance originating in the African community to help participants express themselves and build community. Step team performers use their bodies and percussion instruments to create rhythmic sounds and movements with stomps, claps and words.

"Spokane youth need this as a safe place to find community and grow their leadership skills," she said.

For information, call 981-5595 or email office@tlpnetwork@gmail.com.

GU sets up climate certificate program

Gonzaga University will offer a "Certificate in Climate Action Planning" to guide organizations in how to achieve local climate goals.

With the rise in disasters facing the planet, people and communities are coming together to address climate change.

"Helping communities create concrete plans to confront the climate crisis is urgent work," said Brian Henning, director of the Gonzaga Center for Climate, Society and the Environment.

The center launched the certificate to provide means to meet the challenges facing humanity and the environment in the 21st century.

It combines resources from the Climate Center and Gonzaga's Lifelong Learning Center to provide practical tools to help people achieve "emission-reduction goals and build climate friendly cities, churches, schools and businesses."

The first class, is online from Aug. 30 to Jan. 17, 2024.

Brian will teach it with Kara Odegard, former Spokane City Council sustainability issues

manager and founder/owner of the social impact consulting company Measure Meant.

The course will work with politically diverse stakeholders, strategies to lower greenhouse gas emissions, climate impact assessments and community engagement.

For information, call 313-3579 or email cll@gonzaga.edu or visit gonzaga.edu/center-for-lifelong-learning.



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Mother's Day Champagne Brunch



Come Celebrate Mother's Day with Immaculate Heart Retreat Center at our annual Mother's Day Champagne Brunch on Sunday May 14, 2023 from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm.

All-you-can-eat buffet, with carving stations, made-to-order omelets, extravagant dessert table, beverages available for purchase and a special gift for Mom.

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Virtual Screening
Wednesday, May 31 - 6 to 7 p.m.
via Zoom

For more information and registration, visit pjals.org/2023benefit

Shon Davis partners with schools to mentor youth, increase graduation

Continued from page 1
fisher of men.”

“God came into my heart and opened my eyes to see the harm I caused. I gave my life to become God’s servant and influence gang members to change their lives,” Shon said. “Many were drawn to me, because they knew my prior lifestyle and were inspired by how my life had changed.”

Though it was not hard for him to transition, many who want to leave gangs are threatened because they know too much about a gang’s criminal infrastructure.

“God got my attention by stripping me of material things I had, so I could see I needed him,” said Shon. “It was humbling.”

Adept in business—from previously buying, selling, marketing, transporting and financing drugs—Shon entered California State University at Dominguez Hills to study business. Despite his gang involvement, he had focused on graduating from high school, which he did in 1984. At 22, he began college and worked at an office furniture manufacturing company in Torrance.

After graduating in 1991, he began theology studies at the Los Angeles branch of Aeon Bible College, completing them online in 1996 after relocating to Spokane.

In 1994, the furniture company opened a Post Falls branch. Shon expected to help train employees and return, but God had other plans, eventually establishing him in pastoral ministry in Spokane.

In California, he had spent six years as an elder and then as an assistant pastor, gaining insight on working with people.

“I know broken people may not stay fixed. It’s part of our humanity. So I have learned how to spend time praying for, giving grace to and not giving up on them if they go back to harmful ways,” he said. “God gives me patience to continue working with them in spite of setbacks. It’s

my passion because I know what Christ’s love has done for me.

“Jesus changed my life. If he could change me, he could change anyone,” he said. “That’s why the name of my church is, ‘Jesus is the answer.’”

Shon started Jesus Is The Answer Church, holding worship and Bible studies in the basement of his house in January 1995.

That year, Rich Lane, former pastor at Central United Methodist Church, invited Shon to use the church gym for free for his youth outreach program, “God’s Gym,” a safe haven for kids to hang out, play volleyball and basketball, have meals and connect with safe adults, sometimes until 2 a.m.

The program became Project Hope in 2000, when Shon connected with Patrick and Connie Copeland-Malone at Salem Lutheran in West Central Spokane. Part of the program, Jobs Not Jails, involved youth in community gardens and landscaping to divert them from crime. That is now River City Youth Ops.

Shon now mentors youth through a new nonprofit, Mentoring Today’s Youth, a program Jesus Is The Answer Church started in 2015.

That year, he began partnering with Spokane Public Schools (SPS) to bring Mentoring Today’s Youth on campuses to move teens from a life of gangs and to see themselves graduating and living productive lives. He now supervises a team of eight mentors who work on contract with SPS to mentor students. He introduced a 10-week social emotional learning (SEL) program for high school and middle school students.

The mentoring includes Young Men Achieving Destiny (YMAD) and Ladies Investing in Noble Choices (LINC). YMAD challenges youth to find the root of their anger, addressing “why” instead of “what” and guiding them into making better,

healthier choices, he said.

“In the last quarter, we served 83 students,” he said.

“In Mentoring Today’s Youth, we provide supports for young women and men, and offer family services. We are committed to intervention and prevention,” he said.

Youth come to the daily after-school program to play volleyball and basketball. They also join weekly small group conversations on life issues. Daily meetings at schools are based on learning social-emotional skills.

“It’s important for schools to help students learn how to process their emotions, not just react with punitive disciplines of suspensions that isolate them with no tools for recovery,” Shon said.

The mentoring helps youth develop an identity through caring, so they believe in themselves, set goals and have a vision for their lives. They visit colleges and are exposed to career opportunities to motivate them to believe they finish high school, go to college or a trade school and to care about their own future.

“When we provide these supports in schools, we do not proselytize, but practice our faith through genuine love and care. Some parents, seeing what we do for their sons and daughters, ask why we care and have started to attend church,” Shon said.

“Gangs are still an issue in Spokane,” he said, inviting people to look beyond individual issues to see the bigger picture of systems and economic disparities caused by structural racism.

Forms of redlining still isolate people in impoverished neighborhoods with lower-quality education that excludes them from attaining better jobs and buying homes in better areas, he said.

Both through schools and the church, Shon seeks to keep people of color out of prisons.

In 1999, JITA Church, whose members are of diverse races,

bought a church building at 1803 E. Desmet. Its ministry within and beyond its walls is to build discipleship, Christian character, values and principles.

Inside the walls, there is worship at 10 a.m. Sunday, a Tuesday ministry leadership class, a Wednesday evening Bible study and a Thursday evening faith-based substance abuse 12-step recovery program.

“Faith, forgiveness, love and grace play a crucial role in substance abuse recovery. We come alongside people and work with them at their pace,” Shon said, “but, as with other drug programs in Spokane, recidivism is high.”

With insurance cutting coverage for treatment, it is more challenging to assist people through the lengthy process treatment requires, he said.

The church budget and some state grants cover salaries and materials for a staff of five for the recovery program.

Since 1999, JITA has had a food bank, serving neighbors one Saturday a month. Members go door-to-door to tell neighbors when they can pick up food boxes. They serve about 75 families each month. Youth in the mentoring program set up Friday evenings and carry food boxes to cars on Saturdays.

In 2013, JITA helped the Spokane Police Department form the Police Activities League (PAL) as a bridge between police, gangs and youth of color. It has offered basketball, baseball and football.

It has served hundreds of youth three days a week from June through August as PAL moved between Liberty Park, Cannon Park and Northeast Spokane. It has helped police build healthy relationships with youth, he said.

In COVID, JITA offered online worship on Facebook at jitacitychurch. It still does that. Shon knows from feedback it has a wide outreach online: “Our message continues to resonate through our community that, no matter what your problems are, Jesus Is The Answer,” he said.

For information, call 202-8817, or email jitacitychurch@gmail.com.



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Legal clinics serve multiracial communities

As a part of Sandy Williams’ legacy to serve multiracial communities in the region, six free legal clinics are scheduled in May.

Clinics offering advice on racial justice, civil rights, domestic violence, housing assistance, protection orders, post-conviction relief, education law, family law, elder law, unemployment

law and landlord-tenant law are:

- 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 3, at Union Gospel Mission, 1224 E. Trent Ave.
- 3 to 6 p.m., Monday, May 8 at The Zone, 4001 N. Cook St.
- 5:45 to 6:45 p.m., Wednesday, May 10, at The Way Out Shelter, 55 W. Mission Ave.
- 2 to 4 p.m., Wednesday, May

17, at Catholic Charities Catalyst Project, 4301 W. Sunset Blvd.

• 3 to 6 p.m., Saturday, May 20, at Spokane Valley Library, 12004 E. Main Ave.


• 2 to 4 p.m., Wednesday, May 24 and 31, at American Indian Center, 1025 W. Indiana Ave.

For information, email self-help@carlmaxeycenter.org.













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Louise Chadez, reconnected with Jesuit volunteers for 2022 Camino Walk

By Emma Maple Intern

In October 2022, Louise Chadez traveled across Spain with a group for the 500th anniversary of the St. Ignatius Walk, one of many Camino Walks in Europe.

Louise, who grew up Catholic on a dairy farm in southern Idaho, has lived in Spokane since 1981 and attends Salem Lutheran Church in West Central Spokane.

As a young adult, she earned a bachelor's degree from University of Idaho and then a master's degree in social work from the University of Washington.

After college, she took a gap year and served a year with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) East in 1975.

Louise worked in the public and nonprofit sectors through her career, serving many populations in substance use and mental health for 40 years, before retiring.

Although Louise only served in the JVC for a year, she stayed connected with the organization.

"If you join the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, we say we are 'ruined for life,'" she said.

"The values I incorporated as a Jesuit volunteer—commitment to community, social justice, spirituality and a simple lifestyle—I have maintained throughout my life," she said.

After her year of service with JVC East, Louise married. She and her husband moved to Spokane where she immediately contacted some Jesuit volunteers and became close to them.

Connections she maintained within the program led her to join the 2022 St. Ignatius Walk.

In 1995, the JVC East started the Ignatius Volunteers program for retirees who wanted to continue volunteering. In 2020, the Ignatius Volunteers decided to take part in a St. Ignatius walk for their 25th anniversary, but COVID postponed those plans.

In 2022, the group decided to try again, but this time, it was the St. Ignatius Walk's 500th anniversary. The 320-mile St. Ignatius Walk starts in Spain's Basque country and goes south to Manresa, a town near Barcelona. It traces the pilgrim route St. Ignatius of Loyola took in 1522, going through many of the same towns.



Louise Chadez celebrated as she ended the walk at Manresa. Courtesy of Louise Chadez

A nobleman who sustained a leg injury in a battle in Pompeo, Ignatius began to question his lifestyle and relationship with God before embarking on the first journey, Louise said. He stayed in Manresa for a year to meditate. In 1539, he founded the Society of Jesus or Jesuits.

The walk focused on setting a rhythm, taking time to meditate and practicing Ignatian spirituality. Louise describes Ignatian spirituality for her as first focusing on being present and providing service to God, and second focusing on living with and helping the poor.

She decided to go on this trip because some close friends from the Ignatius Volunteer Corps invited her. Many are now retired.

For Louise, 68, the pilgrimage would be a great way to spend a month with them.

"My hope was to increase my connection with my Creator and develop a greater sense of spirituality," she said.

Twenty-five joined the 30-day walk. She was in a group of 15 who started at the beginning. Another 10 joined halfway.

While many knew each other from JVC, some had no connection with it. "It didn't matter if we knew each other beforehand. When we were walking with people every day, we got to know them," said Louise, who appreciated the community that formed.

Everyone walked at a different pace, so people walked with different people each day. They walked six to 18 miles a day. The group usually started walking at

7:30 or 8 a.m.

Midday, they ate sack lunches or stopped in a village to eat there. Father Jose Luis Iriberry, SJ, their priest and guide, "knew some good spots," she said.

When the group walked through towns, they often explored local churches with Fr. Jose. Louise said traveling with him often felt like being with a "VIP Catholic," because he had keys to many churches.

She appreciated exploring the churches and noticing how they differ from U.S. churches. Devotion to Mary is part of the Spanish Catholic experience. Often Mary is the centerpiece at the altar, rather than the dying Christ on the cross as in most U.S. Catholic churches.

For Louise, that was a hopeful, positive church experience.

Fr. Jose knew the history of Spain. He explained that the Spanish Civil War involved fighting between two of the largest groups in Spain. Many churches were bombed. In some, he showed them remnants of the war.

Louise appreciated exploring both the historical and religious aspects of Spain.

A highlight was staying at

Montserrat, a Benedictine monastery founded in the 1400s. It is surrounded by mountains that look like people.

"It houses a famous Black Madonna in Europe," Louise said. "Our group had a private viewing of the Black Madonna. It was a powerful, holy experience."

After walking all day, the group often wouldn't arrive at their night location until 6 p.m. They would shower, then eat dinner, go to bed around 10 p.m. only to wake up and walk again.

"Each morning, we walked in silence for two hours after a reflective prayer led by Fr. Jose," she said. "I soaked in the countryside, churches and cultures along the way."

Louise found the schedule challenging and exhausting. The weather was sunny and the temperature 75 to 80 degrees for most of the trip, even though it was fall.

Halfway through the walk, she developed a 102-degree temperature and severe cough.

"God often has plans for me I do not anticipate. I like to do things my way, but God nudges me in different directions. I have to listen," said Louise, who stepped out of the walk to recover.

"Luckily, my daughter lives in Barcelona. She rescued me in LaGuardia and nursed me back to health," said Louise, who spent 10 days enjoying additional time with her in Barcelona.

"Being sick slowed me down," Louise said. "I think God wanted me to be with my daughter."

Once she was better, Louise returned to the walk, but not at full speed. She was not fully recovered, and the air quality was poor, so she struggled, but finished the trip with the group.

Louise found the trip physically harder than she anticipated. She trained beforehand, walking

six to eight miles a day with a small pack. Most of her training was "walking" not "hiking," while the St. Ignatius Walk was more hiking than walking.

Louise said one lesson she learned on the trip was humility. Historically, she has always been one of the fastest walkers in a group.

"I was one of the last ones all the time," Louise said. "Stopping to take pictures meant I had to run to catch up."

"I approached the trip a little cocky, thinking that I'd be fine, because I walk all the time. I'd say, 'God, I think I've got it,' and then I didn't," she said.

Louise appreciated the routine of starting the morning with meditation and quiet. She's been trying to set aside at least 20 minutes of quiet in the morning rather than listening to the world's craziness on NPR news.

"Often when I do something like this, I return to normal," she said, "but this time, I continue to try to have silent meditation every morning and to put a better balance between the outside world and my inner self."

Louise believes if everyone gave themselves 20 minutes a day to meditate—with God, the creator, nature, whatever or whoever provides solace—then "we could quietly make positive changes in the world."

"So, here's to the 500th anniversary of St. Ignatius' historic walk, which led to the founding of the Jesuits and has encouraged me to seek to work for the greater glory of God in whatever form that works for us," Louise said.

The blog Louise completed as she walked is <https://lchadez.blogspot.com/?m=1>.

For information, call 435-9680, email lchadez@gmail.com or visit ignatiancamino.com/about-the-ignatian-camino.

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Thrifty Grandmothers is a nonprofit shop and a charitable group

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

The Colfax Grandmothers Club, started in the 1950s, has grown into an independent thrift store run by a group of women who last year gave more than \$56,000 in annual donations to the community.

The Thrifty Grandmothers have always been a charitable organization and became an official nonprofit in 2007, so monetary and merchandise donations are tax deductible.

Since 2007, they have donated \$615,000 to community and county causes.

"We rely on word of mouth for donations," said Chris Thompson, recent past volunteer president. "Donations come from Colfax, Whitman County, shoppers from Spokane and more. Donated items add up to help us raise money.

"In spite of ageism, we have wonderful, talented women in their 80s and 90s working in this place. One of my favorite things about the shop is seeing old ladies move mountains and smash the heck out of ageism," she said. "We are cool, and we are old. We can't move much but we can do amazing stuff."

Chris became involved after shopping there. After retiring, she volunteered more, becoming a member, then secretary and then president for four years.

"It's a wonderful way of loving people. The store is fun, clean, neat and tidy. It's healing for customers and volunteer staff, because of how we treat people and each other," she said. "Our landlord, a man of faith,



Vivalene Nafziger and Jean Anderson are two of the volunteers. Photo by Jeannette Solimine

allows us to pay less than what he might otherwise receive from the building," she added.

"Some women are women of faith, and others are merely good-hearted," Chris said. "They all share a love of people."

Members of the Grandmothers Club are voted into the club after being mentored for three months by another member as they work in the thrift store.

Training is by example, she said, noting that St. Paul said to "preach the gospel and only if necessary open your mouth."

"The example set by our members is how new members learn to be kind, merciful and respectful of our customers and donors. We give people dignity," said Chris.

Members are trained how to process items and run the shop.

"Meetings open and close with prayer. We talk about God in our work room and that can be heard by our customers. What we are doing is a calling," Chris said.

To decide how funds are allo-

cated, Whitman County individuals and groups write the club a letter detailing their needs and requests. At the monthly meeting, the club decides which projects are granted funding. There is no formal application process.

Recently, after the Palouse Robotics Team gave a presentation, the grandmothers voted to continue their help.

"When we have requests for scholarships, we ask the students to write 500-word essays. The committee considers what the student plans to give to their community, wherever they end up, in the state or another country. We are concerned about their being community-minded," Chris said. "The club gives 10 to 15 \$1,000 scholarships."

Some of their grants support local schools and libraries, provide free swim passes in Colfax and support the Youth League. They work mostly with groups in Colfax, but help groups, like the Palouse Care Network, in other

areas of Whitman County.

When Malden and Pine City had disastrous fires, people came to the thrift store. If they were from there and had lost everything, they just had to say so, and the women would outfit them as best they could at no charge.

The Community Action Center in Pullman often sends people with vouchers for a set amount of money to spend on clothing or household items.

"We have a feeling for people's needs for basic survival," Chris said. "By providing them with kitchen supplies and other needs and by keeping the prices low, we help them 'shop' for what they need. We don't expect payment from folks coming from the Community Action Center. The voucher says they went through the approval process."

The Thrifty Grandmothers Thrift Shop at 118 N. Main St. takes almost anything, but mostly clothing and household items. Furniture must be small enough for two people to move.

Donations are inspected carefully, said Chris, and only the

best items are offered for sale. The rest are passed on to other thrift outlets or charities. Sending anything to the landfill is the last resort. Clothing that has been in the shop for three weeks is sent on to low-income people in Lewiston and Spokane.

"The thrift store feeds the soul," she said. "Many of the members are widows seeking new friendships and opportunities to help the community. Women are drawn to the club for companionship and emotional support.

"We are loving. We care about each other. One of our strengths is that not only do we help the community, but also we feel helping each other is equally as important. Needs of our members are as important as the needs of our community," she said.

"We believe if we go out and love people and do what we can for people, it will make them want to be more loving," she said.

For information, call 397-2786, email thriftygrandmothers@gmail.com or visit Colfax Thrifty Grandmothers on Facebook.

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Soden Archives at Whitworth compile records of NW Protestants

By Emma Maple - Intern

The Harriet Cheney Cowles Library at Whitworth University opened the Dale E. Soden Archives and Special Collections in April. Naming the archives after Dale acknowledges his legacy as “Whitworth historian.”

Dale, a professor of history who worked at Whitworth from 1985 to 2022, had wanted to start an official archive around 1990, when he was working on writing *The Illustrated History of Whitworth*. During that time, he realized Whitworth “didn’t really have an archive.”

“We had a large closet, where some records were stored but not organized,” he said.

When the library added an addition to its main wing in the early 1990’s, Dale met with the library director Hans Bynagle and together they chose a suitable space to house the archives.

In the beginning, Dale did much of the work on his own, soliciting records and archiving what he discovered, but the project escalated in 1998, after he launched the Weyerhaeuser Center for Christian Faith and Learning and became its first director.

He used that position to hire an archivist, Janet Hauck, who worked at Whitworth from 1999 to 2018.

Dale and Janet began acquiring church records and materials related to the role of Protestantism in the Pacific Northwest. The goal was for the Whitworth University Archives to become a central place for scholars to research this topic.

The Whitworth Archives’ Protestantism Collections now hold records from more than 100 Pacific Northwest Protestant churches and organizations, including records from three of the 15 churches that were founded by George Whitworth, who also founded Whitworth University.

The Protestantism Collections have also aimed at collecting records from ethnic and racially diverse churches in the region, as well as records of women in church leadership.

This effort resulted in the collection of the Records of Christians for Biblical Equality,



Dale Soden

which was added to the archives.

While the Protestantism Collections are the focus, the Dale E. Soden Archives and Special Collections contain four other categories that aim to collect, arrange, preserve and make the official and historical records of Whitworth University and its predecessors accessible.

The other four categories are the university archives, university history special collections, missionary collections, and general and other special collections.

These records can be in any form—paper, electronic, photographic, digital and magnetic media. They aim to collect the near and far history of the university, records from Protestant churches and leaders in the Northwest, records of missionaries who have a tie to Whitworth University, its faculty and staff, and other records that “hold a value for the research of students and faculty at Whitworth University.”

Several digital collections within this archive are available online for those interested in research.

Individuals who wish to examine the in-person archives must book an appointment and follow rules regarding the archives to ensure no damage is done.

The purpose of these archives is to allow students, Whitworth affiliated individuals, and other interested individuals to access critical information and primary sources they might not have access to otherwise. In the past, these archives have been used



Whitworth names archives for history professor.

for theology students and classes in English, athletics, communications, psychology, political science and sociology.

The archives have been incorporated as part of the teaching material for some Whitworth classes. Additionally, scholars have continually become aware of the importance of the archives for their research projects.

For example, the Christian Movements class used the archives for their research from 2016 to 2018, and created an online encyclopedia that lists some archival material.

Two oral history projects have also been completed using the archives. These projects were played on Spokane Public Radio. The archives were also the basis for an hour-long documentary, “In Time of War: Japanese American Experience of World War II.”

Scholar Robert Gardella used the archives for researching a 2009 book entitled *Missions to China’s Heartland: The Letters of Hazel Todd of the China Inland Mission*. He examined the Hazel Todd Papers, a key part

of the Protestantism Collection.

Dale said it is essential for every institution to preserve documents that reveal the facts of their history, which is part of his goal.

“The archives are the puzzle pieces to constructing a narrative or an analysis of what has gone on in the past,” he said.

Part of the archives is a collection entitled the Dale E. Soden Papers. These papers illustrate how much work Dale has poured

into the archives. This collection is mainly papers and research notes Dale created.

It includes Whitworth College historical documents, his correspondence, college publications, copies of *The Whitworthian*, and research on religious leaders and institutions in the Pacific Northwest.

It also includes the oral history tapes from 1988 to 1993, and the camera-ready plates for *A Venture of Mind and Spirit*, Dale’s book on the history of Whitworth.

“I’m gratified to have the archives named after me,” Dale said. “I’m grateful they thought it was a worthy way of honoring me.”

The archives are open for public access on a limited basis from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays and from 10 a.m. to 12:30 a.m., Fridays. To gain access, people need to schedule an appointment.

Nancy Bunker currently serves as Whitworth’s archivist.

For information, call 777-4481 or email archives@whitworth.edu.



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SpokaneValleyConnect.org

Most in churches can focus on ministry, despite their differences

Continued from page 1

10 American Baptist and Disciples young adults from Iowa and Minnesota on a six-week visit to Himeji, Japan, where American Baptist Churches of Iowa and Minnesota have a partnership with a girls' high school and junior college.

She led English conversations, helped with camps and had a homestay to experience Japanese culture. That affirmed her desire to be a minister because of the church's value system and mission of love.

On a visit home, she told her pastor of her interest in ministry. He called a friend at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kans., and a few days later she was invited to a church vocations conference.

"It was like God opening a door," said Sheila, who went to Japan again that summer before starting seminary.

In seminary, she met her husband, Daniel Miranda, who now serves with her in a ministry bringing together 70 churches in the Seven Rivers and Inland District in Central and Eastern Washington and North Idaho.

Sheila and Daniel served together in the American Baptist Church before their ministry at a federated church led them into the United Methodist Church.

Right after graduating in 1989, they went for a year to Himeji, Japan, while the missionaries there were on home assignment. They taught English, led music and worked with churches.

Sheila's interactions with students confirmed for her that "people are people around the world."

On returning, she experienced cultural shock as she saw her own culture through new eyes.

Sheila and Daniel then served eight years as co-pastors of an American Baptist Church in Beloit, Wis. Along with pastoral work and music, Sheila coordinated a food pantry and clothing bank. She also helped create a community health center.

Just as the 100-member church was ready to move into a new addition, Daniel and Sheila were called to their "dream job"—four years with the American Baptist International Ministries as missionaries teaching theology and music to rural pastors at the Convention Baptist Bible College in Bacolod City in the Philippines. Their three children were pre-



Sheila Miranda connects congregations in region.

school and elementary age.

Sheila was impressed with the Filipino emphasis on family, relationships and doing what is best for the group rather than oneself.

On returning, they spent 2002 visiting American Baptist Churches to share about their mission work.

Next, they served a nearly 100-year-old Federated Church in Waterville, Wash., that included American Baptists, Presbyterians, United Methodists and Disciples of Christ.

In their 10 years there, the support and training of the United Methodists led them to transfer to the UMC.

After the Carleton Complex fire in the Okanogan burned down the Pateros parsonage and the UMC pastor left, the district superintendent (DS) asked Daniel to serve as interim there—50 miles from Waterville. Daniel was then appointed to Auburn. A year later, Sheila was appointed to Colby UMC in Port Orchard. After COVID hit and disrupted lives, the DS asked them to serve the Inland and Seven Rivers Districts. They moved to Spokane in 2021.

While Daniel supervises churches and places pastors, Sheila's emphases are leadership and congregational development, mission and compassion and communication.

She recruits and educates lay servant leaders and mentors five certified lay ministers to serve with ordained elders in larger

churches or provide leadership for rural churches that lack funds to support a full-time ordained pastor.

Once pastors were professionally trained in seminaries, salary criteria were set, leaving those in a limited population and some urban areas struggling to pay pastors' salaries. That gave rise to lay leadership.

Sheila mentors, encourages and coaches lay ministers, helping them hone skills to share their wisdom and gifts, and develop new skills.

"What worked one time may not work another," she said. "As a mentor I don't tell people how to do something. I bring people together and offer resources."

Because COVID made church

people comfortable with technology, Sheila gathers people from Deer Park, Grangeville and the Okanogan on Zoom to talk about their churches, share ideas and support each other.

Their ministries are about more than the needs of people in a congregation. They are ministries in which mission and compassion connect, she said.

For the 2023 PNC-UMC Annual Conference, Bishop Cedrick Bridgforth proposed that the theme be from the story of the Good Samaritan, "Go and Do Likewise."

Sheila said with many congregations doing that, she facilitates their sharing how they serve in their communities.

"Sharing stories in our newsletters or on Zoom often sparks something so readers and listeners say, 'I could do that or something like that.' To see one congregation work creatively inspires other congregations," she said.

Sheila gave some examples:

- The United Methodist Committee on Relief and United Methodist Volunteers in Ministry are partnering with Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington, Mennonite Disaster Services, AmeriCorps and the Red Cross to rebuild 45 uninsured homes destroyed in the Carleton Complex fire and a 2021 fire. Others are partnering to rebuild homes lost in the Malden fire.

• A fall conference on homelessness at Spokane Valley UMC sparked conversations on ways to make a dent in Eastern Washington's housing shortage. The pastor of Wesley UMC in Yakima is offering a webinar on working together for housing solutions.

• As part of the UMC Conference's focus on anti-racism, church youth are going for six-day S.L.A.M. Trips with Mending Wings to do service projects on the Yakama reservation and learn about historical and current injustices the Yakama people have experienced and face.

Bishop Cedrick believes ministries of connection among churches are a way to turn the tide in a time of division in the UMC related to welcoming LG-BTQ members.

"Instead of looking at our differences, we need to focus on service and compassion," said Sheila.

"In the past three years, some congregations have been discerning about disaffiliating," Sheila said. "A few are leaving, but most are staying."

"Most decided they can live with differences and focus on ministry," she said. "Differences are within and between churches. We do not need to believe the same to show love and compassion to the world as Jesus did."

For information, email smiranda@pnwumc.org.

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Gonzaga's new minor in health equity connects health and justice

Gonzaga University's minor in health equity invites undergraduate students to realize that health, illness and health care are about more than doctors diagnosing and treating individual patients.

This year, Gonzaga started the multidisciplinary minor to explore social dynamics of health, health care inequities and social influences on medical science.

Andrea Bertotti Metoyer, professor of sociology and director of Gonzaga's solidarity and social justice department, said that the minor mixes social sciences, humanities and experiential learning. It explores cultural and structural forces that influence individual's health information, choices and care, and implications of health care processes, science and ethics for communities.

As director of the health equity minor and a clinical instructor at the University of Washington School of Medicine, Andrea teaches courses on the sociology of health and medicine. These courses explore the social context of health and health science.

Health equity courses look at various topics, including women in science, patriarchal roots of science and economics, and industry influence on health-care workers, systems, insurance and decisions on cost effectiveness.

Courses also explore ethical issues related to reproduction, sex, environment, health care and food.

Andrea, who grew up in Susanville, a rural community close to nature in Northern California, came to Gonzaga from 1992 to 1996 for undergraduate studies in sociology and Spanish, drawn by Gonzaga's Catholic culture.

Originally thinking she would be a physical therapist, she realized she was asking questions about social justice.

Andrea took graduate classes in sociology at California State University, Northridge, for one year and completed a doctor of philosophy in sociology at Loyola University Chicago in 2003.

She chose Loyola because it delved into social justice and how sociology can create a more just system for health, gender, medical and scientific knowledge.



GU students have new minor.
Photo courtesy of Gonzaga University

In her three years teaching at Marian University, a Franciscan college in Indianapolis, Andrea developed a peace and social justice minor.

When a position opened at Gonzaga, she, her husband and their two children moved to Spokane in 2006.

As she developed the multidisciplinary solidarity and social justice minor at Gonzaga, she saw a need for more courses on the social context of health and medicine.

"It fits Gonzaga's mission to develop people for others," said Andrea, noting the health equity minor furthers Gonzaga's connection with the University of Washington School of Medicine.

Gonzaga's Jesuit, Catholic, humanistic mission is to educate students to promote human dignity, social justice, intercultural competence, care for the vulnerable and care for the earth.

"It's important to offer education on the structures and cultures of the medical profession," she said. "Health equity calls for exploring how health care and science are filtered through human biases and embrace assumptions of race, gender and class."

Those assumptions can lead to belief that people are poor or ill because of genetic, gender or racial inferiority or their immortality, she added.

"I ask why there are health disparities. Health equity addresses what is going on in society that makes some people sicker," she said. "It invites us to look upstream at causes and look at prevention rather than just treatment."

"As we look upstream, we see

that health outcomes of diabetes, cancer, infant mortality or asthma intersect with residential segregation policies and environmental injustice. When we see what affects health, we can prevent the damage to health," Andrea said.

"As society emphasizes diagnosis over prevention, we spend time and energy detecting diseases. That takes imagination, resources and energy from prevention," she continued.

About 30 undergraduates are taking courses for the minor. This year, two students will do internships on how theories play out in the real world.

The program extends across social sciences and humanities because there are injustices everywhere, said Andrea, who expects interest in the minor to grow, especially among students going into medical school and public health.

One course that looks at "upstream" issues is "Organizing for Health Equity," taught by Luis Manriquez, a physician who does street medicine with Community Health Association of Spokane (CHAS) and is an assistant clinical professor at Washington State University. It applies community organizing skills and tools to address social justice issues.

Andrea explained that issues raised in the program are layered, and she in an hour could only offer a glimpse of some layers.

"Americans think on an individual level rather than as social beings. Our current health care targets consumers. That leads us to treat individuals' bodies, not whole human beings who live in communities with social hierarchies of race, class and gender," she said.

"Many health-care decisions are based on what benefits some over others, not what benefits all," she noted.

"Media emphasis on individuals and minutiae over structural issues feed the focus on biological and psychological causes. Media do not ask questions that would lead to looking at social causes or prevention. They help create partisan vitriol and the vilification of others that damage health," she said. "A healthy democracy is good for everyone's health."

Andrea, who attends St. Aloysius Church, said Gonzaga's emphasis on Catholic social teachings, Ignatian discernment and humanism drive her to look for bigger causes, deeper reasons and spiritual issues.

"We seek to be caring, not only because there is a God, but also because it is the humane thing to do. We don't sit by and watch

people suffer," said Andrea.

Courses ask such questions as:

- What does feminism offer health science?
- What is cultural competency in health care?
- How do market interests influence health care?
- What are the ethical dimensions of human sexuality?
- How do politics affect environmental policies?
- What are ethics for relationships of health care professionals to patients?
- What ethics relate to food consumption and production?

"We can get out of trenches we have dug ourselves into," she said. "We can see how some litmus tests are rooted in different philosophies. There is much we can agree on if we go deeper into issues without othering."

Andrea believes academics can help students interested in health care professions be aware of biases so they can better see and hear their patients. They can also practice beyond the one-to-one level and act as citizens to make changes to health care structures.

For information, visit gonzaga.edu/college-of-arts-sciences/departments/health-equity.

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Farmers' markets announce opening dates, times and locations

Farmers markets throughout Eastern Washington and North Idaho will be opening in May.

Farmers markets provide opportunities for farmers and growers to sell fruits, vegetables, meat, honey, flowers, coffee, tea, bread, pastries and other products directly to shoppers.

Market times, dates, locations and contact information:

In the Spokane area:

Perry Street – 3 to 7 p.m., Thursdays, May to October, 1000 S. Perry, Thursdaymarket.org.

Spokane – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays, from May 13, and Wednesdays, from June 14, at Coeur d'Alene Park in Browne's Addition, 4th and Chestnut, spokanefarmersmarket.org.

Fairwood – 3 to 7 p.m., Tuesdays, May 16 to Oct. 10, Fairwood Shopping Center, fairwoodfarmersmarket.org.

Kendall Yards – 5 to 8 p.m., Wednesdays, May 24 to Sept. 27, 1335 W. Summit Parkway, KendallNightMarket.org.

Garland – 3:30 to 7:30 p.m., Thursdays, May 25 to Aug. 31, Gathering House parking lot, garlandsummermarket@gmail.com.

Millwood – 3 to 7 p.m., Wednesdays, May 31 to Oct. 11, Millwood Park, 9205 W. Frederick Ave., farmersmarket.millwoodnow.org.

Emerson-Garfield – 3 to 7 p.m., June 2 to Sept. 29, 2310 N. Monroe, market@emerson-garfield.org.

Outside of the Spokane area:
Athol – 2 to 6 p.m., Fridays to Sept. 29, 30230 2nd, atholfarmersmarket.com.

Bonnors Ferry – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays, April 29 to Oct. 28, Hwy 95 and Kootenai St., bonnersferryfarmersmarket.org.

Chewelah – 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Fridays, May 12 to Oct. 13, Chewelah City Park, chewelahfarmersmarket.com.

Deer Park – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., first Saturdays, May 6 to Oct. 7, Perrin's Field, 216 E. Crawford, 276-5900.

Kootenai County – 4 to 7 p.m., Wednesdays, May 13 to Sept., Riverstone in Coeur d'Alene, and 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Saturdays, May 13 to Oct.

21, Hwy 95 and Prairie, Hayden, kootenaifarmersmarkets.org.

Liberty Lake – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays, May 20 to Oct. 14, Town Square Park, 1421 N. Meadowwood, libertylakefarmersmarket.com.

Moscow – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays, May 6 to Oct. 28, Fridays 4th and Main, 208-883-7036, facebook.com/Moscow/FarmersMarket.

Newport – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays, May 6 to Oct. 28, 1101 W. 1st, facebook.com/people/Newport-Farmers-Market.

Pullman – 3:30 to 6 p.m., Wednesdays, May 17 to Oct. 11, Brelsford WSU Visitor Center, 150 E. Spring, pullmanfarmersmarket.com.

Rathdrum – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturdays, April 29 to Sept. 30, Rathdrum Lions Club, 16114 N. Meyer, rathdrumfarmersmarket.blogspot.com.

Sandpoint – 3 to 5:30 p.m., Saturdays, April 29 to Oct. 14, at Farmin Park, Third and Main, sandpointfarmersmarket.com.

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Valley Connect draws 60 service providers

Spokane Valley Connect—modeled after Spokane Homeless Connect—will be held from 1 to 5 p.m., Thursday, May 18, at Opportunity Presbyterian Church, 202 N. Pines Rd. in the Spokane Valley.

For its third year, Spokane

Valley Connect will offer an afternoon of networking with agencies serving community needs.

“The purpose is to empower attendees to access a variety of resources quickly and easily,” said organizer Aileen Luppert.

More than 60 vendors will be on site offering free meals, medical screenings, haircuts, warrant quashing, showers, food pantries, clothing banks and other services.

For information, visit spokanevalleyconnect.org.

Our Place ‘Stage Lights’ supports services

Our Place’s annual fundraiser, Stage Lights for Our Place, will take place from 6 to 8:30 p.m., Thursday, May 11, at Salem Lutheran Church gymnasium, 1428 W. Broadway.

“This event will raise critical funds to serve the poorest zip codes in Washington, Oregon and Idaho,” said Tracie Swanson, Our Place director.

Our Place provides local food,

clothing, hygiene, laundry and utility assistance for vulnerable West Central neighbors. It served 4,300 people in October alone.

For information, visit givebutler.com/wgM5I4.

WHWF features Malala Fund co-founder

Women Helping Women Fund will feature Shiza Shahid, who is the co-founder and CEO of the Malala Fund with Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai for “Give Like a Woman” Luncheon, from 2:30 to 6 p.m., Tuesday, May 16, at the Spokane

Convention Center. The Malala Fund invests in girls’ education.

Women Helping Women Fund makes grants to women-led organizations and provides Vivian Winston Scholarships for women to attend Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University,

Washington State University-Spokane, Whitworth University, Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane Community College or a trade certificate program.

For information, call 328-8285, email info@whwfspokane.org or visit www.whwfspokane.org.

World Relief resettles 300

Over the spring and summer, World Relief has already begun plans to resettle 300 men, women and children from Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Senegal and Colombia.

Much is happening with airport arrivals, finding temporary and permanent housing, connecting to medical services and other resources, job hunting and cultural orientations.

In April, there was a baby shower for six new moms.

Volunteers can help provide a warm welcome and resources for families, friendship and safe

refuge. Volunteer support for bus training, English practice and other opportunities like offering driving lessons are available. Donations of household items, cleaning supplies and hygiene items are needed.

Other opportunities through the Education Center are a conversation club, citizenship classes, a textiles class focused on women’s entrepreneurship and a financial literacy class for Congolese men.

SNAP is partnering to provide energy assistance.

For information, email bcomito@wr.org.



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Riverkeeper plans 9th Film Festival

The 9th annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival fundraiser for Spokane Riverkeeper is from 5:30 to 9 p.m., Thursday, May 25 at the Garland Theater, 924 W. Garland.

It features environmental films on nature, environmental issues and local efforts.

For information, visit spokaneriverkeeper.org/calendar.



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New Story Festival focus is environment

Speakers for the first New Story Festival on Friday and Saturday, May 19 to 20, at the Hemmingson Center at Gonzaga University, will discuss sustainable agriculture, ecological restoration, green building, resource efficiency, social equity, cultural preservation and shelters for all.

Featured speaker Gareth Higgins, co-author of *The Seventh Story* with Brian McLaren, will be joined by Michael Smith, Warren Seyler, Jim Sheehan, Jim Dawson, Mariah McKay, Gabe Sedberry and Kara Odegard.

Gonzaga University and the Gonzaga Center for Climate, Society and the Environment are among the event co-hosts.

Gonzaga Law Clinic helped create the New Story non-profit organization.

Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund provided a grant.

A benefit concert for the New Story Spokane festival was held April 15 at Covenant United Methodist Church.

For information, visit trobinsongu@gmail.com.

Second Harvest hosts cooking classes in May

Second Harvest will host free cooking classes from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Tuesdays, and 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., Thursdays, at 1234 E. Front Ave., for community members and those receiving food assistance.

May 2 and 4 will be a British Tea Party; May 9 and 11, Breakfast Delights; May 16 and 18, Mediterranean Flavors; May 23 and 25, Asian Cuisine, and May 30 and 31, Spring Flavors.

For information, call 252-6256 or visit secondharvest-kitchen.org.

Letter carriers join in Stamp Out Hunger

Second Harvest partners with the National Association of Letter Carriers through their Stamp Out Hunger program on Saturday, May 13.

Donors may send donations in an envelope provided May 1 and 2. It will be delivered to Second Harvest without needing postage.

Donors can also make a secure online donation at 2-harvest.org/stampouthunger or make direct donations of food or money to a food pantry through foodfinder.2-harvest.org.

“For 30 years, carriers and their customers have worked together on the second Saturday in May to make a difference for the hungry in our communities,” said Sharee Eschenbacher, president of Spokane National Association of Letter Carriers branch 442.

“With \$9 million in cuts to SNAP/EBT and CARES Act funding in Spokane County, food sources are limited. We had enough food 16 months ago that we had to rent offsite storage, and now we have several empty racks in our warehouse. Inventory is one third less than what it would normally be, so there is a real need to fill in that gap,” said Eric Williams, community partnerships director with Second Harvest.

Eric encourages people who would like to make food donations to go to the foodfinder website to donate directly to a food pantry to save delivery costs.

For information, call 252-6264 or email eric.williams@2-harvest.org.

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Pastor restores and refinishes crucifix from another synod church

David Olson, part-time pastor at Peace Lutheran Church in Otis Orchards, recently restored a crucifix from Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Cheney in his woodworking shop at his home in Sandpoint. It was installed April 22 at Peace Lutheran.

The two churches exemplify how the churches have changed over the decades.

The 70-year-old Cheney church sold its building and property in March to MultiCare to use for an emergency health clinic. Before the church closed it gave its pews, furnishings, another cross, art, stoles and other items to other churches.

Liturgical artist Ernst Schwidder had carved and installed the crucifix in the 1970s when Emmanuel Lutheran was a thriving congregation with a campus ministry drawing about 100 students.

Peace Lutheran member Ladd Bjerneby, a retired Lutheran pastor and a former pastor at the Cheney church, knew the church was closing. He also knew David did woodworking and Emmanuel's six-by-nine-foot cross needed attention.

Peace Lutheran installed the crucifix in front of windows at the back of its chancel.

When Peace was built in the early 1980s, eight-foot-tall translucent plastic tubes of water lined the south-facing chancel windows as part of a passive solar heating system that included a concrete floor to absorb heat from the sun and insulation with landscaping sloping seven feet up the side walls.

Those features were removed about 20 years ago. The chancel was remodeled as a raised platform. Trees were planted outside the windows to buffer the sound of trains passing, often during worship.

At Emmanuel, the cross was built around a structural post. David redesigned the 300-pound crucifix to have four sides and stand out from the wall with the windows. It stands in a brace on the floor and has braces attached to the window frames.

"Over years, the mahogany cross cracked, and the finish needed to be refreshed," he said.

He repaired the cracks by driving mahogany wedges into them, gluing them in place and carving them to be flush with the surface. He oiled the finish so it would not dry out and deteriorate in the light from the windows. He said the repairs make it stronger.

"This crucifix combines the death and resurrection of Jesus," said David. "Ernst made several similar crucifixes, depicting Jesus at the moment of death with his



David Olson stands in front of crucifix he repaired.

head bowed and tongues of fire rising above his head, symbolizing his spirit returning to God.

"Liturgical arts, like the crucifix, proclaim the gospel message visually, another way of sharing the word and being windows to divine realities," said David, who grew up in the American Lutheran Church when crucifixes were mostly in Catholic churches in North America, even though they were common in Europe.

"**With ecumenism** and changing dynamics, crucifixes gained value as visual symbols of Christ's death and resurrection. Protestants no longer feared they would become idols," he said, adding that Schwidder has hundreds of art pieces and crucifixes in the Pacific Northwest and Midwest, especially at Tacoma and Valpariso, Ind., where he lived.

David, whose father was a pastor in Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota farm communities, began college at Augustana in Sioux Falls and studied religion at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) in Tacoma, where he first learned of Schwidder's art.

After graduating in 1979, he and his wife Karla—whom he met at Lutherwood Camp in Bellingham—moved to her hometown of Gig Harbor where he began learning woodworking and using it to earn a living.

His specialty was roll-top desks. He also made a cedar boat, exotic hardwood turnings and domestic hardwood cabinets and furniture.

Over the years, David created some liturgical art for churches, including chancel furniture in 1998 for Agnus Dei Lutheran in Gig Harbor and in 2006 for St. Elizabeth Lutheran in Ekalaha, Mont. He also carved a crucifix for Our Savior Lutheran in Thompson Falls, Mont., created an altar rail at St Paul Lutheran Church in Minnesota, and made a baptismal font and processional cross at PLU.

While he had long thought of going to seminary, his decision was clinched while working on

a woodworking piece for the world's eighth wealthiest couple at the same time he was listening to the pain of a woman whose husband was having an affair.

"**The disparity between** working with the wealthiest people and people in a critical moment of need helped me realize my call to be with those in need rather than make something for people who could have whatever they wanted when they wanted it," he said.

Since David graduated from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., in 1988, his focus in ministry has been on pastoral care.

He served churches in Thompson Falls and Baker, Mont. In Baker, he continued efforts his predecessor started to found St. Elizabeth's church in 1997 in Ekalaha, an isolated, declining farm community of 450.

He saw the small congregation grow to 60 members, build a building and thrive. It continues to share a pastor with Baker.

From 1991 to 2013, David served First Lutheran Church in Sandpoint, helping the church work with the community to build an 87-unit assisted living facility, Luther Park Assisted Living at Sandpoint.

Over the years, he found woodworking a good complement to ministry, where he couldn't see what he accomplished in a day, as he could in woodworking.

"It was therapeutic to go to the shop and see what I accomplished working with wood," he said.

Since David stepped back from ministry because of health concerns, he has done more woodworking. In 2013, he reopened Olson's Woodworks.

In 2016, he accepted a call to part time ministry at Peace Lutheran Church.

When David went to Peace Lutheran, it was a small congregation seeking a viable way to continue in ministry in the town-and-country area, where people live on five-acre rural properties.

"**In COVID, we reached out** to the community through YouTube and Facebook," he said. "We now are reaching out to people moving to Liberty Lake. We're just north of the area of growth between Spokane and Coeur d'Alene."

The lack of sewer lines north of the Spokane River limits growth in Otis Orchards, but Peace Lutheran is near enough to serve new people moving to the Liberty Lake area.

Harvard Road is known as church road because in addition to Peace Lutheran, there are Presbyterian, Catholic, Baptist, Seventh-Day Adventist, Community and Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints churches.

Peace Lutheran shares its building with Point of Grace Fellowship, a non-denominational church that worships Saturday and offers food programs.

"**We still use YouTube** and Facebook. Boosting sermons just to this community, we have about 400 hits a week, but our main online ministry is for those connected with the church who are unable to come," he said. "About 20 attend worship in person."

Peace Lutheran has an active quilt ministry with seven women making 100 quilts a year for Lutheran World Relief. Karla started the quilters group.

In addition to the Bible study, pastoral care and the quilts, Peace Lutheran actively supports local and national offerings for campus ministry, world hunger and drilling wells, David said.

For information, call 208-290-2411 or email pastordavidolson@gmail.com.

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'Post-secular age' sparks thoughts on intersection of faith and life

For decades we have assumed that "the secular" influences are overtaking "the religious" aspects of life. So, my eye was caught by an article in the January issue of Media Development, published by the World Association for Christian Communication.

The article's title is, "Rethinking the concept of religion in a post-secular age."

The article focuses on how some expand the understanding religion to transcendent experiences, ethical relationships, inspiring celebrations and and motivation to live justly. It looks at expanding the definition of religion.

I was intrigued, however, about the words "post-secular age," given that scholars and media so often assume we

are in a post-religious age.

In editing The Fig Tree, I have not found people "post-religious" so much as having difficulty expressing their questions, values, understandings and perspectives about the spiritual or religious.

Media made "religion" invisible before we started The Fig Tree, so we help people connect, share stories and reignite their ability to talk about their faith, religion, spirituality and justice. The "religion" beat disappeared with occasional stories, but hardly the focus to support a career.

FaVs publisher and journalism instructor Tracy Simmons recently held a Coffee Talk at Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Pullman with several of her Washington State Universi-

ty students telling about a religion reporting field trip, learning about "faiths and cultures they might report on one day."

We celebrate that effort to train religion reporters and restart religion coverage that helps people understand that faith may not fit in usual "news" definitions—emphasizing celebrity, controversy, conflict and the unusual. There are many nuances to differing expressions of faith influenced by culture, traditions, communities and the natural environment as is evident in the interfaith dialogue on water (below).

With Fig Tree coverage, I continue to be heartened as people share who they are (context), what they are doing (ministries, services and programs) and why they do it (faith and values).

Some struggle to talk about the why, the faith roots motivating them, as if trained to be silent by being accustomed to seeing the world through "a secular lens."

What a joy sharing the insights through the recent interfaith panel and through pages of each issue of The Fig Tree to see the diverse expressions, understandings, perspectives and lenses religion, faith, spirituality, ethics, values, insights and people bring to their efforts to live in their communities, in this society and in this world with a sense of purpose, a sense they are not alone and a sense of the transcendent—however they may articulate it.

That's our journey with The Fig Tree.
Mary Stamp - editor

Photo by Gen Heywood - Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience - Vigil for the Healing of the Earth - April 22

Interfaith Panel

Sounding Board

Care of Water

Interfaith panel offers perspectives of their faiths on care of water

Leaders from Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian and Baha'i faiths shared in an interfaith panel on their faith perspectives on water during the Hope for Creation Conference at the Cathedral of St. John in Spokane on Earth Day.

The following are excerpts from their discussion.

Naghmana Sherazi, of Muslims for Community Action and Support (MCAS), a non-profit that educates on refugees and Islam, and The Lands Council staff, spoke on video because the event was during Eid-al-Fitr, the end of the Ramadan month of fasting.

"In Islam, water is life. Humans are 70 percent water. As one of the most important elements in nature, water is required for all life," she said. "Rain waters crops to provide food."

With water essential for life, those who lack and desperately need it pray for it, while most in the U.S. access it at faucets in their homes, she pointed out.

"It is easy to take water for granted, and not realize how much we waste on a daily basis if we let water run as we wash dishes, brush our teeth or take a shower," Naghmana said.

In Islam, it is a charitable act to give water to another living thing—humans, animals or plants. That act is rewarded—30 percent in this life and 70 percent in the afterlife, she said. Giving water is highly rewarded.

At the Lands Council, Naghmana works to preserve area forests, water and wildlife to express her faith's care for the environment: "We work to remove toxins in the river. They accumulate in fish and pose a threat to those who eat fish," she said. "We champion regulating water in the summer to keep our aquifer healthy."

Muslims use water ritually in their ablutions before they pray five times a day, but only use as much as needed, because "there is a penance if we waste water," she said.

"My relationship with my neighbors depends on my relationship with water," Naghmana said.

Sreedharani Nandagopal of the Spokane Hindu community said she was born on the banks of the Divine River Cauvery.

"Our rivers embody all that is divine and noble," she explained. "My parents told us not to forget the values from the River Cauvery, which carries life-sustaining and

cleansing waters."

When a guest—viewed as a divine person—comes, the first thing a family does is offer water. Before entering temples, Hindus wash their feet with water to clean off the dirt. In a temple, they are offered "fragrant water from the Divine," said Sreedharani.

"Water has a special place in our lives. Rivers are sacred. Temple tanks bestow blessings," she said.

Varuna, the Lord of Waters, an ancient Hindu deity, is the king of gods, the keeper of moral water. Varuna rituals use water to bring rain and prosperity to farmers.

According to grandmothers, giving water to the thirsty earns instant "punya" or merit, Sreedharani said. Clay pots filled with water are set beside roads for people traveling across India. Now there are water coolers.

"Water is one of the five prime elements along with earth, air, fire and sky," she said. "Water is the key nurturer. Without it, most life, including human life, cannot survive."

In India, anyone who nurtures others is a Devata, a deity worthy of worship. So, every source of water is revered and prayed to—oceans, rivers, ponds, wells and lakes, human-made stepwells and temple tanks, Sreedharani commented.

She said one hymn praises rivers for nurturing the land of Bharata (India), and many rivers have their own songs.

Even though India's water-rich culture treats water with reverence, water is declining, and rivers are polluted with toxic waste, she added.

"India's reverence for water extends from rivers to every drop of rain. In summer, people wait for clouds. The abundant rains come in four months—Chaturmas—and bring joy," she said.

Sreedharani said pilgrims take a dip in holy waters of places they visit and also bathe in nearby holy rivers.

She challenged those who buy water in plastic bottles. Her husband worked 38 years with the city water department, and knows that Spokane's tap water is good and clean.

Venerable Thubten Semkye of Sravasti Abbey in Newport invited participants to join in a meditation to be aware of "how we are inter-connected with water, internally and externally."

"Water has a precious place in our lives and bodies," she said. "All beings depend on water."

She guided people to be aware of water in their bodies—saliva

in their mouths, mucus in their noses, blood in their bodies, moisture they exhale, urine in their bladders, the wetness of their eyes and in their spinal fluid and fat.

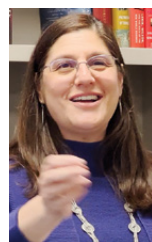
"Moisture is healing," Thubten Semkye said, noting that water transfers toxins out of cells and delivers oxygen to them. "Water permeates and surrounds every cell in our bodies."

Water is outside in oceans, streams and lakes, in plants and animals, she said, adding "all water in our bodies is part of us, but borrowed from outside, flowing through us, not owned by us. There is no 'me' water or 'other' water."

"Our existence is impermanent as it depends on water flowing in and out, but never owned by us," she said, concerned that people are self-centered and focus on "me, my and mine."

"We need to see we are all connected, and all we do has an impact on others," Thubten Semkye said. "To have clean water and a safe environment, we need to humble ourselves and commit to the bigger picture."

Rabbi Tamar Malino of Temple



Beth Shalom and Congregation Emanuel in Spokane said the Jewish teaching is that water is a divine blessing.

Israel's climate is a desert dependent on precious seasonal rains, celebrated in Jewish holidays.

In the dry summer, people conserve and pray for water. Then Sukkot expresses joy as winds blow and rains begin to fall in fall, winter and spring

"We pray God will give life as part of the life cycle of death, resurrection and regrowth in spring," she pointed out.

"In Passover, we pray for water in the growing season," she said. "Water is a blessing when it is in balance, and we are responsible for the balance, so we are not destroyed by too much (floods) or too little (drought)."

With water part of cleansing and blessing, when someone converts, they are immersed in water, Tamar added.

"Water contains life and is identified with God," she said, "Water is also a metaphor for the Torah, for divine wisdom. We say, 'Let justice roll down like a mighty stream,' tying humans and nature."

A Jewish midrash says that as God was showing Adam and Eve around the Garden of Eden, God instructed them that it is their responsibility to care for the earth.

"Every day we are responsible to repair the world," Tamar said.

Ikani Fakasiieiki, a member of Liberty Park United Methodist Church who grew up in Tonga, said Christian understandings of water are like Jewish understandings.



"Water is the source of life. Clean water is a

basic need," he said.

Ikani said that according to the first creation story in Genesis 1, water was already there.

"For me, water pre-existing signifies that it is divine," Ikani said.

"Jesus refers to himself as a source of living water," he said. "In baptism, water represents many things like life, death, renewal, cleansing and resurrection."

Ikani grew up on an island surrounded by the Pacific Ocean: "Water connected us. In our tradition, we are children of Moana, the deep ocean. We are of different races and cultures, wear different clothes and eat different food, but we all need clean water."

In the U.S., Ikani observes that sprinklers run in yards and on farms even if it is raining.

"Water is a gift of God, but many run sprinklers on programmed times. When we program things at a certain time, we may miss God's gift of providing us the water we need to live," he said.

Daniel Pschaida, who teaches about



religious diversity at Gonzaga University Religious Studies, shared from his Baha'i tradition.

"Our teachings on water are like those of the other religions," he said.

April 21 to May 2 is Ridvan, when Baha'is commemorate the 12 days when Baha'u'llah was in Ridvan garden in Baghdad, Iraq, on the banks of the Tigris River. There he proclaimed his mission as God's messenger to unite earth and religions and he founded Baha'i. He received and gave God's message that "we are to care for all the earth and for each other, that we are all one and we are to have justice for all."

David spoke of all walking humbly on earth, not taking water for granted and assuring that all have water, which is 70 percent of the earth and 70 percent of human bodies.

"Water is the fountain of life," he said. "Water is significant for God's mercy and sovereignty."

To view the full comments of panelists, visit www.thefigtree.org and select Videos in the menu.

Calendar of Events

Area code for phone is (509) unless otherwise listed

- May 1-June 12 • Mindful Self Compassion Course**, Harmony Woods Retreat Center, 11507 S. Keeney, Spokane, 6 to 8 p.m., annieditto@gmail.com
- May 4 • 28th Annual Hispanic/Latino Graduate and Young Scholar Recognition Ceremony**, Spokane Community College Gym, 5 p.m., 557-0566
- Awake My Soul:** Brigham Young University and Gonzaga Friendship Concert, Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 E. Desmet, 7:30 to 9 p.m.
- May 4-9 • Northwest Energy Coalition:** Clean and Affordable Energy Conference, online, 9 to 11:30 a.m. christ@nwenergy.org
- May 5 • "Persistence of Vision: Asian Diaspora Perspectives in Continuum,"** First Friday Artist Talk, Margaret Albaugh and Frances Grace Mortel, Chinese American Bear DJ, Chase Gallery, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 5 to 8 p.m., apicspokane.org
- May 5-6 • Rest, Rewind, Retreat**, Harmony Woods Retreat Center, 11507 S. Keeney, 993-2968
- May 5-7 • Engaged Encounter**, Marriage Prep Weekend Retreat, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr, 7 to 5 p.m., ihrc.net
- May 6 • Millwood Community Presbyterian**, Spring Fling Sale, 3223 N. Marguerite, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 924-2350
- Asian/Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Graduation**, Whitworth Chapel, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., apicspokane.org/calendar/asian-pasifika-grad2023
- Peace Walk**, Unity Spiritual Center of North Idaho, 4465 N. 15th, Coeur d'Alene, 1 p.m., 208-664-1125
- Getting Dirty Silent Auction**, Newby-Ginnings and Kootenai County Elementary Schools, Curley's, 26433 W. Hwy 53, Hauser, 1 to 5 p.m., 208-773-5816
- Eastern Washington University Native Hawaiian Pacific Islanders Club**, Lu'au 2023, EWU Pavilion Rees Courts, 3 p.m., jhoffschneider@ewu.edu
- Marshall Islands Constitution Day Celebration**, North Spokane Library, 44 E. Hawthorne, 4 to 6 p.m., 893-8350
- May 7 • Asian American Pacific Heritage Celebration**, Center Place Regional Event Center, 2426 N. Discovery, 3 to 7 p.m., 590-6613
- Spokane String Quartet**, Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague, 3 p.m. 227-7404
- Faith Action Network Spring Summit**, online, 3 to 5 p.m., fanwa.org/regional-spring-summits
- May 8 • Asian and Asian American Heritage Month Proclamation**, APIC Spokane, Spokane City Council Chambers, 808 W. Spokane Falls, 6 p.m., 990-6164
- Double Crossed: The American Missionary Spies of World War II**, Matthew Avery Sutton, WSU history professor, South Hill Library, 3324 S. Perry, 6:30 p.m., humanities.org
- May 8-11 • "No Faith in Fossil Fuels: A Climate Finance Summit,"** Green Faith, online, actionnetwork.org/events/no-faith-in-fossil-fuels-a-climate-finance-summit
- May 8-12 • "Send a Friend a Goat,"** Wishing Star Foundation fundraiser, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 744-3411.
- May 9 • Peace and Justice Action Committee**, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS), 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. jarcher@pjals.org
- May 10 • "Gentle Undoer of Knots and Powerful Help in Every Need,"** Silent Marian Day of Prayer, Sr. Mary Eucharista, SMMC, IHRC, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., ihrc.net
- "Native Plants on the Palouse,"** 1912 Center, 412 E. Third, Moscow, 208-669-2249
- Hispanic Business Professional Association Monthly Meeting**, Fiesta Mexicana, 1227 S. Grand, 6 to 7:30 p.m., hbpaofspokane.org
- Medicare Getting Started**, Medical Lake Library, 321 E. Herb, 6 to 7:30 p.m., 893-8330, sclid.org
- May 11 • "From the Public Schools to Public Service,"** Leila Fleming-Staffler, Northern Mariana Islands Secretary of Labor, EWU AANHPI Heritage Month, EWU Cheney Campus PUB 317/319, 12 to 1:30 p.m. jhoffschneider@ewu.edu
- "A Month in the Life of A.L.I.C.E." Simulation**, Central Library, 906 W. Main, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., 444-5364, amurcar@spokanelibrary.org
- Stage Lights for Our Place**, fundraiser, Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway, 6 to 8:30 p.m., 326-7267
- May 11, 25 • Showing Up for Racial Justice**, PJALS, 5:30 p.m., slichty@pjals.org
- May 12 • "South of the Border,"** Coeur d'Alene Symphony Orchestra, Schuler Performing Arts Center, 1000 W. Garden, Coeur d'Alene, 208-765-3833
- May 13 • "Stamp Out Hunger,"** 2-harvest.org/stampouthunger
- Friends of the Cheney Library Book Sale**, 610 First, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., 893-8380
- Mother's Day Brunch**, Martin Luther King Center, 500 E. Stone, 10:30 a.m., 868-0856
- Asian, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Day**, Riverfront Park, 507 N. Howard, 928-9664
- Celebration of Mothers**, Fundraiser for Covenant Homes and Resources, 1124 W. Sinto, 6 p.m., 842-6516, covenanthomesandresources.org
- Inland Northwest Short Film Festival**, The Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague, 6 p.m., bingcrosbytheater.eventue.net/cgi-bin/ncommerce3/SEGetEventList
- May 13, 14 • Spokane Symphony Masterworks 9:** Stravinsky's Firebird, The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, Sat,

- 7:30 p.m., Sun, 3 p.m., 624-1200
- May 14 • Mother's Day Brunch**, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., ihrc.net
- May 15 • NAACP General Membership Meeting**, Spokane Public Library, 906 W. Main, and virtual, 6:30 p.m., spokaneaaccp@gmail.com
- May 16 • "Give Like a Woman,"** Women Helping Women Luncheon with Shiza Shahid, co-founder of The Malala Fund. Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 2:30 to 4 p.m., pre-party, 4 p.m. program/keynote, 5 to 6:30 p.m. after party, whwfsokane.org/give-like-a-woman
- May 18 • Kootenai County Human Rights Task Force**, Summer Luncheon, Coeur d'Alene Inn, 506 W. Appleway, CdA, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30, 208-765-3932
- Social Media Basics for Small Business**, Zoom, 12 to 1:30 p.m., sclid.org
- Spokane Valley Connect**, Opportunity Presbyterian Church, 202 N. Pines, 1 to 5 p.m., spokanevalleyconnect.org
- Taiko Drums and Dance Performances**, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 2316 W. 1st, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 456-3931, northwestmuseum.org
- May 19-20 • New Story Spokane Festival**, Gonzaga University Hemmingson Center, environment networking event, 313-7942, newstoryspokane@gmail.com, newstoryfestival.com/spokane
- May 20 • Mother's Day Brunch**, Southside Community Center, 3151 E. 27th, 10 a.m., 535-0803
- Pauline Flett Pow Wow**, Flett Middle School, 5020 W. Wellesley, 11 a.m., Grand Entry 1 p.m. and 7 p.m., 218-1929
- May 21 • Sharing The Dharma Day** with the Srvasti Abbey Community, YouTube Live, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., plus Zoom discussion groups, 2 to 3:30 p.m., srvastiabbey.org/event/sharing-the-dharma-day-9/2023-05-21/
- "Rachmaninoff: 150 Years,"** St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th, 3 p.m., 838-4277.
- "Ovation,"** Spokane Youth Symphony The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, 4 p.m., 624-1200
- Corbin Senior Center 55th Annual Auction and Dinner**, Historic Flight Foundation, 5829 E. Rutter, 3 to 7 p.m., 535-6000
- May 22 • Working Families Tax Credit Application Assistance**, Medical Lake Library, 321 E. Herb, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., 893-8330, sclid.org, bit.ly/3IPxQEA
- "One Life at a Time" Luncheon**, Christ Kitchen, True Hope Church, 1316 N. Lincoln, 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., 325-4343, christkitchen.org/events
- May 24, 31 • "Weaving Connection: Building the Power of Community,"** PJALS Annual Benefit, in person lunch 12 to 1 p.m., Spokane Valley Event Center, 10514 E. Sprague, and zoom, May 31, 6 to 7 p.m., pjals.org
- May 25 • EWU Asian Student Association Spring Market**, Arevalo Campus Mall, Cheney, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., jhoffschneider@ewu.edu
- OutLive Film Festival**, Washington Cracker Co., Building, 304 W. Pacific, 12 to 9 p.m., 630-7696
- "Atomic Washington: Our Nuclear Past, Present and Future,"** Central Library, 906 W. Main, 5 p.m., 444-5336, humanities.org
- May 26 • "Persistence of Vision" closing reception and panel on "The Asian American Experience: Spokane Colleges Perspective,"** APIC Spokane, Chase Gallery, Spokane City Hall, 5 to 8 p.m., apicspokane.org/calendar/persistence-of-vision-closing
- May 27 • El Mercadito**, Latinos En Spokane, A.M. Cannon Park, 1901 W. Spofford, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 558-9359, info@LatinosEnSpokane.org
- May 30 • Working Families Tax Credit Application Assistance**, Fairfield Library, 305 E. Main, 1 to 3 p.m., 893-8320
- May 31 • The Fig Tree Distribution and Mailing**, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 535-4112, kaye@thefigtree.org
- Spokane Area Jewish Family Services Benefit Luncheon**, "L'dor V'dor: From Generation to Generation," Gonzaga Hemmingson Center, 12 to 1:30 p.m., 747-7394, director@sajfs.org
- Community Conversation and Author Series**, Erin Jones, *Bridges to Heal Us*, The Bing, 901 W. Sprague, 5:30 p.m., innovia.org/communitybookclubs
- Partnering for Progress Benefit Night** at "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" performance, Spokane Civic Theater, 1020 N. Howard, 6 p.m., 208-720-8408, partneringforprogress.org
- June 1 • The Fig Tree Development and Board Meetings**, 12 to 3 p.m., 535-4112, mary@thefigtree.org
- June 2 • "Evening of Praise and Worship,"** Rick McLean, Sister Mary Eucharista and Ron Larson, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., IHRC, ihrc.net
- June 4 • Faith Action Network Spring Summit**, online, 3 to 5 p.m., fanwa.org/regional-spring-summits
- To May 13 • Facing Fire:** Art, Wildfire, and the End of Nature in the New West, Jundt Art Museum, 200 E. Desmet, 313-6843
- To Aug 6 • "Searching for Home,"** Humaira Abid, Pakistan-born artist on plight of refugee women and girls, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 2316 W. First, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 456-3931
- Thurs • Taize Prayer**, 4:15 p.m., Zoom, Shonna Bartlett, bartletts@gonzaga.edu
- Suns • "Burritos for the People,"** SCAR, Compassionate Addiction Treatment, 168 S. Division, 9 to 10 a.m., scarspokane.org/burritos-for-the-people

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Please see <https://sajfs.org/benefitluncheon> for details



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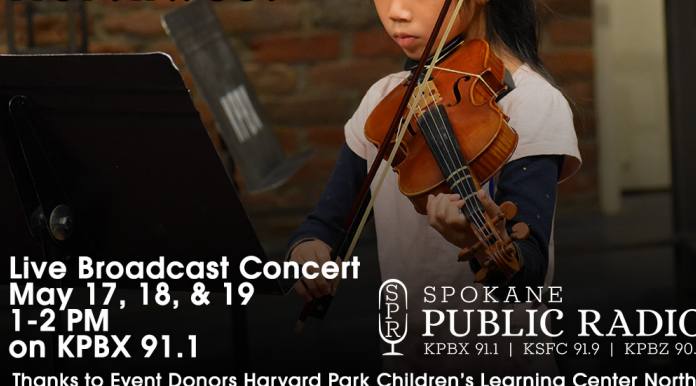
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Explore Event Underwriting at SpokanePublicRadio.org

Spokane Human Rights Commission focus is education and advocacy

By Catherine Ferguson, SNJM

The Spokane City Council established a Human Rights Commission (SHRC) in 1992 to promote the dignity of all people, to make recommendations to the City Council on human rights and discrimination, and to implement programs consistent with the needs of all city residents.

To that end, it actively participates in community events, facilitates public forums and conducts public outreach to drive awareness, education and advocacy around human rights issues affecting the community.

What does its mandate mean in day-to-day practice?

The SHRC receives complaints on three types of discrimination—equal opportunity in employment, housing practices and public accommodation. It then makes referrals to agencies authorized to respond to those types of discrimination.

Each year the nine-person volunteer commission plans its priorities.

This year, Mayor Nadine Woodward appointed Anwar Peace, from the City of Spokane's Third District, as chair. He is now going into his second term.

An activist who moved from Seattle about eight years ago, he has a background in advocating for police accountability, especially for families touched by police violence.

His passion in working for human rights originated from his personal experiences growing up in Seattle. When kids made fun of his name because they found it hard to pronounce, his parents assigned him a book report on his namesake, Anwar Sadat, the Nobel Peace Laureate from Egypt.

"I learned about the work of human rights from book reports they made me do on others like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X," he explained.

He also experienced discrimination firsthand in other ways. Early on, he was a lone black youth in an all-white school in a well-to-do suburb of Seattle. As



Anwar Peace chairs the SHRC.

a young black man, he lived in the ghetto of central Seattle after his family had to move there during an economic downturn.

Anwar explained his perspective on being chair of the SHRC.

"I look on this as I would look on a full-time job," he said, describing the importance of the commission to respond to complaints of people suffering discrimination.

In years past, the city had a civil rights officer who was able to assist the commission with investigating human rights complaints. When that person left, the position was not refilled. The commission can now only handle complaints by making referrals to other offices.

"The commission should be an investigative body," he said. "Without the ability to carry out investigations, some of its effectiveness has been stripped away."

Anwar described other commission priorities as "giving voice to our communities' homeless issues and bringing a wider awareness to the issues of human trafficking."

To this end, he has been inviting the leaders of service providers who work with homeless people—like Jewels Helping Hands at Camp Hope and the Salvation Army at the Trent Homeless Shelter—to make presentations at SHRC monthly meetings.

Anwar has also been commu-

nicating with service providers on trafficking victims and with the Spokane Police to provide information to the commission on human trafficking in Spokane.

For Anwar, public safety is a primary concern as he compares Spokane's police department with other cities.

He is collaborating with the police ombudsman and the chair of the Office of Police Ombudsman Commission. He hopes they can work together to enhance public safety.

"Spokane Police Chief Craig Meidl has told City Council at several Public Safety Committee meetings that his department needs at least 140 more officers for a city of our size according to national-best-police-practices," Anwar stated. "However, the chief is asking for only 70 more officers currently."

Spokane, with a population of 229,513, is the second largest city in Washington and currently

has 341 officers. With 219,346 people, Tacoma, the third largest city, has 334 officers. With 747,300 people, Seattle, the largest city, has 1,400 officers.

Anwar is concerned about the mental health of police officers with the stress caused by the shortage of staffing in the face of crime in Spokane.

During the COVID restrictions, the previous chair, Lance Kissler, an associate vice president of university relations at Eastern Washington University, sought to professionalize the commission. He developed protocols for operating, rebranding with a new logo and doing community outreach.

Among the materials he developed for community outreach is a wheel of rights designed to teach the public about their rights and ways the commission can support them. He also worked to make the commission better known.

When he was chair, Lance was pleased that the commission SHRC collaborated with Gonzaga University to research the design of an Office of Civil Rights for Spokane and then collaborated with 50 local organizations to develop a proposal for an Office of Civil Rights, Equity and Inclusion (OCREI) that was accepted with some modifications. He is disappointed they were not able to hire a director to make the office a reality during his term.

Furthering the OCREI is a priority for Anwar.

In a guest opinion published Dec. 5, 2021, in the Spokesman Review, Lance, Pui-Yan Lam of APIC Spokane, Kurtis Robinson

of NAACP Spokane and Katy Sheehan of the Community Building wrote on behalf of a coalition of community organizations that envisioned and worked to create the OCREI.

They wrote: "An OCREI would provide much-needed structure to help realize our city's commitment to promoting justice, equity and an inclusive environment for all, by recognizing the dignity and worth of all human beings, regardless of identity.... Creating an OCREI is how our city will take action to guarantee the law's promise."

The City Council and Mayor have accepted forming the OCREI, albeit with a smaller staff. The search for a director has not yet been successful nor has the space for a new office been identified, Anwar said.

In early April, a second search process began, and he hopes a director will be appointed in June.

"I'm looking forward to the startup of the Office of Civil Rights, Equity and Inclusion. Until it is up and running, the SHRC will continue working to advance the rights of all," Anwar said.

In January, SHRC meetings moved back to the City Council Chambers for the first time since COVID. They meet at 5:30 p.m., first Thursdays, and are also livestreamed.

Anwar sees public participation as key to the success of the SHRC's work.

For information, email apeace@spokanecity.org or visit my.spokanecity.org/bcc/commissions/spokane-human-rights-commission.

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