

38TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Stories inside

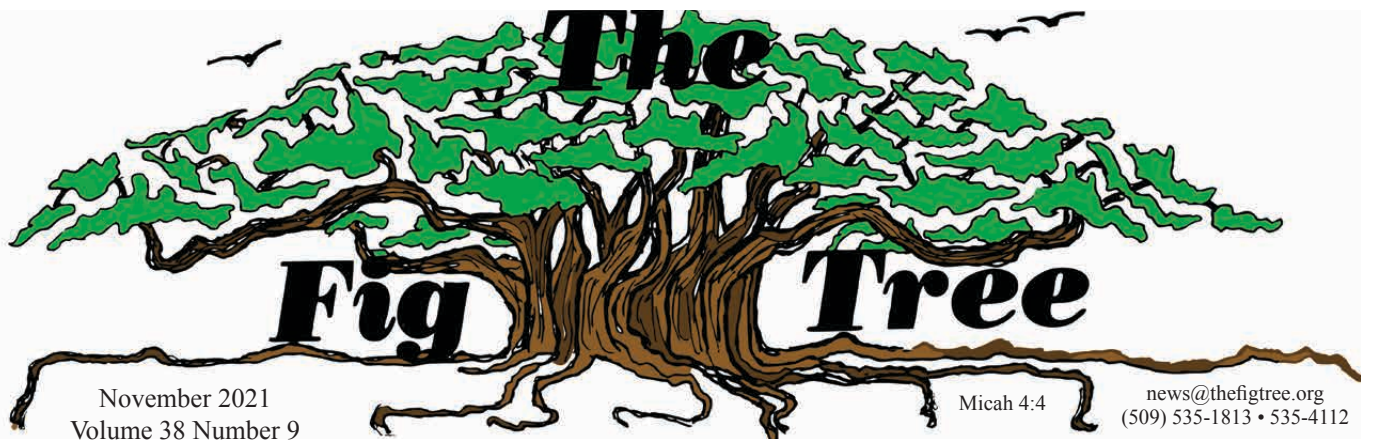
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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest online at www.thefigtree.org • check The Fig Tree Facebook page daily for news and links

Compassion helps reduce suffering

By Lillian Piel

Setting out with the intention of a career in finance, Gloria Chien had no idea that becoming a professor who researches and teaches about Buddhism and meditation would be the path she would take, but it is the one she has pursued.

Taking this path has allowed her to follow her passion.

Gloria, who began teaching at Gonzaga University in 2017, grew up in Taiwan and earned a bachelor's degree in finance in 2003 from the National Central University in Taiwan. She received a coveted job offer as a financial analyst, but she turned it down so she could pursue a career in her new-found passion in Buddhism.

"I wanted to follow my heart. There was a voice inside me saying a financial career is not right for me," she said.

In college, Gloria attended a Buddhist meditation group, where she first started learning about Buddhism and Buddhist meditation, specifically Thai Buddhist Mahasati meditation.

To pursue a career in Buddhism, she went to a monastery for three years where she studied and practiced the Chinese Buddhist monastic life style.



Gloria Chien said students learn self-care in Buddhism classes she teaches.

In 2007, Gloria earned a master's degree in Tibetan Buddhism at the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan.

The idea of being a professor had first piqued Gloria's interest while she was in Taiwan pursuing her master's degree at Dharma Drum Mountain, because of her desire to help reduce people's suffering by facilitating their self-awareness through an academic environment.

She explained that her approach to Buddhism is different from how the general public views it in Taiwan because she emphasizes the psychological approach to Buddhism.

Gloria was especially touched by the Buddhist idea of universal compassion to alleviate sentient beings' suffering, she said.

Dharma Drum Mountain has a relationship with the University of Virginia's religious studies department, where Gloria earned a master's degree in religious studies in 2009 and then a doctoral degree in 2015.

Her dissertation was on "The Life and Collected Works of Tibetan Lojong Master Tokme Zangpo (1295-1369)."

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Fair traders with Guatemalan ties seek to address suffering of artisans

By Mary Stamp

Local fair traders with Guatemalan ties have been concerned about the weavers, sewers, artisans, artists, crafters and coffee growers who have suffered financially because lockdowns and closed borders during COVID reduced tourism, shipping and access to raw materials.

COVID also reduced the number of fair trade sales events where they could sell the products. They have inventory and seek to sell items now, so they can buy more from their Guatemalan partners to provide them income.

Fair traders Maria Cuc and Felipe Gonzales of Mundo Maya Enterprises, Debbie DuPey of Corazon Scarves, and Sandi and Brian Thompson-Royer of Resilient Threads will partner with Kizuri for a Guatemalan Holiday Market from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 20, at the Community Building, 35 W. Main.

They will require masks, will be distancing and using plastic shields to offer an opportunity for people to purchase artisan crafts and support Guatemalan neighbors during the pandemic.

Each told about the struggles of

people who create their products.

In addition, with the vaccination rate in Guatemala being just 28 percent, many have been sick or died because multiple generations of a family live in one house, said Sandi.

They have produced less and been unable to sell what they have, so they are struggling, but have had no government assistance. During COVID, the fair traders raised funds to send, but the producers prefer to sell their products.

Each fair trader offered more details on the situation and shared background on their fair trade enterprises and partners.

Felipe and Maria of Mundo Maya Enterprises, which includes Maya Coffee and Maya Color, say many farmers, artisans and weavers have had COVID and are producing less organic coffee, hand-made folk art, weaving, music instruments, wood carvings and crafts.

Felipe started the business as Moonflower Enterprises in the 1980s in San Antonio Agua

Continued on page 4

Fig Tree holds fund drive for new, renewing sponsors

For the second year, The Fig Tree is doing the "Fall Festival of Sharing," a time from Oct. 21 to Nov. 30 (Giving Tuesday) to invite support from new and renewing sponsors for The Fig Tree monthly newspaper and its annual Resource Directory.

"It's basically our fall sponsorship appeal. We sent out a letter to renewing and potential sponsors in early October and we are making appeals online, by email and by phone as a special effort to draw support from regular readers," said Marijke Fakasiieiki, development and editorial associate.

"Through quotes of speakers for the 2021 benefit and video clips from those featured in the promotional benefit video, we remind people daily of our mission of sharing stories of people who make a difference, connecting people with resources they need, offering reflection, understanding and dialogue, and building respect and solidarity among diverse people," she said.

In addition to a The Fig Tree Facebook fundraiser, anyone may set up Facebook fundraisers to raise funds reach the budget goal for sponsorships. The 2021 goal is \$15,000, of which \$10,125 was in by Oct. 28, including \$2,625 given for the fall goal of \$7,500—with nine new sponsors.

"Our 2021 budget includes the expanded role of our development associate, adding editorial responsibilities. Marijke has helped bring in new advertising, resulting in the last two issues being 16 pages and bringing additional stories of people who make a difference. She continues to help build partnerships for the directory, develop relationships with funders and increase the number of readers," said Mary Stamp, editor. "We are also beginning a strategic planning process to look at our vision for the future, expand participation and review policies."

For information, call 535-1813, mary@thefigtree.org or visit thefigtree.org/donate.html.

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‘One River’ focus is ethics

The eighth annual “One River, Ethics Matter,” a multi-year ethics consultation on the Columbia River Treaty facilitated by the Ethics and Treaty Project, is online beginning at 9 a.m., Wednesday and Thursday, Nov. 17 and 18.

The theme is “kl cpəlk stīm - restoring ntytyix (salmon) to the Okanagan River and the Upper Columbia.”

The conference will focus on treaty renewal, restoring salmon and the river, youth and climate change. It will explore remedial options on topics of the Columbia River Basin, grounded in respectful dialogue with a goal to further public understanding. It alternates between meeting

in the U.S. and Canada. The 2021 conference is co-hosted by the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the University of British Columbia Okanagan campus.

It addresses the history of the Columbia River Treaty and the treaty review process related to social and environmental justice, collaboration for the common good, and the need for truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Some themes are treaty-specific while others focus on topics such as the history of Indian residential schools and calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

For information, visit research.ok.ubc.ca/news-events/orem.

Interfaith talks look at connection to land

350 Spokane’s Interfaith Committee offers two presentations on “Our Biblical Connection to the Land” at 5 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 10, on livestream and Zoom.

First, Daniel Stulac, author, campus minister, agricultural developer and theologian, speaks on “Land and People Together: A Biblical Vision of Health.”

He introduces an “agrarian hermeneutic,” from writings of contemporary and second-generation agrarians. It analyzes words of Elijah in 1 Kings 17–19 offering a holistic vision for human health as an agro-ecological, theological and social act.

Daniel, a 2001 graduate of Dartmouth College, worked with Partners In Health in Rwanda

before earning a master’s in divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary in 2012 and a doctoral degree from Duke University in 2017.

Second, Yoshi Silverstein, executive director of Mitsui Collective, speaks on “Sojourn and Soil: Connections to Land, Place and Community in Jewish Tradition and Contemporary Practice.”

As a cultural, religious lineage of indigenous and diasporic roots, Jewish tradition offer insights for individual and collective relationships to land, place and community, said Yoshi, who grew up in Spokane. He will share Jewish ideas and texts related to climate change and environmental justice.

Mitsui Collective builds resil-

ient community by embodying Jewish practice and racial equity.

Selected as a 2021 “Grist 50 Fixer” for building a more just and equitable future, his work nourishes body and soul with nature connection, creative expression, somatics and anti-racism.

Formerly with JOFEE Fellowship at the Hazon Jewish lab for sustainability, Yoshi is a Repair the World board member. He has a master’s in landscape architecture and certificates in spiritual and social entrepreneurship, permaculture design and environmental education. He lives in Cleveland, Ohio, on Erie-Mississauga-Haudenosaunee land.

To join, go to <https://gonzaga.zoom.us/j/96333378163>.



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Sāmoans and others tell why statue of Monaghan needs to come down

Joseph Seia and Malie Chanel, leaders of the Pacific Islanders Community Association of Washington, said they are descendants of some of the Sāmoan women, children and elders who were machine gunned down in their village by John Monaghan and the U.S. Navy during U.S. colonial conquests in 1899.

They were among Sāmoan and community leaders at an Oct. 16 rally in Riverfront Park calling for the City of Spokane to remove the statue of John Monaghan that stands at Monroe St. and Riverside Dr.

Opening the rally with a prayer, Luc Jasmin of Jasmin Evangelical Ministries said the statue is a reminder of the atrocities suffered by Sāmoans and others in the colonial period. He said taking down the statue is part of the efforts across the nation to tear down statues honoring people who stand for hate.

Kiana McKenna, director of Eastern Washington services for the Pacific Island Community Association of Washington (PICA-WA), said that when she first saw the statue, her blood boiled because of the text and imagery on the plaque.

Joseph, founder of PICA-WA from Seattle, said his family came from the village where Monaghan and the naval troops killed people. He led a Sāmoan funeral chant for those killed as a way to say their lives mattered, and the thousands of murdered children, women and elders are more than statistics.

As he read names of a few killed, 10 women set red flowers on a tapa mat.

He said of the American soldiers that all of them were “victims of a culture and a people who lost their humanity. After they compromised their humanity by killing the Native people in the Americas, they extended their brutalities over Pacific peoples.”

Joseph added that the killing is not something that is a remnant of Sāmoan history, but something “very real still, alive here in the City of Spokane as the statue continues to represent white supremacy, unfettered capitalism, greed and no care for the fellow human beings who are suffering.”

“We want our ancestors to know their legacy must continue, and we must continue to humanize people today to honor those who were killed because of greed. Sāmoans know we are all dust and spirit, because we are not here forever,” he said.

“Some who forgot that honor the atrocity with a statue,” Joseph said. “Thank you to those who also fight for justice and stewardship of the land here in solidarity with the Spokane Tribe. We can waken from ignorance.”

Joseph distinguished that “allies” are sometimes just spectators. He called for people to be in solidarity to fight for justice for the descendants of those



Joseph Seia and Malie Chanel dance by the mat with flowers.

Monaghan killed and to challenge the colonization throughout the Pacific that the statue represents.

“The person who gunned down innocent villagers has a statue and two ships named for him, but he was not a hero and should not be honored,” Joseph said. “We seek to educate people.”

Malie said the massacre killed her great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents.

“We are here as their voices,” she said, remembering growing up in Sāmoa and seeing graveyards made of lava rocks in the back of homes.

“Why were there so many when we can bury family in the front of our land?” she had asked.

“People were silent in their grief about what happened. Imagine how they would feel to know their oppressor, abuser was honored by a statue. Would you like to see it every day? We are here. Let’s move forward. This is 2021. Why perpetuate hate?”

She asked how Christians today sit with the massacre and how God sees it.

“2022 must be a year we do better in living with all people of color so hate has no place in our community,” Malie said.

“When I first saw the statue, it triggered pain about how Sāmoans did not talk about it but suppressed our history,” Malie said. “It celebrates a time

of empires based on ‘the white man’s burden to civilize savages.’ There was arrogance then and there is arrogance now.”

Margo Hill, Eastern Washington University professor and member of the Spokane Tribe of Indians, said removing the statue is not about erasing history but about telling the truth that Monaghan was not a hero but killed innocent villagers.

“There is no honor in genocide,” said Margo, a leader in the effort to rename Fort George Wright Dr. as Whistalks Way after an indigenous woman warrior, Whist-alks, rather than after a general who committed genocide against area tribes.

“History is written by those on the top of the racial hierarchy. We need to celebrate the alternative by removing symbols of white supremacy and hate,” she said.

Paul Schneider, high school history teacher and member of the Spokane County Human Rights Task Force, said the task force is committed to bring human rights to all in the presence of oppression and to tear down symbols of oppression.

“We are in solidarity with you and with the work that needs to begin to take down this symbol,” he said. “If we honor a genocide, we do not do justice to Sāmoans in this community.”

Joseph said some today think that challenging colonizers who committed genocide now makes them victims.

Iusi Laumatia, a student at the University of Idaho, was born in her father’s village in America Sāmoa and raised in her mother’s community on the Coeur d’Alene reservation.

“I’m aware how people erase people. My parents did not know how the U.S. and Great Britain attempted to control our country,” she said. “They did not know people were shot by machine guns firing for hours on a church. They did not learn that or how colonizers disrupted our culture.”

“We deserve to represent a perspective of honesty by taking down the statue,” she said.

Kurtis Robinson, vice president of the NAACP Spokane now serving as a Washington State Criminal Justice training commissioner, declared, “The NAACP is in solidarity with you. It’s time for racial reckoning, for holding people’s feet to the fire.”

He said that recognizing that indigenous people know the importance of fire to the spirit.

“Fire burns away the dross and puts the nutrients back in the soil so it will pull out the good,”

Kurtis said. “When I look at the statue and what it represents, it’s got to come down. We need to be here as human family together in hope, freedom, equality and justice, not just us.”

“You tell us what we need to do and we are with you,” Kurtis said. “We can do this. We can, will and must do this together across race and class lines. Those who are not with us, need to get out of the way. We must and will do this.”

Joseph thanked Sāmoans, communities of color and a white co-organizer, Roberta Truscott, for responding when there was need to form a Citizens’ Advisory Council that is spearheading the effort to remove the statue.

“I am interested in raising humans who are anti-racist and lifting up communities in solidarity,” Joseph said.

In closing, Kiana invited people to sign petitions available at the event and that are online at tinyurl.com/RemoveRacistStatue.

They will submit the petition, which had more than 1,400 signatures as of Oct. 25, to the Spokane City Council when it reaches 2,000 signatures.

For information, call 714-6642 or email kiana@picwa.org.

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Grant supports new Domestic Violence Court to help victims, offenders

YWCA Spokane and the Spokane Regional Domestic Violence Coalition (SRDVC) received a \$550,000 Justice for Families grant in October from the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women to implement a Domestic Violence (DV) Court in Spokane.

The grant allows YWCA Spokane, SRDVC and Spokane Superior Court to address domestic violence in a specialized court setting with alternative processes.

Trained legal advocates will give trauma-informed support to victims. Judges and court personnel who understand complexities of domestic violence will be available and treatment options will offer a therapeutic,

whole family approach.

“This grant is an incredible win for Spokane,” said Annie Murphey, SRDVC director. “The court will respond to the profound impact domestic violence has on families in our community, ensuring victims have access to trauma-informed advocates and offenders have tools they need to reduce recidivism.”

The coalition has been a hub for coordinated community response between victim service agencies, law enforcement and court branches since the early 1990s. To support the DV Court, SRDVC will provide a court coordinator who prepares information for the judge, including input from victims, lethality

assessments, firearm purchases and initial assessment results.

They will work with partners to identify other resources for family members, including children and offenders.

Through the grant partnership, YWCA Spokane will provide free legal advocacy to offer victims safety planning services, and help with accessing community resources for counseling, therapy, economic empowerment, shelter and housing. YWCA’s legal advocates will voice victim concerns on an offender’s progress, assist in filing protection orders, and provide other advocacy for victims.

Jeanette Hauck, CEO of YWCA Spokane, said the court

facilitates a holistic approach.

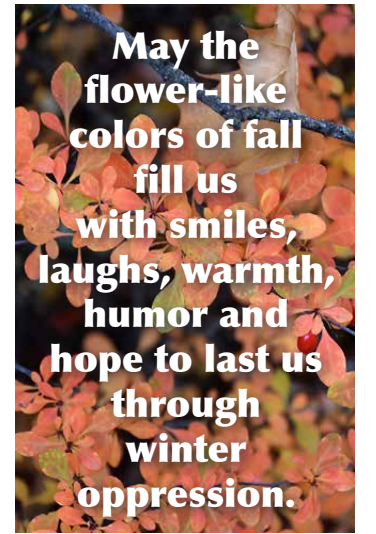
County residents bear a disproportionate burden. Domestic violence calls to law enforcement in the county are nearly twice the state level, she said. This rate has increased.

Spokane has the highest rate of domestic violence in the state with more than 3,300 reported cases annually or 25 percent of all criminal cases. Domestic violence is the number one call to law enforcement annually, she said.

The pandemic has exacerbated isolation, stress and issues of violence, increasing domestic violence cases in our court systems, Jeanette said.

For information, call 325-1190, email ericas@ywcaspokane.org

kane.org or visit endtheviolence-spokane.org or ywcaspokane.org/impact.



Gather Safely

Stay safe while gathering indoors or outdoors with others.

Talk to family & friends about safety expectations.

Use “I” statements like, “I don’t feel comfortable being around that many people yet” to set boundaries without sounding like you’re blaming others.

Take things outside.

Meet outside if possible. If you do meet inside, mask up, hold smaller gatherings, and increase ventilation by opening windows and using fans.

Get your COVID & Flu shots — encourage others to do the same.

Encourage others while listening to and respecting their concerns. Share your own experience using “I” statements. For example, “I was concerned too, but after talking to my doctor, I decided to get vaccinated.”

If you’re sick after an event, test & tell.

If you develop any COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of a gathering, get tested and let people who were near you know right away.



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World Relief is rallying the community to welcome Afghan refugees

Sharing how community members are helping welcome newly arriving Afghan refugees into the region, Mark Finney, executive director of World Relief Spokane, said, "It takes an entire community to resettle refugees."

World Relief Spokane is gearing up to receive 300 Afghan refugees.

"We thank everyone who has donated financially and given items for those arriving with nothing to be welcomed with open arms and provided a furnished apartment," said Mark

On the community's capacity, Mark said there are "tons of jobs, with employers begging for more people to join the workforce, so refugees help businesses who need employees."

In employment, he said Afghan refugees often gravitate to the hospitality industry—hotel, restaurant and food service. They also fill security, IT or medical tech nursing positions.

"Through our contract with the federal government, we are receiving Afghan refugees. Having assessed the community capacity, we have resources to provide this welcome," he said. "This is a national and international crisis. Spokane can make a difference and welcome Afghan allies because it is the right thing to do."

As of Oct. 20, 30 arrived, including about 10 in multigenerational families, single adults and unaccompanied minors, who Lutheran Community Services Northwest helps.

World Relief seeks solutions to some "good" problems. Donated household items fill their warehouse. They are clearing their basement for more storage space. They are not taking big items. A new resource coordinator is managing donations.

World Relief is helping house individuals and families, either with relatives who were already here, or as individual landlords, property managers and congregations offer housing.

They seek housing for 100 people a month through Dec. 31.

"Housing is the challenge. I'm confident the community will help us find housing. We are looking to partner with people who want to rent extra apartments or vacant houses and want to bring them onto the market for this cause," said Mark.

Funds through donations and fund drives are needed, because federal funds only help in the first 90 days after arrival. Long-term funds help with emergency housing relief and staff support, such as a new housing coordinator.

Youth groups and churches



Volunteers help pack Welcome Kits at World Relief office.

can do individual fund raising activities, such as car washes or raking leaves for neighbors to raise funds, he suggested.

Congregations, businesses, scouts and individuals can put together Welcome Kits, for families with items listed on the World Relief website.

Several faith communities are partnering.

- Congregation Emanu-el, Emmanus Church and Bethany Presbyterian will help with housing.
- Colbert Presbyterian is doing a winter coat and car seat drive.
- Life Center is offering a Refugee Youth Program.
- Emmanuel Church, Summit Church and First Presbyterian are providing volunteers.
- Shadle Park Presbyterian, whose youth did a Tennis Tournament fund raiser, shares its building with an Afghan Jafaria Shia Muslim community.

World Relief is partnering with Global Neighborhood Thrift to handle clothing donations. Refugees will be able to choose clothing there. Global Neighborhood will give shopping vouchers and let refugees shop in there for free, providing the dignity of choosing what they want. Those with clothing for refugees may take it to Global Neighborhood

Thrift at 919 E. Trent Ave.

Another opportunity is to participate in World Relief virtual fund-raising gala, "Around the Table," on Tuesday, Dec. 7

World Relief's Friendship Center in their office building, 1222 N. Washington, is currently closed. World Relief hopes to open it when it's feasible, based on COVID numbers, which are high. Because many volunteers are retirees, who are at higher risk, there is need for volunteers from partners and churches.

"Social services also have the capacity to help people, as do ESL programs," said Mark.

For ESL support for adults, World Relief works with Community Colleges of Spokane and Barton School. Other ESL supports include District 81's

English Language Learners department for school children. World Relief makes sure students are enrolled in school and receive that support.

While World Relief is a Christian-based organization, it appreciates that resettling refugees "is an effort across the length and breadth of the community that includes people of Islamic, Jewish, other faiths or no faiths, pulling together for this cause," he said.

"It is a matter of our core humanity that we are compelled to share and be part of this regardless of our faith tradition," said Mark.

"We have an incredible outpouring of support from city and national elected officials, creating a unified front pulling together as a community," he said.

For information, call 484-9829, email wrspokane@wr.org or visit <https://worldrelief.org/spokane/get-involved/donate-items>.



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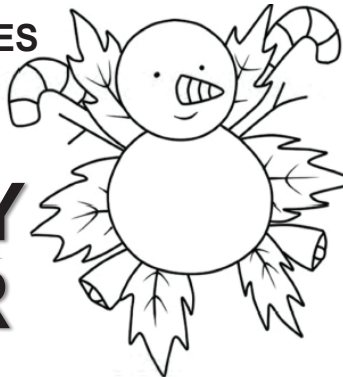


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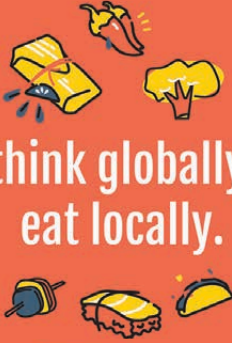


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Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition finds avenues for serving community

From involvement on the Mission and Social Justice Committee of Shalom United Church of Christ in Richland, Marsha Stipe helped form the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition (TCIC) and continues to find avenues for the church to serve the community, including helping Afghan refugees.

Because of financial struggles of people during COVID, TCIC recently decided to form the Tri-Cities Mutual Aid Project to help people who lost jobs or hours in food service, agriculture and service and did not qualify for any federal assistance.

Marsha said the community has been devastated by the pandemic: "We knew people needed cash to help with rent, utilities, food and health costs, so we started the fund."

It prioritizes people who are undocumented, are 60 or older, lost jobs or hours, were quarantined without pay, have disabilities and grave illnesses, are experiencing homelessness, are people of color or LGBTQ and affected by COVID. Recipients live in Franklin or Benton counties and did not receive federal stimulus checks nor receive unemployment compensation.

For the Mutual Aid Project, TCIC partners with the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN) and Planned Parenthood. Applications are available through the WAISN state Help Line—844-724-3737—which receives hundreds of calls from the Tri-Cities.

"Our initial goal was to raise \$5,000 and give awards of \$150 to \$300 to those who qualified. When we first opened the application process, we received 400 applications, so we needed more funds," she said. "The pandemic has lasted longer than we ever imagined."

"With the urgency, we 'went on the road' to raise funds and increased our goal to \$50,000, then to \$100,000 and now we have raised \$120,000 on our way to \$150,000," Marsha said.

In August, the Mutual Aid Fund opened a second round of applications and received 110 applications.

As of mid-September, the Mutual Aid Fund had given out more than \$115,000 in awards of \$150 to \$500 to more than 325 people, mostly women with children.

Funds have come from grants,



Marsha Stipe

churches, businesses, foundations, local and state organizations, and individuals. Some give monthly. The Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition, a nonprofit with Shalom UCC, is the fiscal agent. Donations are mailed to Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition, Shalom UCC, 505 McMurray St., Richland WA 99354.

"Fund recipients have been more than grateful. Some have said they didn't know that anyone cared," Marsha said. "This project demonstrates that our community does care. All dona-

tions go directly to families and individuals in need."

Marsha said the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition, which she chairs, was formed in 2017 in response to negative press about immigrants.

Shalom's Mission and Social Action Committee sent a letter to churches and organizations inviting people to come together to counteract those messages.

Seventy came to an initial meeting in June 2017 for training with a group from Walla Walla. The Tri-Cities group formed. More than 90 people are now on the TCIC group mailing list. The core is about 25, many from Shalom, but also from other churches, social service organizations, private businesses, attorneys, farm workers, labor organizations and other community members.

"We began by educating ourselves and the community, by engaging with community organizations and churches to network, by doing advocacy through writing elected officials, and by supporting immigrants," said Marsha, who worked before retirement as a speech and language clinician, in special edu-

cation, as a school administrator and assistant superintendent of schools in several communities.

"With COVID, we shifted TCIC from doing education talks, tabling to inform people of their rights and holding community forums on economic and legal issues for immigrants, because those activities were face-to-face," she said.

They added the Mutual Aid Project, wrote letters to the editor, offered petitions and continued one-on-one access to community services.

"We are flexible, meeting monthly, to network and share information and resources. Often we have a speaker," she said.

On Sept. 14, Aneelah Afzali, executive director of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound-American Muslim Empowerment Network, spoke and invited the TCIC to add another dimension to their mission: resettling Afghan refugees through World Relief in the Tri Cities.

"Several members had expressed interest in resettling Afghan refugees. We are working with the Tri-Cities Afghan Resettlement Support Project sponsored by the Mid-Columbia

Islamic Center, as well as World Relief," Marsha said.

"While first formed to educate ourselves about undocumented Hispanic people so we could be a welcoming community, we are now meeting to learn about welcoming Afghan refugees," said Marsha, who joined a state meeting to learn more.

There are many members active in TCIC, so she is confident some can focus on supporting and advocating for citizenship for undocumented immigrants, while others can focus on welcoming refugees.

Marsha said she and her husband Mike are relative newcomers at Shalom UCC. For 40 years, they attended Episcopal churches as they moved with Mike's work with Express Employment Professionals in Walla Walla, Pendleton, Salt Lake City and Hermiston. They moved to Richland 16 years ago.

They came one Sunday to Shalom UCC and were impressed by its community involvement and social justice commitment.

For information, call 509-946-6168, email marshastipe@gmail.com or visit tricitieimmigrant-coalition.com.

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Parish nurse lends a listening ear, offers advice and walks with people

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

Being a parish nurse is about being an advocate and bringing the community together—inter-twining spirit and health.

It's about helping parishioners be there for one another, said Debbie Martin, volunteer parish nurse at Advent Lutheran in Spokane Valley.

Parishioners who knew of other congregations with parish nurses approached her in early 2015 aware she was already doing much of the role, answering members' health questions.

Advent Lutheran sponsored her to go to a one-week parish ministries program in August 2015 at the Tillum Hospital System in Mississauga, Ontario, to intentionally serve as a parish nurse.

"We are to be there for others and help each other. That's what God wants us to do," she said. "It combines helping others as a nurse and as a child of Christ."

When she was five, Debbie's cousin cut her foot. She helped her aunt, a nurse at a community hospital. From that experience, she had a call to be a nurse.

Growing up in Southern California, she graduated from high school early to become a licensed practical nurse (LPN). She came to Spokane to develop the spiritual aspect in nursing in studies for a bachelor's at Gonzaga University from 1988 to 1991. She is pursuing a master's in nursing at Grand Canyon University, a Christian University that prioritizes spiritual aspects of nursing.

Her role in the congregation has been limited by COVID. Before COVID, she was available Sundays and Wednesdays, her day off from her work at Pulse, an outpatient cardiac pulmonary rehabilitation center.

Debbie taps into the spiritual side of nursing by listening.

"A nurse listens to patients, tries to save lives and does medical protocols. A parish nurse focuses on spiritual healing that helps the body heal well," she said.

To be a listening ear, she has her number and email available so she can respond to parishioners' questions and concerns. She also does a monthly newsletter on health concerns.



Debbie Martin serves as parish nurse at Advent Lutheran.

Pre-COVID, the church held classes on diabetes, breast cancer, fall prevention, nutrition, CPR and blood pressure and held a health fair. It connected members to Meals on Wheels and hospital social workers.

Debbie shared health information at Wednesday evening Lenten soup supper services.

"It's important to know we can help each other instead of feeling stressed and hopeless, or waiting to call 911," she said.

She did surveys to learn congregational concerns. Because parishioners' median age was in the 60s then and now is in the 70s, grief was a common concern.

For three years they offered programs on grief that included Hospice and a Sacred Heart chaplain leading programs.

Since COVID, Advent Lutheran has returned to in-person worship, but Debbie has not been back. She got COVID even though she was fully vaccinated.

"I've done newsletters and made phone calls, but have gone to no meetings besides Zoom.

"Contracting it made me realize the vaccine is not 100 percent. I work in an out-patient setting and know it is possible to be a carrier and have no symptoms. Even masking and doing hand hygiene, I contracted it from someone who did not get vaccinated. COVID is serious," said Debbie, who had no fever, chills or body aches, just congested lungs. "I'm thankful I didn't get sicker.

"People should be vaccinated. I would have been hospitalized if I hadn't been vaccinated," she said.

The congregation is following six-foot distancing, wearing

masks and not coming in if they have symptoms.

Debbie helped with COVID patients at a Spokane hospital, where she found it heartbreaking as people saw loved ones dying and were unable to say goodbye in person.

While there before her work started again, she asked the manager to have families work with hospital chaplains so they could visit when patients were on their death beds. With the delta variant, they let no one in.

She believes many people have become "more spiritual since this pandemic has hit."

Debbie urges through the church newsletter for members to help those experiencing COVID isolation by bringing them groceries. She said the visiting ministry team can serve communion outside a home or pray with someone by phone or on Zoom.

The church prepares take-out meals alternate Fridays. One member cooks and others deliver to those confined to their homes.

Debbie also offers information to help parishioners navigate medical issues. If she doesn't know something, she finds resources and people who know.

Some resource people who have given presentations include

church members—a firefighter, nutritionist, dentist, physical therapist (on preventing falls) and a Medicare and Medicaid advisor.

She helps people fill out the POST (Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment) form, listing end-of-life wishes on intubation, CPR, hydration, heroics, breathing tube and more.

The church has held classes on using emergency and first aid kits and its Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), which Debbie said is important to have on site if anything happens.

"My role at Advent Lutheran is advocacy. One parishioner had skin cancer. Another had tremors from medication, not Parkinson's. The tremors went away when he stopped the medication.

"I may take parishioners to medical appointments and provide questions to ask, such as on medications," she said. "They feel good to have an advocate.

"Some people have no family in the area or need advice on medical issues. Some would not ask questions and do not realize side effects of medication they are taking," said Debbie.

"The overall well-being of the community is linked to mind, spirit and body," she said. "Helping with medical issues helps them know that God is looking after them, physically and spiritually, through me."

Debbie went to the doctor with a woman who had cancer. The woman didn't understand the extent her cancer had spread.

"I asked the doctor to explain what it meant for her life, that it was end stage cancer because the parishioner thought she would have surgery and be fine," she said. "I prayed with her and explained what the doctor meant, so she could put her life in order.

She reconnected with family she hadn't seen in a while. Because it was terminal, it was a spiritual journey for parishioners who took her to appointments.

"She accepted that we were there to help, even though she was a strong, independent woman who didn't normally ask for anything," Debbie said.

In that way, this role has built a sense of community for parishioners.

For information, 928-7733 or email debs2debs@msn.com.

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Whose smiles, laughs, warmth, humor and hope inspire our walks?

Anglican Archbishop Emeritus and 1984 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Desmond Tutu, who led the South African Council of Churches to wake up the church and help bring the end to apartheid in South Africa, turned 90 on Oct. 7.

I walked beside him in a peace march at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2006 when he was about the age I am now.

The Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at Bossey, the lab for ecumenical, interfaith, intercultural, interracial, intergenerational human interaction, just celebrated its 75th year.

In 1969-70, I studied about "The Future of the Church," and have been living into that future ever since. I was there again in 1996 for its 50th anniversary with Fig Tree Resource Directory editor Malcolm Haworth. During that visit in Europe, I took his senior picture near a castle.

In recent weeks, I have been taking the senior picture for my oldest grandchild,

Tevita Fakasiieiki, son of The Fig Tree's development and editorial associate Marijke Fakasiieiki and editorial writer Ikani Fakasiieiki.

Along with taking pictures, I've been looking at photos of Tevita as a baby and through his growing years, enjoying how he is emerging into adulthood with a desire to make a difference in the world, to make people more loving, caring, truthful, peaceful and justice minded.

Not just my words, but words he has been sharing with our family.

I carry a bit of the spirit of Desmond Tutu's smile, laugh, warmth, humor and hope in my soul. His witness and words, his work to end racial separation and hate, inspire me. In the 1980s, I shared stories and joined in a boycott that was one of the requested actions of solidarity.

I carry with me the spirit and inspiration of the smiles, laughs, warmth, humor and hope from interacting with the 60 people from 40 countries who engaged their faith

to challenge their societies to be more loving and just. One challenged the ultra-rich two percent who hoarded the wealth of Guatemala, keeping it from everyday people. Others challenged the Cold War East-West divisions and repression before the Berlin Wall fell. The witness of many inspired me to return to challenge the racial, economic and environmental inequities and injustices in my own land.

I also carry with me the spirit of Tevita, whose smile, laugh, warmth, humor and hope as a baby and growing person continue to fill my life and inspire me to persevere in trying to make the world a better place for all my grandchildren, for everyone's children, grandchildren and future generations.

Sometimes at milestones in life, we pause and take time to reflect on what has had impact on our lives and on what impact we hope we have had, have and will have on the lives of our families, our congregations, our communities, our

countries and our world.

With the upcoming graduation and with interviewing people asking when they did what, I recently took time to recall my journey in time—when family members graduated, when family and I traveled, when I intersected with different people here and around the world.

Now I look forward to dates of grandchildren graduating and moving into the world to have their impact, because there is still much to be done on the ongoing journey of bending the arc of humanity toward living in justice and peace.

Whose smile, laugh, warmth, humor and hope inspires you, keeps you going, gives you meaning, challenges you to care, love, act and seek justice? How will we join with others to make our unique difference, our unique marks, our unique milestones for ourselves and for our world? Let us walk in solidarity.

Mary Stamp
Editor

Tongan sharing tradition is about caring for and respecting others

We can fight climate change by re-visiting the Tongan sharing tradition. Caring for our neighbors and caring for others is a way to fight climate change.

For Pacific Islanders, climate change is already happening and it is getting worse. Although it affects us more, it already affects us all. Caring for and respecting others, including nature is one part of Tongan indigenous knowledge that has helped us survive for generations. It also allows us to preserve and protect nature. I want share with two of the traditions from my little island of Tonga.

Growing up in one of the outer islands, in high school, parents would send their kids to school on the main island, where they stayed for the whole year. During the school year, parents would usually send gifts to their kids, especially fruit during

each fruit's season.

Whenever any season begins, parents would usually mark the tree by wrapping its trunk with coconut leaves or tie a coconut leaf to one of the branches of that tree. When a tree is marked, that family continues to look after that tree until it is harvested. When someone sees a tree with the coconut leaves wrapped around it, he/she knows that tree is not to be touched or picked. In other words, they know that there is a special person out there that someone is caring for and for whom that tree is spared.

In Tonga, Sunday is called "Sapate" which is a literal translation of the English word Sabbath. As one of the traditions of Sunday, every family prepares good dishes for their neighbors. Every Sunday, each family will wake up and prepare their

lunch and bake it in the underground oven before they go to church for the 10'clock service. When they come home and prepare their lunch, before they prepare their own lunch they will always prepare the best dishes for their neighbors.

I always remember when my brothers and I would always take the plates/dishes to our neighbors before we would sit down to have our lunch. Lunch is the main Sunday meal. Sometimes as kids, we did not eat too fast. Otherwise we would be full before the good dishes from the neighbor's would arrive. In doing that, we were able to share the small good things we had.

As we are coming near to the time of the year where gift sharing is important, we need to be mindful of the gifts we share. May we take the opportunity at this sharing season to share with our loved ones

and our good neighbors something good and special.

Caring for one another here is one of the small steps that we can take locally to fight climate change for our own sake, for our children and their future.

During my time here in Spokane, I have witnessed different organizations sharing these good gifts with vulnerable populations, like Transitional Living Center, Communities in Schools of Spokane County, Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington and Liberty Park United Methodist Church.

As we continue this great tradition of sharing, may we continue to remember that our mother nature is always one of our neighbors and needs our good gifts of love and care.

Ikani Fakasiieiki - Editorial Writer

Letters to the Editor

Sounding Board

Commentaries

Idaho clergy and Spokane Tribe member share their perspectives

It is time to offer another perspective, from inside the world of Christian faith.

Many Christians across this region of North Idaho take this coronavirus pandemic seriously. They share deep concern for people in our communities who have dedicated their lives to our health and well-being and put themselves at risk to care for those infected by this disease. Many have been vaccinated and are willing to accept a temporary burden of precautions that have been strongly recommended in order to reduce risk of the free spreading of the disease among us all as neighbors.

In Numbers 21, when the Israelites were plagued and bitten by poisonous snakes, God directed Moses to create a brazen serpent and to set it where all in the camp could see. Those who took the action to look upon the bronze serpent were healed and saved.

The letter of James (3:16-18) urges followers of Christ to show their faith in their actions by watching over how they speak, caring for people in need, and treating people with dignity. "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace."

Anger has run hot these days, and can seem attractive for its passion, but anger can become its own seductive addiction, easily binding and warping our thoughts. As Proverbs guides us, "Do not make

friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared" (Prov. 22:24-25).

As a group of pastors here in North Idaho, our meditations in scripture together have brought us repeatedly to how we are called to follow Jesus' example by giving up our own selves for the sake of others. Jesus does not call his followers to defend their right to make all their own choices. He calls them to follow him, give up themselves and the things they hold dear, to love God, and love others at least as much as themselves.

We believe that the freedom we are given is not simply to do whatever we please. We are given freedom to rise in care, defense, healing, and empowerment of others around us.

As ministers of the Gospel, we honor and give thanks for healthcare workers and for researchers seeking to bring healing from this pandemic. We affirm calls from community leaders for vaccination. We pray continuously for children, teachers, and all those working in schools and colleges, and for those in protective services and in places where people shop and gather.

We take on the appropriate cautions of this time—vaccination, wearing masks in more public places—as a period of change in our lives so that we can take our part in helping protect others and reducing risk for others. We urge all to do the same, out of loving concern for others around you. We pray continuously for you, our

neighbors, our nation and the world.

Fr. David Gortner, Pastor Bob Albing, Rev. Heather Seman, Rev. Seth Rumage, Pastor Dan Forsgren, Rev. Michael Grabenstein, Rev. Terese Fandel, Rev. Glenda Empsall, Rev. Grant MacLean, Rev. Alice Ling and Pastor Matthew Erickson wrote this letter which was published Oct. 6 in the Coeur d'Alene Press.

Xest xl xalt. Greetings and good day. I am pleased to share that my article, "No Honor in Genocide: A Case Study of Street Renaming and Community Organizing in the Wake of National Decolonization Efforts," was published in the Gonzaga Journal of Hate Studies.

The case study provides an example wherein Indigenous people have objected to a place-name that honors genocide and thus consequently employed strategies to change the name to one that reclaims the Indigenous narrative.

For over two centuries, white settlers had named towns and landforms as a function of the settler-colonial mentality, even though these places and landmarks already had established Indigenous names.

The Spoqínš have always lived on these lands and interacted with their environment. Their cultural knowledge and identity are part of the landscape.

Tribal communities worked with urban Native Americans, non-Native allies and the Spokane City Council to challenge oppressive structures and change a name

that honored genocide.

The 42 organizations, including Spokane Falls Community College, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, The NATIVE Project, American Indian Community Center, as well as the Peace and Justice Action League, urged City Council members to ensure the expedient renaming of Fort George Wright Dr.

The lands of the Inland Northwest were not acquired in a peaceful manner, but rather as a brutal attack on Indigenous villages and families. As part of society's movement toward social equity, we need to critically analyze the teaching of history and the power relations of place-naming.

The City of Spokane's leadership recognized the sovereign territory and the importance of self-determination of renaming and thus asked the Spokane Tribe to lead the renaming process.

The Spokane City Council stayed courageous and challenged existing institutions of colonialism as well as questioned its own complicity in those institutions.

It maintained a pathway that led to decolonization, instead of using ideals of democracy to supplant Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. The City respected Indigenous understanding of Tribal territories.

The article is at <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.200>. Lem Lemsh sl lx laxt. Thank you my friends!

Margo Hill - Spokane Tribe of Indians

Calendar of Events

For phone numbers without the area code, it is 509

- Nov 2**
- **Salvation Army** hiring Christmas Kettle Workers by appointment only, 222 E. Indiana Ave., 329-2759, andrea.reedy@usw.salvationarmy.org
 - **Science & Technology in Service of Society**, North Idaho College, 1000 W. Garden Ave., Coeur d'Alene, 6:30 p.m., Zoom, 208-769-3300, bit.ly/2021Chodron
 - **Jamar Tisby**, Weyerhaeuser Center for Faith and Learning Event, Whitworth Weyerhaeuser Hall, 7 p.m., 777-3707, kidawson@whitworth.edu
- Nov 3**
- **The Fig Tree Mailing and Distribution**, 631 Richard Allen Ct., 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - **Shadle Park Library** opens, 2112 W. Wellesley, 2 p.m.
 - **Thomas Berry's Vision for the Earth Community**, Gonzaga Climate Center, 4 p.m. online, 719-464-5555, gonzaga.edu/center-for-climate-society-environment/events
 - **The Columbia Basin Odessa Project**, Groundwater & Agriculture, Jennifer Sandoval-Hickenbottom, EWU, Interdisciplinary Science Center, 5 to 6 p.m., dprichard@ewu.edu
 - **Redefining Protest through Music**, Humanities Washington, 6:30 p.m., humanities.org/event
- Nov 3-5**
- **Decolonizing Education Conference**, Equity in Education Coalition, decolonize-education-conference.org
 - **Farm and Food Symposium**, Centennial Hotel, 303 W. North River Dr., SpokaneCD.org/events
- Nov 4**
- **The Fig Tree Benefit and Fundraising**, noon, Board, 1 to 3 p.m., Zoom, 535-1813
 - **Flannel Fest Red Kettle Gala**, Salvation Army Kroc Center, Coeur d'Alene, kroccda.org
 - **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, online, 5:30 to 7 p.m., slichty@pjals.org
 - **NAMI Spokane Family to Family Group**, 6:30 to 8 p.m., ed@namispokane.org
- Nov 4-6**
- **Gonzaga International Conference on Hate Studies**, virtual, gonzaga.edu/ICOHS
- Nov 5**
- **Anti-Trafficking Program** Volunteer Training, HRC Ministries, ChangePoint Fellowship, 14415 E. Sprague, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 - **East Side Library** closes permanently, replaced by Liberty Park Library at 402 S. Pittsburg
 - **Spoken River Fundraiser and Auction**, livestream, 7 to 8 p.m., spokenriver.org, Silent Auction runs from Oct 29 to Nov 10, 475-1228, spokenriver.com
 - **3 Minute Mic**, Auntie's Bookstore, 402 W. Main Ave., 7 p.m., 838-0206
- Nov 6**
- **Holiday Bazaar**, Trinity Lutheran Church, 812 N. 5th, Coeur d'Alene, 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., 208-664-5743, trinitylutherancda.org
 - **Dan David Concert/Shabbat Service**, Canadian violinist, Greenacres Christian, 18010 E. Mission, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., COVID precautions, Kehilat HaMashiach, 558-8625, khmwa.org
 - **North of 55 "Decluttering Your Life,"** Breathing Rooms, Life Center, 1202 N. Government Wy, 4:30 p.m., lifecenter.net, 327-4422
 - **Salmon Tales Dinner and Celebration of Salish School**, Gonzaga Preparatory School, 6 p.m., salishschoolspokane.org
 - **Spokane Human Rights Champions Awards**, Facebook livestream, 5 p.m.
- Nov 6-Dec 4**
- **Cheney Churches Online Holiday Bazaar**, cheney-wa-churches-holiday-bazaar.com
- Nov 7**
- **Race to Feed Our Vets 5K**, Benefit Meals on Wheels, Heritage Funeral Home, 508 N. Government Wy, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 838-8900, mospokane.org/veterans-5k
 - **Building Interfaith Community**, North America Interfaith Network Connect, 12 to 6 p.m., http://nain.org/nainconnect/
 - **Spokane Youth Symphony**, Martin Woldson Theater, The Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 4 p.m., 624-1200, spokaneyouthsymphony.org
 - **Women Composers Concert**, Myrhe Recital Hall, Whitworth, 8 p.m. youtube.com/whitworthuniversitymusicdepartment, 777-3280
- Nov 7, 21**
- **Imaginarium**: Creative Play for Preschoolers, Spark Central, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy, 1 to 2 p.m., 279-0299, spark-central.org/events
- Nov 8**
- **Aging and Long Term Care** of Eastern Washington Virtual Volunteer Recruitment Event, noon, https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZwpc-uvpj0iGNypReC7cy2sJnBU98wgSVY
- Nov 9**
- **Habitat-Spokane home dedication**, 1819 and 1823 W. Sharp, 4 p.m., habitat-spokane.org
 - **My Auntie Survived Residential School**, Mary Bell, Spokane Public Schools Native Education Dept., Zoom, spokanepublicschools.org, 354-4633
- Nov 9, 12**
- **Whitworth Chamber Ensemble Concert**, 8 p.m., youtube.com/whitworthuniversitymusicdepartment
- Nov 10**
- **"Our Biblical Connection to the Land,"** 5 p.m., livestream and zoom, gonzaga.zoom.us/j/96333378163
 - **Spokane Falls Music Educators Association Annual Jazz Festival**, Whitworth Cowles Auditorium, 7 a.m., 777-3280, whitworth.edu/music
- Nov 10, 17**
- **Riverfront Winter Market**, 507 N. Howard, 3 p.m., 625-6600
- Nov 11**
- **Days for Girls**, assemble feminine hygiene kits, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 14111 E. 16th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - **"Finding Our Place in the Inland Northwest,"** Human Rights Education Institute, St. Luke's Episcopal, 501 E. Wallace, Coeur d'Alene, 6 to 8 p.m., hrei.org/events, 208-292-2359
- Nov 11, 25**
- **Showing up for Racial Justice**, 5:30 to 7 p.m.
- Nov 12**
- **Liberty Park Library opens**, 402 S. Pittsburg, noon
 - **South Hill Library**, 3324 S. Perry St., closes for renovations until late summer 2022
 - **Harpischorid Dedication**, Recital Music Building, Whitworth, 8 p.m. youtube.com/whitworthuniversitymusicdepartment, 777-3280
- Nov 13, 14**
- **26th Annual Spokane Fall Folk Festival** Virtual, spokanefolkfestival.org
- Nov 14**
- **Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes**, 5101 S. Freya St., 10:30 a.m., samaritanspurse.org/occ
- Nov 16**
- **Climate Crisis as Public Health Crisis: A Regional Perspective**, Gonzaga Hemmingson Center, 702 E. Desmet Ave., 6 to 7:15 p.m. 313-6942, gonzaga.edu/center-for-climate-society-environment/events
- Nov 18**
- **Greening Congregations Gathering**, Earth Ministry/WAIPL, 6 p.m., online, earthministry.org/event/greening-congregations-gathering/
- Nov 17, 18**
- **One River Ethics Matter Conference**, Zoom, 9 a.m. each day, research.ok.ubc.ca/news-events/orem/
- Nov 19**
- **NAACP Spokane Monthly Membership Meeting**, online, 7 p.m., naapcspokane.org
 - **Auntie's Book Club**: Books in Translation, 402 W. Main Ave., 7 p.m., 838-0206
- Nov 19-20**
- **Holy Family Illuminated Manuscript Retreat**, leader Hannah Charlton, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Nov 19-Dec 10**
- **Tree of Sharing** requests, treeofsharing.org
- Nov 19-Dec 24**
- **Salvation Army Christmas Kettle** Bell Ringers, 329-2759
- Nov 20**
- **Guatemalan Holiday Market**, 35 W. Main, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 714-8928, corazonscarves.com
 - **AFSP International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day**, Journey through Grief, 202 N. Pines, 1 to 4 p.m.
 - **Merry Little Christmas**, Greyhound Park Event Center, Post Falls, therustystar@hotmail.com, 218-8711
 - **Handel's Messiah** excerpts, Spokane Symphony Chorale and Chamber Singers, St John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th, 7:30 p.m., spokanesymphony.org
- Nov 21**
- **Volunteer at Tom's Turkey Drive**, Es Kaielgu Lodge, 1234 E. Front, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.
 - **Spokane String Quartet**, pianist Archie Chen, Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, 1001 W. Sprague, 3 to 5 p.m. 624-1200, spokanestringquartet.org
 - **Faith Action Network Annual Dinner**, fan@fanwa.org
- Nov 23**
- **American Democracy's Indigenous Roots** and Future, Humanities Washington, 6:30 p.m., humanities.org/event
- Nov 25**
- **Huffin' for the Stuffin'**, Benefit for Active 4 Youth, runsignup.com/Race/WA/Spokane/TheTrot
 - **Thanksgiving Community Service**, Spokane Minister's Fellowship, Martin Luther King Center, 500 S. Stone, 10 to 11:15 a.m., facebook.com/SpokaneMinistersFellowship
- Nov 26-Dec 12**
- **Tree of Sharing**, Riverpark Square, Northtown, Valley Malls, treeofsharing.com
- Nov 26-Jan 2**
- **Northwest Winterfest**, Mirabeau Meadows, 13500 Mirabeau Pkwy, 5 to 9 p.m., 995-7700, mk@genesiscreatescolor.com, northwestwinterfest.com
- Nov 27**
- **Holly Jolly Craft Market**, Rathdrum Senior Center, 8037 Montana St., Rathdrum, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 208-415-8007, fb.me/e/1bbQl25sD
- Nov 27-Jan 2**
- **Light Up the Night**, Trail of Lights and Trees, Riverfront Park, 508 N. Howard, 625-6600
- Nov 29-Dec 21**
- **Advent Individual Silent Retreats**, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Nov 30**
- **Habitat-Spokane home dedication**, 719 N. Lindeke, 3:30 p.m. p.m., habitat-spokane.org
- Nov 30-Dec 12**
- **Christmas Tree Elegance**, Spokane Symphony Assoc, Davenport Hotel, 10 S. Post, 800-899-1482,
- Mon-Fri**
- **Ornament and Small Works Show**, Spokane Art School 811 W. Garland, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 325-1500,
- Mon-Sat**
- **Staying Home: Interior Views**, Collection of the Jundt Art Museum, 200 E. Desmet, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 313-6843, gonzaga.edu/jundt
- Tues-Sun**
- **Awakenings: Traditional Canoes** and Calling the Salmon Home, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, 2316 W. 1st, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 456-3931
- Wed**
- **Drop In & Draw**, Spark Central, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy, 5:30 to 7 p.m., 279-0299, spark-central.org
- Wed-Sat**
- **Art Overcomes**, Jacklin Arts & Cultural Center, 405 N. William, Post Falls, times vary, 208-457-8950, thejacklincenter.org/art-4
- Thurs**
- **Taizé Prayer**, Zoom, 4:15 p.m., bartletts@gonzaga.edu
 - **Celebrate Recovery**, Salvation Army Spokane, 222 E. Indiana, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 325-6810
- Sat-Sun**
- **Spokane's BeYoutiful**, Local Farmers Market, Northtown Mall, 4750 N. Division, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., 315-9608, beyoutifullocalmarket@yahoo.com
- Dec 1**
- **The Fig Tree Distribution and Mailing**, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 631 S Richard Allen Ct., 535-4112
 - **World AIDS Day Commemoration** and National AIDS Memorial Quilt Display, Spokane AIDS Network, Washington Cracker Building, 304 W. Pacific, 4 to 7 p.m., san-nw.org
- Dec 2**
- **The Fig Tree Benefit/Finance Committee**, 12 noon, Board, 1 to 3 p.m., on Zoom, 535-1813
 - **Holiday Remembrance Service**, Heritage, 508 N. Government Wy., 6 p.m., fairmountmemorial.com
 - **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, 5:30 to 7 p.m. slichty@pjals.org
- Dec 3**
- **Community Building Book Launch Party**, Saranac Roof Top 4 to 7 p.m., dana@community-building.org
- Dec 3, 4**
- **Hayden Chambers Outdoor European Christmas Market**, McIntire Park, 8930 N. Government Wy, Hayden, 208-762-1185

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Coeur d'Alene church re-engaging cautiously in outreach, discussions

By Kaye Hult

When David Gortner began serving St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Coeur d'Alene in 2018, many aspects of his life and faith experiences coalesced in his ministry.

Now he helps members of the congregation and community find their voices, see cries for "freedom" in light of love for others and gather to share wisdom.

"I want Christians to share our journeys of faith, listen for signs of God at work in everyone's life, name where we see God at work and invite people to discover more," David said.

"My early work on farms and building houses, in pastoral and mental health settings, plus serving seminaries, churches, campus ministries, church plants and interfaith organizations, shapes me as a pastor," he said.

His upbringing with parents of mainline and evangelical-fundamentalist faith, mentors in school years and seminary studies gave him a range of perspectives on living a faithful Christian life.

After 17 years as a seminary professor, David began as half-time vicar after St. Luke's interim minister left and became rector in 2019. He moved to the area with his wife, the Very Rev. Heather VanDeventer, dean of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral in Spokane, and their two children.

His efforts at caring for and developing the community at St. Luke's shifted with COVID.

"We are beginning to walk briskly again. When the pandemic hit, we put many things on hold, but groups are picking up again," David said. "We took pandemic precautions seriously. People at St. Luke's want renewed connection, but with caution."

People who volunteered pre-pandemic are reactivating community engagement, Christian outreach and social ministries, such as partnering with North Idaho College to tutor adults, with St. Vincent de Paul to help clients work on a GED or apply for a driver's license.

St. Luke's has recently partnered with the Human Rights Education Institute (HREI) on a documentary discussion series, "Finding Our Place in the Inland Northwest," offered simultaneously in person and online.

Sessions use documentaries such as some from PBS. The first three sessions were on city growth and land loss, frontierism and owner-labor relations, and land management over 100 years.

The last fall session, "Dis-



David Gortner shares the power of love in his ministry.

placed in One's Homeland," speaks to the experience of Native American Tribes in the region. It is 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 11, at St. Luke's and online.

The first sessions drew 20 to 30 people from St. Luke's, HREI, the Museum of North Idaho and other networks. The series seeks to "create opportunities for thoughtful small group discussions on some realities, challenges and opportunities of life in the Inland Northwest." The goal is to help participants think together, share experiences and insights, and seek wisdom together.

"People converse on questions facilitators pose in an open, honest space. Although they did not know each other before, they came to know each other," David said.

Four sessions set in January, February and March focus on matters of race and poverty.

"Trying to find one's voice is challenging," he said. "It includes finding people with whom to have a voice."

"We need voices that say, Jesus showed us a self-emptying way," he said. "Jesus' incarnation and giving himself up to death were about choices—him choosing to set himself aside and yield himself to be present with us."

David invites St. Luke's to wrestle with divisive issues, like white supremacy and racism, through conversations that lead to understanding various perspectives to create a more peaceful, accepting community.

With "freedom" at center stage in the region, he says following Jesus is not about personal freedom for freedom's sake, but about working for the common good, the greater good, something greater than us as individuals, something that requires sacrifice, such as vaccinations and masks.

"Being a faithful Christian combines an individual's love relationship with God and love that pours out to others. God invites people into a lifelong

love relationship: The First Commandment is 'Love God with all your heart, mind and soul.' The second is 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' That leads to the question: 'Who is my neighbor?'

"Often people don't recognize we're humanity together, none of us can live on our own," David said. "I can't make my car, drill for oil, mine granite, create tiles or process lumber. For everything I touch, I rely on other people."

"Jesus doesn't call us to freedom," he said. "Jesus calls us to a deep allegiance that means giving to something beyond ourselves. Jesus says, 'Take my yoke upon you, my light burden. Take up your cross. To save your life, you must lay it down,'"

He believes there needs to be more of the message, "I've been embraced and loved by God. I'm giving myself over in love to what I find along the road."

"Power is unleashed when we give ourselves up for others," he said. "We need to talk about that, and demonstrate that God's power is the power of life-transforming Love, combined with passion and purpose."

In August, David spoke to a Gathering of Episcopal Clergy Leaders in Seattle on "It All Depends." He told peers that in a

world constantly changing and in turmoil, clergy need to encourage their communities to reach out in mission in the public square. By inviting peers to learn, create and look to the future together, the gathering created a collection of voices sharing the gospel of God's self-emptying Love, he said.

David collaborated in October with some North Idaho clergy to write a letter to the community in the Coeur d'Alene Press—reprinted on page 14. They invited giving up self-freedom for living in the pandemic, in order to protect and care for others. Through this group, he finds a voice.

In ministry for 38 years, ordained ministry 18 years, he began in music ministry as a teen and led a youth group.

"I inherited my grandfather's interest in Christian community," said David. His grandfather was a pastor in the Lutheran Church in America, now in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

His father was a mainline Christian. His mother was Missouri Synod Lutheran, and became fundamentalist. David, who was baptized Lutheran, attended Methodist, Presbyterian, Chris-

tian and Missionary Alliance, and Evangelical Mennonite churches. He went to a Christian college, Taylor University in Indiana.

He discovered the Episcopal church when playing the organ and directing the choir of a tiny church in West Chicago, while attending Wheaton College.

David earned a bachelor's degree there in psychology in 1988, a master's in psychology from Wake Forest University in 1994, a master of divinity from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in 1997, and a doctorate in psychology and human development from the University of Chicago in 2004. Since then, he has taught and led national initiatives from three seminaries, and was associate dean for church and community engagement at Virginia Theological Seminary just before coming to Spokane.

"In the Episcopal Church, I find an unflinching, passionate belief in God's love for all humanity, and the power of that Love to remake us and heal the world," he said.

For information, call 208-664-5533 or email priest@stlukesca.org.

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