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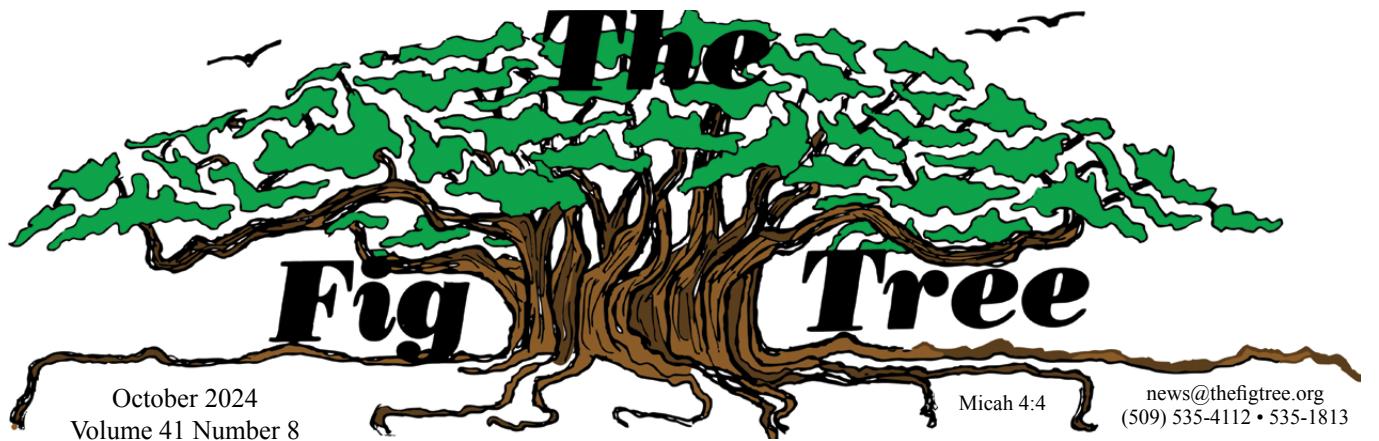
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(509) 535-4112 • 535-1813

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

# Mahima empowers refugee women

By Mary Stamp

Pingala Dhital, who fled from Bhutan and lived in a refugee camp in Nepal from 1991 to 2008, resettled in Spokane and worked with World Relief for 14 years.

In 2021, Innovia offered \$250,000 for her to start a program for refugee women. Those funds followed the project as she moved from World Relief to Refugee and Immigrant Connections of Spokane in 2022 and then came on staff at Thrive International—where former World Relief director Mark Finney became director.

Pingala met with others to explore what refugee women needed. There were already English language and social service programs, so they looked for what would be unique.

In 2019 and 2020, while they were considering what to do, two refugee women were victims of honor killings. Pingala worked with one. Her burial was traumatizing, so she didn't go to the second burial.

"My eyes were opened to disturbing things happening for women," she said.

"I did not know what we had missed. One told her doctor, co-workers and a friend, but no one



Pingala Dhital shows some of the jewelry women in the Mahima Project make.

believed her husband would kill her. The second was divorced, but her ex-husband still wanted to control her.

"We wanted to honor them in a way that would be healing and keep their memory in a healthy way," Pingala said, knowing women find healing through making connections as they socialize.

"We chose to name the program the Mahima Project. 'Mahima' is a feminine word that means grace and transformation," Pingala said. "I see power in women if they are given opportunities. If women serve their families well, the next generations will be healthier and happier.

"Women need opportunities, but there are cultural barriers," she continued. "Many with children feel obligated to stay home, and there are language barriers. We wanted to give an opportunity to validate, empower and equip women."

In 2021, she and others in the refugee community gathered women to do beading and make jewelry to sell to earn some income.

With the Jubilee Market returning, they have an outlet to sell what they have made and to

*Continued on page 4*

## Connect, protect, restore and listen are key goals of Spokane Riverkeeper

Connect, protect, restore and listen are the key goals that structure work for the executive team that began leading Spokane Riverkeeper last November as they connect people with the river, protect and restore it, and listen to the people who use it.

Jule Schultz as waterkeeper, Katelyn (Katy) Scott as water protector and Katherine (Katie) Thompson as managing director realized by early 2024 the leadership team model freed them from typical top-down structure,

letting each bring their expertise, perspectives, visions, voices and values into creating hope for the river.

Spokane Riverkeeper includes four staff, 350 supporters and 1,800 volunteers locally. It's part of the global Waterkeeper Alliance of 311 local groups in 47 countries with 1,000 staff and more than a million volunteers connecting with their communities to protect and restore their bodies of water.

"First, we connect people to

the river, so they love and respect it," Jule said. "We use science, recreation and volunteers to connect people to the river and help them learn about it."

Second, Katy said, "we protect the river from pollution and support the Clean Water Act, plus advocate for stronger laws and policies to support fish and eliminate pollution."

Third, they restore water quality to support fish and river health. Jule contracts with groups to replant native vegetation as riparian buffers to improve shorelines and wetlands. He also trains volunteers to collect water samples to measure turbidity and monitor water quality to guide policies.

Fourth, Katie said listening is important to acknowledge that people use the river for many different purposes.

"We need to listen to diverse voices and learn people's relationships to the river so we can advocate for it," she said.

This year, the Waterkeepers Alliance approved a Justice, *Continued on page 6*

## Harvest Festival of Sharing runs from Oct. 4 to Dec. 3

The Fig Tree fall fundraiser, renamed the "Harvest Festival of Sharing"—to connect with the idea of harvesting the fruit of the fig tree—is an opportunity for renewing and new sponsors to support and sustain the ongoing work of publishing The Fig Tree newspaper and annual Resource Directory, and organizing educational events. The campaign runs from Oct. 4 to Giving Tuesday on Dec. 3, by mail, email and online.

The Fig Tree Board and major donors are again offering challenge gifts to invite people to match. Currently board members are offering \$3,000, but they are still pledging their gifts.

"In 2024, we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the founding of The Fig Tree and looking to the future," said editor/founder Mary Stamp. "Looking to the past, we are compiling and scanning all the past issues to send to provide online through the Washington Digital Newspapers Archives."

The Fig Tree is also looking ahead with several new initiatives—a listserv to communicate among faith and nonprofit communities, a podcast as a different format for covering stories, ongoing upgrades to the website and an opportunity for people to contribute to a long-term Sustainability Fund.

Supporters suggest some reasons to give, saying The Fig Tree: 1) tells of commonalities people share; 2) shows us God has many people working to improve the world; 3) builds community and humanity; 4) lets people know they are not alone; 5) highlights stories of diverse people all year; 6) is non-judgmental and inclusive and 7) uses solutions and peace journalism to help readers gain an in-depth picture.

The goal for this fundraiser is to raise \$19,000 through sponsorships and donations. Donations may be made by mail or online [thefigtree.org/donate.html](http://thefigtree.org/donate.html) or at give lively (see ad page 3). For information, email [development@thefigtree.org](mailto:development@thefigtree.org).

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## Religion News Briefs

### Around the World

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

#### WCC welcomes UN Pact for the Future

World Council of Churches (WCC) General Secretary Jerry Pillay recently said he welcomes the adoption of the United Nations Pact for the Future saying, "This historic agreement embodies a collective commitment to tackle the most urgent challenges of our time—climate change, inequality, peace and justice. It offers a pathway for the global community to work toward a more just and sustainable future."

He reaffirmed the WCC's dedication to justice, human rights, peace and the integrity of creation, saying, "The Pact for the Future reflects concerns long championed by faith communities worldwide. The global crises today reflect broken relationships between humanity and creation, and among peoples and nations."

He commended the pact's vision of deepening multilateralism and renewed international cooperation to ensure no one is left behind, noting that faith communities play a vital role in inviting states and peoples to realize this vision. He commended the UN for uniting diverse nations. He urged governments and stakeholders to move beyond words, to overcome obstacles that leave commitments unrealized or inadequately fulfilled, and to implement the pact's provisions.

"Our shared witness must be active participation, prayer and advocacy, amplifying voices of those most impacted by the climate crisis, economic injustice, human rights violations and conflict," he said. "We remain committed to partnering with all people of goodwill to build a future that reflects God's vision for humanity's wellbeing and the flourishing of all creation."

Jerry said the pact renews "hope and strengthens resolve to work together for a world where peace and justice prevail."

#### WCC explores churches role in land restoration

A September World Council of Churches workshop on "Restoring the Land, Protecting the Climate" gathered faith leaders, climate advocates, and agricultural and forestry experts in Limuru, Kenya. Participants explored how churches can spearhead sustainable land restoration and climate resilience efforts. Focusing on advocacy, community engagement and faith-rooted solutions, they addressed environmental challenges.

Athena Peralta, director of the WCC Commission on Climate Justice and Sustainable Development, highlighted the church's role as environmental custodians because they bring hope and transformation. "By integrating care for the land and all creation into our faith and actions, we can respond to the climate crisis in ways that promote the livelihoods of the socio-economically vulnerable and uphold the dignity of life," she said.

Workshops covered land use, climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. The gathering created a network of churches dedicated to promoting climate-resilient farming and sustainable land use and restoration practices.

The workshop included a visit to the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) site in Nakuru, demonstrating the potential of faith-based land restoration. Sally, a farmer, shared how adopting FMNR techniques allowed her to sustain her family and educate her son, who lives with a disability. Her farm, now thriving with indigenous trees, vegetables and livestock, exemplifies how simple, sustainable practices can create lasting change.

The workshop also showcased global faith-based initiatives, such as the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's conservation efforts across 35,000 monasteries and the Anglican Communion Forest's global reforestation projects.

Participants committed to advocating for sustainable land restoration policies at international forums and pledged to strengthen partnerships between faith communities, NGOs and policymakers, ensuring marginalized, indigenous voices—are central in climate justice efforts.

## Regional Ecumenical & Interfaith News

### Planning underway for Legislative Conference

In partnership with Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington, Faith Action Network, Earth Ministries/Washington Interfaith Power and Light, and NAACP Spokane, The Fig Tree is coordinating plans for the 2025 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference.

Planning meetings are at 1 p.m., second Tuesdays (Oct. 8) on Zoom.

"Shaping Public Policy: What

Does It Mean to Be Prophetic?" is the theme for the 2025 hybrid event, scheduled for 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 25, at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, 115 N. Raymond, and on Zoom.

The planning team is recruiting participants and developing the program to include a keynote speaker, a panel of youth advocates, briefings by legislative advocates and two sessions of

workshops.

The workshops will be on such issue areas as environment, housing, hunger, racial equity, police accountability, health care, education, taxes, and refugees and immigrants. Workshop leaders are being recruited from partner groups.

To participate in planning or for more information, call 535-4112 or email kaye@thefigtree.org.

### Holy Names Sisters support The Fig Tree

For 2024, The Fig Tree was among the programs to receive a Ministry Grant from the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary U.S. - Ontario (SNJM).

In September, it received a check for \$5,000, as one of 31 entities whose missions reflect the SNJM charism and values.

The Fig Tree has received SNJM grants for 16 years since

2009, continuing the legacy of years of in-kind support through the role of co-founder and co-editor Sister Bernadine Casey.

The grants are applied for by a Holy Names Sister who works with a ministry. Sister Catherine Ferguson serves in that role, also supplementing the grant with her services as a member of The Fig Tree Board, an editor and writer,

and assisting in many advisory capacities.

"We appreciate that the SNJM affirms our ministry as carrying on the charism of their founder Mother Marie Rose in today's world," said Mary Stamp, editor, "and continues their support in funds and people over the years."

For information, call 535-4112 or visit thefigtree.org.

### Benedictine oblate exhibits art in Moscow

Through mid-November, the artwork of Karla Neumann-Smiley, who is a member of the Oblates of the Center for Benedictine Life at the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho, will be featured in an ex-

hibition titled, "Seismic Shifts," at the 1912 Center, 412 E. 3rd St. in Moscow.

Karla, an ordained deacon in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is a campus minister at the University of Idaho and

Washington State University.

In August, she led workshops and finished projects at the Center for Benedictine Life in August, finishing some pieces.

For information, visit stgertrudes.org/become-an-oblate.

### October sessions explore current topics

Asians for Collective Liberation in Spokane and Reimagine Spokane are offering five weeks of workshops on various topics Wednesdays, Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30.

- Housing and Homelessness is 5:30 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 2, at SNAP, 3102 W. Whistalks Way.

- Refugees and Immigrants is 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 9, at Spokane City Hall Briefing Center, Chase Gallery, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

- Health Equity is 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 16, in the Saranac Building, 3 F Learning Studio, 25 W. Main.

- Intersectional Communities

is 5:30 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 23 at SCC, The Bistro in the Lair, Building 6, 1810 N. Greene.

- Environmental Justice is 5:30 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 30, at Gonzaga's Hemmingson Room 220, 702 E. Desmet.

For information, email tmoua@aclspokane.org or visit bit.ly/reimagineworkshops.

### WLIHA meeting elicits housing proposals

Participants in the Sept. 12 meeting of the Washington State Low-Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA) at Spokane Community College, discussed ideas to solve the state's housing crisis.

These issues are expected to come before the 2025 Washington State Legislature, said Michelle Thomas, director of policy and advocacy at WLIHA.

The proposals include:

- 1) Reintroduce the 5 percent rent stabilization bill to lower rents and prevent rent evictions. In 2024, this bill passed in the state House, but not the Senate.
- 2) Provide \$500 million in the state Housing Trust Fund

for affordable homes, given that 650,000 homes are needed over the next 20 years.

- 3) Provide operation and services funding for affordable housing, as well as homeless funding and protection rights.

For information, visit wilha.org.

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*Dining with Dignity,*  
*A Gala Event*  
*October 26, 2024*  
*5 to 8 pm*

**Southside Community Center**  
 3151 E. 27th Ave.

**Live & Silent auction**  
**Auctioneer Stephanie Vigil**  
**Music by songwriter TimG**  
**Testimony by WSU nurse educator Susan McFadden**  
**Beef Stroganoff Dinner**  
**Tickets \$60 at shalommeal.org**  
**INFO 455-9019**

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### Groups plan seven-mile Spokane River Roll

Spokane Riverkeeper and 350 Spokane plan an easy, educational, seven-mile Spokane River Roll on the Centennial Trail beginning at 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 5, at the Riverwalk Overflow Parking Lot. Participants bring a bike, roller skates, scooter or other human-powered wheels to roll along the river west through Kendall Yards to the Hangman Creek Overlook and return to No-Li by 3:30 p.m. Enroute they will hear about the river's past, present, and future.

Guides will be 350 Spokane's Jered Sweeney-Demezas and Spokane Riverkeeper's Jule Schultz and Katelyn Scott, who will point out climate change's growing impacts on the river, its habitats and its people.

For information, email [info@350spokane.org](mailto:info@350spokane.org) or visit [forms.gle/TJ3H6QsxtZ7Y5v6c9](https://forms.gle/TJ3H6QsxtZ7Y5v6c9).

### 'People Who Care' luncheon is Oct. 15

"People Who Care" (PWC) is the annual fundraiser luncheon to raise support and awareness for the work of Transitions to end homelessness and poverty for women and children in Spokane. It will be held from noon to 1 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 15, at the Davenport Grand, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

The event will gather donors and supporters to highlight the ongoing work, progress and needs faced in the community. The luncheon includes updates from each of the six Transitions programs, stories from Transitions alumnae, an award honoring a community supporter and a keynote address on the theme, "Respect for Human Dignity," one of Transitions' four key values.

For information, call 328-5702 or email [info@help4women.org](mailto:info@help4women.org).

### St. Mark's Lutheran holds Prayer for the Nation

St. Mark's Lutheran Church will offer a Prayer for the Nation, State, City and Neighborhoods, for those who are in authority, those who seek public office and for the wellbeing of all at a worship service at 7 p.m., Monday, Nov. 4, at 316 E 24th.

"One of God's greatest gifts is our ability to pray for all things in all circumstances. Those who came before us have passed along a tradition of praying for the nation, our leaders and the needs of our shared civic life," said Edwin Weber, the pastor.

"As the national election approaches, we see within our community different responses. Some are enthusiastic about parties and campaigns, and others seek refuge from continuous debate," he continued. "Regardless of personal political persuasions, we are all still called to pray for the welfare of our nation and to do so with humility and compassion, something often quite foreign to the world's way."

For information, email [eweber@stmarks-spokane.org](mailto:eweber@stmarks-spokane.org).

### Vanessa Behan announces Pumpkin Ball

Vanessa Behan's 21st annual Pumpkin Ball from 5:30 to 11 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 26, at the Davenport Grand Hotel features a dinner, auction, games, live music, dancing and an opportunity to help keep children safe and strengthen their families. Since its inception, this black-tie gala has raised more than \$3 million, after expenses, to benefit vulnerable children and their families.

"Vanessa Behan provides a haven of unconditional love and attention from adults who hope is to create lifetime memories of security," said Amy Vega, executive director. "For parents who are overwhelmed and lack support, the center helps eliminate burdens, keeps kids safe and strengthens families."

The center at 2230 E. Sprague provides 24-hour childcare for infants and children under the age of seven. It also offers parent education, crisis counseling and referrals.

For information, call 598-7490 or visit [vanessabehan.org](https://vanessabehan.org).

## Columbia River Treaty symposium set

The 2024 Columbia River Transboundary Water Governance and Ethics Symposium will be held from Wednesday to Friday, Nov. 13 to 15, at Gonzaga University to discuss the Columbia River Treaty, emerging initiatives and public governance in the Transboundary Columbia River Basin.

North American Youth Parliament for Water (NAYPW) Diplomacy and Advocacy Training Pre-Symposium will be on Tuesday, Nov. 12.

The gathering will engage residents of the Columbia River Basin in education and dialogue on transboundary issues and river governance.

The 2024 conference is hosted

by the University of British Columbia Okanagan, the Universities Consortium on Columbia River Governance, the One River Ethics Matter Project, the North American Youth Parliament for Water and the Climate Institute at Gonzaga University.

It will give opportunity for public comment on The Agreement in Principle to Modernize Columbia River Treaty Regime along with addressing water quality in the headwaters and transboundary mainstem, climate change, salmon reintroduction and habitat restoration.

The guiding principle of the conference is ethics, defined as justice—righting historic wrongs and shared benefits in

the context of water development—autonomy—a voice for the ecosystem—stewardship and intergenerational equity.

Ethics will be the lens through which the conference considers governance now and in the future in terms of formal government and informal efforts for collective action.

The event will look at public engagement, transboundary sharing and university research to address emerging issues.

The Youth Diplomacy and Advocacy Training seeks to empower youth—ages 18 to 35—attendees with skills to engage in discussions and advocacy.

For information, visit [columbiabasingovernance.org](https://columbiabasingovernance.org).

## World Relief addresses myths about refugees

"It's a Small World and We're All Connected" is the theme Terry McGonigal, former dean of spiritual life at Whitworth, and Matthew Soerens, World Relief's vice president of advocacy and policy, will address at events Oct. 10 and 11.

Other speakers are Souzan Zavdo, former refugee from Iran, and Nathan Thiry, associate pastor of Faith Bible Church.

They will discuss myths and facts on immigration at 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 10, at Sun City Church, 10820 E. Sprague Ave., and 9:30 a.m., Friday, Oct. 11, at St. Luke Lutheran, 9704 N.

Division St.

They call for changing the message of "othering" to spreading the message of "belonging," recognizing refugees are human beings created in God's image, people who have fled persecution and seek to rebuild their lives in Spokane.

World Relief, which resettled around 700 refugees in 2024, offers these events to explore the theme of migration in Scripture, and the need for a safe haven for persecuted Christians.

World Relief, a global Christian humanitarian organization, engages churches in the refugee crises. It was founded after World War II to respond to humanitarian needs in Europe.

For 80 years in 100 countries, World Relief has partnered with churches and communities to build a world where families thrive.

For information, call 484-9829 or visit [worldrelief.org/spokane/get-involved/events/its-a-small-world](https://worldrelief.org/spokane/get-involved/events/its-a-small-world).

### Grants available

Empire Health Foundation has announced a 10-year program to create paths to healthy, thriving lives. They are dedicating \$5 million over the next five years, with \$1 million for annual general operating funds and grants of up to \$75,000 a year. Grantees selected in 2024 will receive a five-year commitment, for 2025 to 2029 with the first installment paid in February.

Grants will prioritize BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and rural communities—the most at risk, said Jeri Rathbun, program officer.

For information, email [jeri@empirehealthfoundation.org](mailto:jeri@empirehealthfoundation.org).



**Jubilee**  
FAIR TRADE MARKETPLACE  
Nov 1: 10am - 7pm  
Nov 2: 9am - 3pm  
First Presbyterian Church 318 S. Cedar  
Global Cuisine Provided By: **Feast** WORLD KITCHEN  
List of vendors, event history, fair trade values & more!



**Harvest Festival of Sharing**  
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SALE  
Kid 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Saturday, Oct. 12  
Veradale UCC Church  
611 N Progress Rd.

**35th Annual Fall/Holiday Bazaar**  
Millwood Presbyterian  
3223 N Marguerite Rd  
Friday & Saturday  
Oct. 25 & 26  
9 am to 4 pm  
Quilts, Jewelry, Afghans, Greeting Cards Hand-crafted Items  
Fall & Christmas Decorations  
Gifts for all ages  
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509-924-2350

**Bazaar Day In Cheney**  
Saturday, Nov. 2  
Three Holiday Sales to Visit  
**Congregational Church**  
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Soup Lunch, Raffle, Baked Goods  
423 N. 6th St.  
**St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church**  
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Crafts, Baked Goods, Gift Items  
460 N. 5th St.  
**St. Paul's Episcopal Church**  
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Crafts, Baked Goods, Gift Items  
625 C St  
**United Methodist Church**  
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Crafts, Gift Shop, Baked Goods  
Cookie Bar, Raffle  
204 4th St. (4th & G)

**Highland Park United Methodist Church**  
**Take-out Bazaar**  
Saturday, Oct. 19  
12-untill sold out  
611 S Garfield St.  
Beef bowls, Char sui, senbei, bake & craft sales  
\$9 for food  
bake sale & craft sales priced individually.  
Call 509-535-2687 or [HPAdcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:HPAdcouncil@gmail.com)

**Colbert Presbyterian Church**  
3rd annual BAZAAR  
Saturday, Nov. 2  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
New Venue  
The Gathering Place  
Handmade items and baked goods by church family and friends.  
Lunch \$7 suggested donation.  
4211 E. Colbert Rd.  
509-222-0850

# Each woman comes with her story of courage, strength, dignity

*Continued from page 1*  
take orders. Next year they will have cards telling stories of the women who made the items. Each woman brings a story of grace through courage, strength and dignity, she said.

"We had few ways to market what we made," Pingala said. "It's an incentive if women are paid beyond Mahima funding."

**Mahima provides** equipment and supplies. As women gain skills, a local jewelry company, hires some of them.

Roya Ahmadi, 19, an Afghan woman who lived in Indonesia 10 years and came to Spokane six months ago, interprets for the beading class. Mahima may hire her to work while she goes to school.

Mahima also offers sewing classes. The first group of eight completed a six-week class and received new sewing machines. The next class will be eight weeks. The goal is to train 21 this year before snow makes driving hard.

Students make cloth bags, aprons, pillows and yoga mat covers to sell at Jubilee. The women will also make services like altering clothes available.

Mahima is partnering with Spokane Zero Waste that also hires some graduates.

"Some women have experienced abuse, so our setting keeps them in their comfort zone," Pingala said.

Nafisa Zafari, a woman who evacuated from Afghanistan, leads the sewing project.

"I met her at Tea and Coffee Time with Feast World Kitchen. Another woman bakes baklava and makes Turkish coffee," Pingala said.

Mahima also meets one-on-one with women and connects some with Lutheran Community Services Northwest for counseling.

Elizabeth Shchukina, a Ukrainian refugee, painted sunflowers, sky and other flowers around a room where women gather at Thrive to make it a joyful space, Pingala added.

Over the door is a quote from Mahatma Gandhi: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

That expresses the Mahima

Project's mission to validate, empower and equip refugee women to thrive.

"We want women to know they have a place to come if they are in need," Pingala said. "We have an emergency fund and guide women to resources. Our dream one day is to have a safe house with cultural sensitivity for refugee women."

**"Women need empathy,"** she recognizes. "Empathy is not something that can be taught, it comes from our life experiences."

She shared how her empathy grew from her struggles.

Pingala values the many faiths ingrained in who she is from growing up in a Hindu family, going to a Buddhist school, being taught by Christian teachers, having Muslim friends and coming to America for freedom.

Although of Nepali heritage, she was born in a village in southern Bhutan. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, with support from Parliament, the government implemented a one nation one people policy to amalgamate cultures and conducted a survey to balance the country's demographics. The Bhutan People's Party was formed to challenge the government. It coerced people to participate in demonstrations against the government. It terrorized people, beheading two government officials and hanging them in public to show the consequences of not following the party.

Pingala, then 16, participated in a peaceful demonstration in 1990, and then was called and coerced by the political party.

"People were not aware they had power to oppose the law," said Pingala, empowered by joining demonstrations.

With her family's safety threatened, her father left. Her family slept in the jungle to hide from the army and the party who were raping girls. When her great uncle was kidnapped, her grandfather rescued him. Pingala heard of kidnappings, torture and killing.

Bhutan is a small kingdom. Those who came before 1958 could be citizens with free medical care and education. Those coming later were not citizens.

"Bhutan is a preliterate society, so few stored documents, but my grandfather stored his," she said.

**With discrimination,** injustices and violence, more than 100,000 of 600,000 Bhutanese fled Bhutan. The UN High Commission on Refugees asked Nepal to open refugee camps.

"We thought we might go home," Pingala said, "but 15 years of bilateral talks ended in deadlock."

With limited freedom and poor education, Pingala, her husband, whom she married in the camp, and their two children decided to leave. UN solutions to the refugee crisis are 1) go home, but that was impossible, 2) be integrated in the local society, which was also impossible or 3) resettle in a third country, the only option, she said.

"We wanted to raise our children in a normal community. Refugee leaders left with their families, seeking asylum in the U.S or Germany," she added.

**In a 2007 BBC interview,** Pingala spoke about going to a third country. A Bhutanese leader gave an ultimatum to her husband to either lose his job or let her be physically punished by his Maoist group. He left the job.

A few months later, when she went to the camp to get a visa to go to Chiang Mai for a women's conference, her hut was vandalized.

When she called her father, he did not know where her mother and siblings were. A sister-in-law was four months pregnant. A brother had a nine-day old baby, a toddler, a five- and a nine-year-old. Her family was displaced and she could never return to the camp.

Then Pingala and her friends helped gather 75,000 signatures to take to the U.S. embassy requesting the U.S. not to withdraw its offer to resettle 60,000 Bhutanese. She learned from the

U.S. Embassy that the Bhutanese leaders were asking the U.S. government to withdraw its resettlement offer. Seven countries agreed to take refugees.

"Women were not to speak up," she said, explaining how women are considered disposable.

**In February 2008,** the U.S. embassy brought her whole family to a hotel in Kathmandu and told them to keep a low profile. Her parents came in August.

"We then came to Spokane," said Pingala, noting that now 80,000 Bhutanese refugees live in the U.S.

Although her parents and siblings first came to Spokane, most moved to Harrisburg, Pa., or other communities like Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio, with big Bhutanese communities. About 400 Bhutanese live in Spokane.

Pingala said her roots are now in Washington state, with her son working as a civil engineer in Seattle and her daughter studying in Seattle.

**It's still painful** being separat-

ed from grandparents, relatives and friends she and her husband left in Bhutan. As soon as they became U.S. citizens in 2013, they went to India to visit with relatives at the border.

She knows other refugees share that experience.

For information, email pingala@thriveinternational.org or visit thriveint.org/mahima-project.

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# Sharing director role, couple advance Holy Names Music Center

As co-executive directors of the Holy Names Music Center, pianists Archie Chen and Rhona Gouldson-Chen envision future opportunities, partnerships and expansion as they look to relocate from the historic building where the center offers music instruction and programs.

Every day after school, the 12 rooms for private and group lessons are filled until 7 p.m. During the day, homeschool students, preschoolers and adults come.

**Believing music is integral** to individual lives and the community's cultural vibrancy, they are reaching out through their partners and the community to find a state-of-the-art place with room to grow for their future needs.

Renowned singers, violinists, composers and pianists have started at the center, which is accredited by the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts.

"We are optimistic in face of the challenge of relocating, seeing it as an opportunity to reimagine what Holy Names Music Center can be with new partnerships and continued support from the community," Rhona said.

**As a child and teen**, Archie came to Holy Names Music Center (HNMC) for music festivals, auditions and recitals.

"It has always been a great place for music education with quality faculty and unparalleled dedication to music," he said.

Rhona recounted the center's rich history of more than a century, founded by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

When five Sisters of the Holy Names arrived in Spokane in 1888 from Portland, Ore., to open an elementary school, they also began teaching piano.

**Over the years**, the sisters have known the power of music and the arts in people's lives, so music has a prominent role in their mission of education and justice.

Holy Names Normal School (1907-1938), Holy Names College (1938-1960) and Fort Wright College of the Holy Names (1960-1982) offered studies in fine arts, arts and education.

Since the college closed in 1982, the Music Center continued in one building at Fort Wright College, preparing music teachers, performers, community leaders of the arts, and patrons who support music throughout the region, nation and world.

In 1990, Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute, an extension of Mukogawa Women's University



Archie Chen and Rhona Gouldson-Chen play a duet.

in Nishinomiya, Spokane's sister city in Japan, purchased and opened a U.S. campus at the Fort Wright site. They agreed to have HNMC to continue music education with a 30-year \$1 a year lease for the Music Center and McNally Recital Hall buildings, which continued until June. Mukogawa students also have taken instruction at the Music Center, which considers itself Spokane's community music school.

**The mission remains** to "nurture a lifelong passion for the arts, making music accessible to all ages, regardless of ability, income or background," said Rhona. "Like any institution, we are facing challenges that require us to adapt and grow."

After the lease expired, HNMC began paying rent, Archie said. "We can't buy just this building, so we are looking for options to purchase a facility that will be large enough in a new venue."

**Beyond seeking a venue**, he said they are developing partnerships and relationships to advance what the music center can be, so they can increase access to music education and cultural opportunities for Spokane.

They invite others to help them explore options. So they are expanding the board to bring fresh perspectives that reflect the needs of the community.

"We seek to build a sustainable model by expanding our donors, exploring new ways to raise funds and creating an endowment so we do not just survive but thrive in the decades to come," said Archie.

Meanwhile HNMC continues

guitar at HNMC, and enjoys musical theatre.

Rhona grew up in Dublin, Ireland, the youngest of five siblings in a musical family. She and one other sibling have pursued music careers.

**"Piano is my first passion.**

I also play the Irish harp," said Rhona who graduated with full scholarships from the Dublin College of Music in 1992 and Trinity College Dublin in 1995.

She headed the piano department of a private school in Dublin for several years before deciding to open her own private school for piano, the Piano Academy of Ireland, which she and Archie continue to manage remotely.

They also ran National and International Piano Festivals before moving to Spokane in 2018 to care for Archie's mother, after they had lived 15 years close to Rhona's mother in Ireland.

**Archie's mother grew up** in Taiwan, the youngest of 10 siblings. She was an organist playing in jazz clubs when one sister married a Navy officer. His mother and other sisters immigrated to Spokane in the 1970s.

Picking out tunes on his mother's organ at the age of three, Archie began formal piano lessons at five. He was immersed in music early, because his aunts and uncles came to his mother's house for late night jam sessions, playing Bach to Beatles.

Archie grew up in the Mead schools before pursuing music studies at Indiana University in Bloomington. After earning a bachelor's in 1999 and a master's in 2001, he was invited to a master class with John O'Connor, an Irish pianist. In 2012, Archie completed doctoral studies at Dublin City University.

**Archie and Rhona met** in Dublin in 2003 and began working together to run the Piano

Company of Ireland.

Rhona was raised Catholic in Ireland. Archie grew up Presbyterian, attending First Presbyterian in Spokane, where he played piano solos, played for funerals and weddings, and participated in Messiah and Bachfest. The two enjoy visiting different churches with their children.

He is classically trained in Bach, Mozart and Chopin. Rhona loves the romantic music of Schubert, Beethoven and Chopin.

**"For me, music**, especially Bach, is a spiritual experience adding to worship," said Archie.

"Music has power to connect us to the spiritual," Rhona said. "I am drawn to music that is uplifting, reflective and soulful."

"Before we were administrators, we created music. We enjoy practicing and playing together," said Archie, who frequently plays with the Spokane Symphony and Spokane String Quartet.

Rhona said many students at the music center are of diverse faiths, but its mission is to be open to anyone in the community.

**Archie and Rhona continue** the values of Holy Names Sisters, guided by two teachers, Sister Kay Heberling, piano, and Sister Karen Conlin, cello.

"The Holy Names Sisters are wonderful supporters of the arts," Rhona said. "The influence of the sisters is evident in the way we run the center and continue to be inspired by them."

"We are part of their education ministry and continue their values of being inclusive, fair and just, making music accessible to everyone, regardless of their experiences or struggles," Rhona said, pointing out that music can be healing, drawing people out of their problems and helping them find their voice.

For information, call 326-9516 or email [music@hnmc.org](mailto:music@hnmc.org).

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# Leadership team cover range of aspects to strengthen Riverkeeper

Continued from page 1  
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Plan, identifying ways to incorporate diverse voices in their quest to address pollution. Globally, millions of miles of water areas are protected as people work on initiatives.

Katy described some upcoming local events and initiatives to educate and involve others.

- In Spokane River Walk and Talks, guests pick up litter while they listen to river experts sharing their expertise.
- Volunteers and groups partner with them along the water's edge to learn about the river and provide education on issues that impact it.

• Happy Hour events through the summer and early fall at places like Indigenous Eats gathered people around tables to discuss issues.

• Ride the River on Oct 5—with bikes or scooters—is a time to discuss climate impacts on the river as participants ride from No-Li Brewery to Kendall Yards.

• For a Full-Moon Witch Float on Thursday, Oct. 17, participants will launch their boats, kayaks, canoes or paddleboards at 6 p.m. at Gonzaga University.

• The annual Spoken River is from 5:30 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 7, at the Spokane Convention Center Ballroom. It will raise funds as people share river stories about the work of Spokane Riverkeeper along 111 miles of river from Lake Coeur d'Alene to the Columbia River.

**The fourth employee**, Liv Kindl, is river litter cleanup and outreach lead, inviting individuals and groups to join her on the river in one of the Riverkeeper rafts. She brings staff from CHAS Street Medicine, SNAP, the Spokane Regional Health District and others on river floats for homeless outreach to 20 people in 12 camps. Along with her providing regular trash pick-up, agency reps offer services.

"Most campers do not choose to not have a home, and they do not want to trash the environment," said Jule. "Having a clean river is a shared value."

Throughout the year, River Watch Trainings teach people how to spot and report pollution



Jule Schultz



Katie Thompson



Katy Scott

in the river.

Jule, Katie and Katy told of the backgrounds and perspectives they bring to Spokane Riverkeeper.

**Growing up in Anacortes** connected with the ocean led Jule to complete a master's degree in 2005 in marine biology at the University of Oregon, after earning a bachelor's degree in 2001 at Lewis & Clark College in Portland. He then worked with the Washington Department of Health to regulate water quality standards for the shellfish industry.

"I recognized that regulations help people downstream affected by pollution created upstream," he said.

In 2014, he and his wife, Katy Sheehan, moved to her hometown, Spokane. He began working with Spokane Riverkeeper as a scientist focused on upriver pollution.

"I thought science would save the world but realized we need a comprehensive process to solve pollution by involving the community in scientific monitoring of water quality," Jule said. "We need to fund programs and solutions. We can't just rely on others to be in charge of solutions for the watershed."

Spokane Riverkeeper creates programs to restore watershed areas by involving many people in multipronged efforts. For example, litter clean-up involves the community in cleaning up the rivers.

"We also advocate for multipronged regulations to stem

plastic pollution," he said.

**Katelyn brings** knowledge of law and innovative ideas for policies to address water quality and litter. While it's illegal to pollute and litter, no one funds cleanup.

"We want the state to officially recognize the river is polluted with trash and direct funding to clean it up," Jule said, believing that combining science and community action will create a cleaner world and river for those who depend on waterways.

"We realize the unequal political and economic power of polluters upstream," he said. "We need to hold them accountable to the public because everyone depends on a clean river."

Jule, who connects his sons, 11 and 8, to the river, is hopeful about cleaning up the river for future generations.

"Power structures are changing as community groups grow and more people connect to the river," he said. "Even in climate change, I see the river has the potential to be resilient."

Jule considers the large-scale re-introduction of salmon and trout an environmental change for the better.

"I never thought we would see salmon return from the Pacific Ocean," he said. "I am hopeful,

but we have much work to do. Working alongside the tribes, my role is to provide scientific data when asked."

**Katie joined** Spokane Riverkeeper in late 2021, after managing global education at Community Colleges of Spokane.

"Spokane Riverkeeper provides hope and an opportunity to connect with community-oriented people to do impactful work," she said.

"Having a healthy, clean river is integral for my children, 13, and 15, and for the community," noted Katie, who grew up in Spokane, the daughter of a Lutheran pastor who taught New Testament at Gonzaga University.

**After completing** a degree in Spanish and environmental studies at St. Olaf's College in Minnesota in 2000, she spent three years as a Peace Corps volunteer working in rural Panama on clean water, sanitation and watershed issues.

Now attending St. Luke's Lutheran, Katie, who manages operations and development, said her faith gives her a commitment to stewardship, social concerns and serving people to foster a healthy community where everyone can find meaning.

**Katy uses her skills** as an attorney to protect the river.

At eight, she moved from a Davenport farm to the Spokane Indian Reservation, where her mother taught for 36 years at Wellpinit High School.

While not a tribal member, she grew up valuing tribal respect of nature, loving the river and learning from river advocates, canoe families and storytellers. In the sixth grade, she wrote the government about losses the river faced. At 14, she began rafting.

"I respect the environment and relate with the natural world rather than being part of the culture of resource exploitation," she said. "For me, community is family and that includes every animal and creature."

In 2016, she earned a degree in political science with a minor in law, societies and justice at the University of Washington. At Law School at Loyola University in Chicago she specialized in public interest international law. Both degrees heightened her commitment to social justice.

She worked in personal injury law in Spokane before joining Spokane Riverkeeper to manage legal action and policy on clean water defense, river flow protections and water conservation programs.

For information, call 464-7614 or visit [spokaneriverkeeper.org](http://spokaneriverkeeper.org).

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# Local refugees contribute products to new Jubilee Marketplace

For the first time since 2019, the Jubilee Fair-Trade Marketplace will re-emerge this fall with a slightly new model that includes more local refugees. It will be held Friday and Saturday, Nov. 1 and 2, at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

Some regular vendors from past years have needed to discontinue their fair-trade ventures, said Mary Frankhauser, who has returned to coordinating the event this year.

In addition to the event highlighting returning vendors, local refugees will also share their arts, crafts and products.

For example, Thrive International has a group of women who gather evenings to create items.

Pingala Dhital, on staff with Thrive, gathers Afghan and Arabic-speaking women to sew fabric bags and make jewelry through the Mahima Project.

In addition, recently arrived artists and craft producers from Ukraine will host booths featuring paintings, cards, candles, and knitted bags and scarves.

Vendor and refugee booths will be in the gym, leaving the fellowship hall for eating food provided by chefs from different



**Maisa Abudayha, Mary Frankhauser and Lance Potter meet to plan Jubilee Marketplace at Feast World Kitchen.**

countries through Feast World Kitchen and for some music groups to perform.

The hours will be from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday.

Why is Mary back at gathering volunteers to restart this event?

**“My heart is still there.** I want to lift up artisans around the world who are still struggling as they were five years ago and still need markets,” she said.

First Presbyterian Church has been growing, adding new members who have not experienced a Jubilee Marketplace, she added.

“I think it can be viable for the future by involving new people in the church and community,” said Mary, who had refocused her life around grandchildren, travel and health needs. “As new people become involved, I hope to move to volunteer from the sidelines.”

**“I love bringing people together across cultures,”** Mary said. “I’m excited to include refugees in our international celebration.”

Mary and her husband, John, originally worked with another First Presbyterian member, Gloria Cooper, to start Jubilee in

1989. It was held every year through 2019. It was not held in 2020 because of COVID.

“We started Jubilee with the goal of introducing Spokane to the community of artisans around the world. What was then known as ‘alternative’ trade grew into fair trade, and organized around standards,” Mary said.

“We don’t require artisans for Jubilee to be certified fair traders, but we include those who pay fairly,” Mary said, celebrating that there are “so many beautiful people in the world, some in distant countries and some who come to us. It’s a gift to share them and their skills with our community.”

**How is this commitment** an expression of her faith?

Mary said that “as followers of Jesus, we want to live into loving our neighbors as ourselves. It’s part of life and a core of my faith. As a Christian I know each person has great value. I want to live that understanding.

“Instead of being self-centered or focusing on our own gain, we seek to work with people who want to make life better for others,” she said.

While many vendors are Christian, vendors include Muslims and people of other faiths.

“We are open to everyone in this event and in life,” she continued.

Mary appreciates working

with people invested in small businesses that are committed to fair trade, and through these business relationships, many have become her friends.

**Not only has she become** friends with vendors, but the vendors also have become friends with each other and support each other, rather than competing.

Mary also appreciates the faithfulness of the artisans whose actions of caring for other people speak loudly. She has seen people who care develop skills and good business practices in difficult situations when they have the chance.

**“I have learned we need** each other across cultures,” Mary added. “We always need to learn more about the cultures of others and our own culture. We can always be growing.”

For information, call 499-4724 or email [mfrankhauser@gmail.com](mailto:mfrankhauser@gmail.com).

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## District hosts Dancing Our Prayers youth team

The Inland District of the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Church (UMC) is hosting a presentation by Dancing Our Prayers, a team of Native American students from the Yakama Nation who travel locally, regionally and nationally sharing spirituality and ways of life as followers of the Jesus way and

members of the Yakama Nation.

They will present a cultural program for area churches and the community at 4 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 2, at Covenant UMC, 15515 N. Gleneden.

The group will share music, dance and stories during worship at 10 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 3, at Coeur d’Alene Community

UMC, 1470 W. Hanley.

Students drum, dance share testimonies and perform dramas. As part of Mending Wings, they share about conciliation, justice and healing between the Church and Native America.

The Inland District sponsors this event to work toward eliminating racism, said Sheila Miranda, associate for connective ministries, Inland and Seven Rivers Districts.

For information, email [smiranda@pnwumc.org](mailto:smiranda@pnwumc.org).

## Lectures highlight Handel’s Messiah

The Music Conservatory of Coeur d’Alene will host “Lunch & Learn” lectures on Handel’s Messiah at noon, Friday, Oct. 25 and Thursday, Nov. 14, at the Conservatory at 627 N. Government Way.

will lecture on the historical and musical context to increase appreciation of the oratorio. Music excerpts will be played during the talk. This talk is funded partly by the Idaho Humanities Council.

The Music Conservatory of is a nonprofit furthering musical excellence through private and group instruction, partnerships and performances. Faculty are professional musicians who mentor students through their musical education.

For information, call 208-551-3933, email [registrar@cdaconservatory.org](mailto:registrar@cdaconservatory.org) or visit [www.cdaconservatory.org](http://www.cdaconservatory.org).

These lectures, “G.F. Handel: The Man, His Music and Messiah,” discuss the music in anticipation of the third annual performances of Handel’s Messiah at a concert performance at 7 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 23, and a sing-along at 3 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 24, in Schuler Performing Arts Center at North Idaho College.

Kent Kimball, artistic director,

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# Mission Community Outreach Center's shoe giveaway a hit with volunteers

Each August for 14 years, Mission Community Outreach Center (MCOC) at 1906 E. Mission Ave. has been swarmed with children, parents and volunteers for their annual School Shoes for Kids Give-Away.

This year, the center gave away 1,817 pairs of new shoes and socks to preschoolers through eighth graders in 764 families.

MCOC's second biggest shoe event, and it ran smoothly, said Ali Norris, executive director of MCOC.

With the event now hybrid, most families ordered shoes and gave sizes online two weeks ahead. When children came to pick up the shoes, they tried them on to be sure they fit. With most pre-ordered, they did not have to stand in line as long as at past shoe events.

There were 300 kids who had not pre-registered who came on Friday, Aug. 16, to Stevens Elementary School for shoes.

Founded in 1996 as an outreach of Mission Community Presbyterian Church to provide clothing, the center is in its 28th year.

Ali, who had volunteered and donated clothing during her years at University High School, began working as part-time office staff after earning a bachelor's degree in 2013 at the University of Idaho and a master's in public health in 2017 from Eastern Washington University.

Now as executive director, she is the only paid staff person. She manages a team of 30 volunteers who come to help receive donations of clothing, hygiene items, diapers, wipes and housewares, setting them out on racks and tables like a thrift store for guests to select from. Volunteers also manage the shopping floor.

Most volunteers come once a week. Some come twice a week. Others come bi-weekly. MCOC is always looking for more volunteers.

Guests from any zip code can



Ali Norris values how volunteers and donors help improve lives of those using center's resources. Photo courtesy of Ali Norris

come every 60 days for clothing, hygiene items and housewares, and every 30 days for diapers from 1 to 4 p.m., Mondays and Thursdays, or 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Wednesdays.

"So far this year, we have served 11,986 people and expect to have served 15,000 by the end of the year.

"I love doing this important, critical service for the community," she said. "It fits my master's in public health, because providing clothing, hygiene items and diapers helps families in the community stay healthy."

Since starting, Ali said that the MCOC has increased the number of people they serve, as well as expanded to serve all areas. Support in donations has also increased for this ecumenical nonprofit from congregations and service organizations.

They donate funds and items, along with providing volunteers.

Different churches sponsor different events. Some collect shoes. Some have barrels out at their church for donations of gently used clothing.

This was Westminster Congregational UCC's second year taking part in School Shoes

for Kids. Several shared their experiences.

• Two order fillers said: "It's amazing how many shoes got collected and distributed to families at no charge. It means there are a lot of kids who won't have to go around with holes in their shoes!"

• From a Friday greeter: "I had so much fun interacting with the kids. Whenever there was a language challenge with the parents, it seemed there was always one of the kids who could step in to help."

• From a fitter: "What I'll always remember was working with a boy who needed a size 14, and the priceless expression of joy on his face when we found one last pair that fit him."

Volunteers were impressed with the diverse cross-section of community members helping out.

For Ali, who grew up in Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, service to others is an expression of faith.

"We are the hands and feet of Christ. We are to be in the community serving," she said. "Being here is how I was raised in faith, to serve without asking

people why they need items, without barriers, so they can have the items they need to move to their next phase of life.

"MCOC reaches out with care to show Christ's love to those who come," she said.

Congregations that have participated in recent years, supporting with funds, volunteers or donations of items include All Saints, Beautiful Savior, Bethlehem, Holy Cross, Hope, Redeemer and St. Luke Lutheran churches; Hamblen Park, Manito and Millwood Community and First Presbyterian churches; St. Aloysius Catholic Parish, Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, Life Center, The Rock Church, Summit Spokane and Sun City Church.

Ali shared the list of items MCOC receives and gives out: gently-used or new clothing, shoes, coats, and socks for all ages; gently-used blankets, sheets, bedding and towels and housewares such as pots, pans, dishes, silverware and small appliances.

In addition, they accept ap-

propriate children's or adult books, new infant care supplies: disposable diapers, wipes, baby shampoo, lotion and powder; new personal care items such as shampoo, lotion, women's hygiene products, toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, shaving cream, deodorant, bar soap and toilet paper.

Items they do not accept include soiled or well-worn clothing, furniture, large appliances, home decor, cribs, car seats, toys, food, medicine, medical supplies, jewelry, magazines, decorations, liquids or chemicals.

For information, email [mcoc.spokane@gmail.com](mailto:mcoc.spokane@gmail.com) or visit [www.4mission.org](http://www.4mission.org).

## Unitarian Universalist leader to speak

Heather Vickery, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's coordinator for congregational activism, will speak about the Pink Haven Coalition from 3 to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 19, at The Hive, 2904 E. Sprague.

Noting that Washington is the leading relocation destination for trans and gender-diverse people

leaving 26 states with hostile laws and violence, Heather will also tell how faith communities are working with trans-led groups to support individuals and families who need to relocate to safe state.

"There is an increase in attacks against two-spirit, trans and gender expansive folks who

fit the United Nations' criteria as internally displaced people," she said.

Heather will suggest ways to help people stay safe where they are or move where they have equal rights to access healthcare and housing.

For information, email [socialjustice@inuuc.org](mailto:socialjustice@inuuc.org).

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# Seattle U's ecumenical center resources faith leaders for today

By Marijke Fakasiieiki

Michael Trice, as founding director, is in his third year of leading the regional Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement (CEIE) at Seattle University.

The center draws faith leaders and lay leaders to courses they offer for students to study on their own time online or to attend in person. Students come from Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California and British Columbia.

Michael said the school's mission is rooted in a Jesuit and Catholic commitment to ecumenical and interreligious engagement, spiritual and indigenous pathways and cultural wisdom.

In 2020, the School of Theology and Ministry (STM) announced it would close over the next three years.

"It was painful for faculty, staff, students and faith leaders. Northwest leaders had worked hard to establish the STM, so there was much grief when it could not be sustained through the changing times," said Michael.

Shane Martin, then the provost of Seattle University (SU), was asked in 2021 to begin the CEIE. Fr. Stephen Sundborg, SU president until 2021, agreed, along with his successor President Eduardo Peñalver. The trustees voted in 2021 to start the center on July 1, 2021.

The Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement takes the word "engagement" seriously, Michael said.

Both the Society of Jesus General Congregation 34 and Vatican II promote collaboration and structural unity, he explained, even though the ecumenical spirit is more about how communities and individuals can thrive and flourish, especially when alternating ideologies suggest they shouldn't.

The university's programs, scholarship, relationships and curricula for community and classroom helped it realize it was entering an era when conflicts are national and geopolitical, and when authoritarianism is rising, he added.

Michael, who was first hired



Michael Trice

Photo courtesy of Seattle University

as the assistant dean for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and assistant professor on tenure track at SU's School of Theology and Ministry, gained tenure in 2017.

Born in 1969, he grew up in an Episcopal family that joined a Lutheran community when they moved to Albuquerque N.M. There, he was surrounded by people from different cultures, contexts, communities, ethnicities and religions.

"My experience of diversity as a young kid was tactile. I saw it in my friendships, my neighborhood and my community. I was drawn to positive examples of people living together in spite of differences," said Michael.

He attended Bethany Lutheran Liberal Arts College in Kansas from 1987 to 1991, studying philosophy and theology with an English literature minor. From 1993 to 1994, he studied at North Carolina Central University, an historic black university, majoring in English literature with a focus on the Harlem Renaissance. He earned a master's in systematic theology at Duke University Divinity School in 1995.

Duke faculty were interdisciplinary, with some students focused on law and theology, and others on social theory and theology.

"I thought the best questions we have in theology were rooted in other disciplines," he said.

While at Duke, he clerked at a

law firm, working on racial gerrymandering and capital punishment. One professor, Robinson Everett, was the chief justice of the military court of appeals for the armed forces. The firm addressed historical discrimination in voting districts, presenting at the U.S. Supreme Court from 1994 to 1996.

Michael also worked on death penalty appeals related to several clients who were executed in North Carolina.

"Our work in the 'oikoumene,' the whole inhabited house, is with a sense of the community rooted in the need to care for one another and that requires laws and policies that govern human life to be just and fair," he said.

These experiences motivated him to work towards a doctorate on the origins of discrimination and on building communities based on unity.

"I was interested in how cruelty shows up in systems, how communities address and respond to it, and how they unify so they are not diminished by structures bathed in cruelty," he said.

Michael pursued studies and experiences focusing on injustice and life in a unified community. He believes interreligious and ecumenical dialogue and engagement are rooted in a context where people live lives of integrity in community with each other.

After earning a master's of theology at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, he completed a doctorate there in constructive theology, followed by an executive leadership master's in business.

Starting his doctoral work in 2001, a month after 9/11, he learned a client was executed in

North Carolina Central Prison. Considering it a travesty of justice, Michael, then 28, decided to continue doctoral classes in constructive theology at Loyola University in Chicago from 2001 to 2006.

For the first four years of those studies, Michael studied at the Ecumenical Institute at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, Germany. There he wrote his dissertation "Encountering Cruelty."

"In Germany after World War II, libraries contained texts about the Holocaust, genocide and structural prejudice," he said.

He did research from the viewpoint that the theological discourse of sin was inconsistent with his experience of his client's execution and the plight of others on death row. Michael saw a thin line between when justice is served institutionally, and revenge becomes a state-sanctioned means of resolving conflict.

Through the pandemic, he applied to the CEIE much of his study on cruelty in the context of racial divisions in this country based on zip code and freeway exit area.

"We want to engage individuals and communities in the midst of these challenges," he said.

The center has created courses and is creating flexible certificate programs for continuing education to meet people where they are. It includes Ignatian discernment and assessment to help local leaders be effective in their context, Michael said.

"We are in constant discussion with religious leadership, who are the eyes and ears in local communities naming and addressing challenges," he said.

The CEIE relates with the Lutheran World Federation and

the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights and High Commission on Refugees.

Its staff serve on national bilateral dialogues between Christians and Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Buddhist communities, along with the UN's Interfaith Commission.

The center plans to hire regional faculty for certificate programs.

With a commitment to be egalitarian, the center's 32-member advisory council includes varied religious and cultural perspectives.

"Centers or institutes dedicated to virtues of religious systems, philosophical worldviews and indigenous pathways cannot afford to become politically partisan because it would cloud our vision for achieving a healthy balance in the future," he said.

Michael cited a recent Pew Research Forum poll that found hate speech to be a major problem. The center pays attention to data that shows Americans divided.

"On the one hand, we are too sensitive. On the other hand, we may be too critical, but we know there is too much hate speech," Michael said.

"Centers like this must resource leaders so they know how to address cultural and societal division. I'm inspired by the vitality of ecumenical and interreligious circles happening around kitchen tables as well as international conferences," Michael said.

"The centers are connected, and their creative soul-searching is as close to the heart of God as I've been," he said.

For information, email [tricem@seattleu.edu](mailto:tricem@seattleu.edu) or visit [seattleu.edu/center-for-ecumenical-and-interreligious-engagement](http://seattleu.edu/center-for-ecumenical-and-interreligious-engagement).

## Spiritual Film Themes in a Secular Age

**Faith, Film & Philosophy 2024**  
**October 7-11, 2024**

**GONZAGA UNIVERSITY** | Faith & Reason Institute

<p>Mon., Oct. 7 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Brian Clayton, (Philosophy Emeritus, Gonzaga) <b>"I See Dead People': Spiritual Quests in the Films of M. Night Shyamalan"</b> WOLFF AUD JEPSON 114</p>
<p>Tues., Oct. 8 7:00 pm</p>	<p><b>FREE film screening and panel discussion: Barbie (Gerwig, 2023)</b> HEMM AUD 004</p>
<p>Wed., Oct. 9 7:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Spiritual Film Themes in a Secular Age</b> Student panel discussion WOLFF AUD JEPSON 114</p>
<p>Thurs., Oct. 10 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Michael P. Foley (Honors College, Baylor University) <b>"A Secular Stage: Religion through the Lens of Hollywood"</b> WOLFF AUD JEPSON 114</p>
<p>Fri., Oct. 11 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Duane Armitage (Philosophy, University of Scranton) <b>"The Displacement of the Sacred in Modern Film: Film Nihilism from Nietzsche and Heidegger to Barbie and Deadpool"</b> WOLFF AUD JEPSON 114</p>

For further information  
[gonzaga.edu/fp2024](http://gonzaga.edu/fp2024)

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## GU programs will discuss spiritual films

Gonzaga University's Faith and Reason Institute's Faith, Film and Philosophy 2024 Seminar on the theme "Spiritual Film Themes in a Secular Age," includes discussion with 12 to 15 film scholars and fans. It will be held from Monday, Oct. 7, to Saturday, Oct. 12, at different locations on campus.

"Highlights include three interactive conversations with questions, discussion and feedback," said David Calhoun, director of the Gonzaga Faith and Reason Institute.

Five events that are part of the program include:

- Brian Clayton, philosophy emeritus, Gonzaga, "I See Dead People: Spiritual Quests in the

Films of M. Night Shyamalan" speaks at 7 p.m., Monday, Oct. 7 in Jepson 114.

- Film Screening and Panel Discussion is at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 8, at Hemmingson 004.

- "Spiritual Film Themes in a Secular Age," is a student panel discussion at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 9, at Jepson 114.

- "A Secular Stage: Religion through the Lens of Hollywood" features Michael Foley, a professor of patristics from Baylor University who writes and speaks on Catholic history and culture, sharing at 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 10, at Jepson 114.

- "The Displacement of the Sacred in Modern Film: Film Nihilism from Nietzsche and

Heidegger to Barbie and Deadpool" features Duane Armitage, associate professor of philosophy at the University of Scranton, and a scholar of continental philosophy specializing in theological dimensions of Nietzsche and Heidegger's thought. He will speak at 7 p.m., Friday, Oct. 11, in Jepson 114.

For information, call 313-6743 or email [faithandreason@gonzaga.edu](mailto:faithandreason@gonzaga.edu).

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## Interfaith event addresses boarding schools

The Interfaith Network for Indigenous Communities is offering a presentation on “Understanding the Impacts of U.S. Indian Boarding Schools” at 12 to 2 p.m., Friday, Oct. 11, on Zoom.

Presenters include Jewell James, Lummi Nation master carver, activist, elder and boarding school survivor; Theresa Sheldon, Tulalip Tribes, National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition and Tulalip Tribal Council, and Edward Washines, Yakama Nation, Washington State Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee with the Washington Attorney General’s Office.

Beginning in 1801, the United

States implemented a colonized school system mandating Native children, from three to 16 years old, attend boarding schools. In 1819, the U.S. federal government began funding religious organizations to run these schools. They operated for almost 200 years.

The event is co-sponsored by Faith Action Network, Interfaith Works, JUUSTICE Washington and Learning Right Relations.

Northwest boarding schools include Chehalis Boarding and Day School in Oakville, Colville Mission School in Kettle Falls, Cushman Indian School in Tacoma, Fort Simcoe Indian Boarding School in White Swan, Fort Spo-

kane Boarding School in Davenport, Neah Bay Boarding and Day School in Neah Bay, Puyallup Indian School in Squaxin Island, Quinaielt Boarding and Day School in Taholah, S’Kokomish Boarding and Day School in Olympia, St. George Indian Residential School in Federal Way, St. Joseph’s Boarding School in Federal Way, Paschal Sherman Indian School in Omak, Tonasket Boarding School in Tonasket, Tulalip Indian Industrial School in Tulalip Bay and Tulalip Mission School in Priest’s Point.

For information, visit <https://forms.gle/T1MWMRhn9eYx-2M7o9> or visit [fanwa.org/our-network/inic](http://fanwa.org/our-network/inic).

## JUUSTICE advocates ecosystem health

The Columbia River Treaty signed in January 1961 by the U.S. and Canada to dam the Columbia River for flood control and power generation, included a clause to review it after 60 years, meaning it is being renegotiated.

Recommendations for modernizing the treaty began in 2011, including consideration of river ecosystem health, climate change, best science and expanding the role of Tribes, Nations and First Nations in renegotiations that began in 2018.

In March 2023, the board of JUUSTICE Washington, the Unitarian Universalist state action agency, signed on an NGO letter calling President Joe Biden to expand the U.S. negotiators to

include a representative for the “health of the river’s ecosystem.”

JUUSTICE felt the Bonneville Power Administration and Army Corp of Engineers did not meet needs of salmon and Columbia River health in focusing on hydroelectric production and flood management.

In May 2023, Deb Cruz, JUUSTICEWA president, spoke at a listening session of the Department of State, with the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Northwestern Division, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. She called for including the rights of the river’s ecosystem and in-

cluding Tribes and First Nations.

In July 2024, the U.S. and Canada reached an Agreement In Principle (AIP) with flood control and power generation as priorities, and language on the river’s ecosystems and tribal participation fell short of what’s needed.

The board of JUUSTICE Washington will sign onto another NGO letter to the U.S. State Department and U.S. Senators, in the Northwest, reiterating the need to prioritize the health of the river ecosystem and strengthen the voice of the tribes.

For information, email [deb@juustwa.org](mailto:deb@juustwa.org) or visit [juustwa.org/program-areas/issues/climate-justice/columbia-river-treaty/](http://juustwa.org/program-areas/issues/climate-justice/columbia-river-treaty/) or [state.gov/columbia-river-treaty](http://state.gov/columbia-river-treaty).

## Christ Kitchen graduates 120 in 25 years

Over its 25 years, Christ Kitchen has provided more than 800,000 hours of job training and employment for impoverished women, and 100,000 hours of community service by volunteers.

Since 2017, nearly 120 women have graduated to find family-sustaining employment, breaking the chain of generational poverty for themselves and the children who rely on them for survival, reported Sharon Robertson, donor and community relations manager.

Christ Kitchen hires up to 24 women at a time to learn job skills in nine fields: commercial baking, culinary arts, barista, catering, food truck management, office administration, retail/wholesale, customer service and marketing, and horticulture/gardening.

“Women we hire are working to break the chains of poverty, addiction and abuse in their own lives, so that they can provide for themselves and their children without destructive relationships, substances or government assistance,” Sharon said.

Since 2017, Christ Kitchen has

had a 96 percent retention rate among graduates. In 82 percent of cases, mothers reunite with children placed in foster care.

Christ Kitchen began in 1998 at Westminster Presbyterian Church as an offshoot of Christ Clinic, which was started by five physicians to treat uninsured and underinsured people. In 2017, Christ Clinic closed its doors and Christ Kitchen became a stand-alone ministry, with just \$327.69 in the bank.

Sharon said Christ Kitchen products can be purchased at Rosauers, Yoke’s Fresh Market, My Fresh Basket, Huckleberry’s and its 2410 N. Monroe St. location, and online at [christkitchen.org](http://christkitchen.org).

They plan to launch a mobile barista truck and food truck in Spring 2025.

Christ Kitchen’s mission is to help impoverished women heal and overcome critical employment and life challenges, such as felonies, re-entry into society, prostitution, human trafficking, abuse, addiction and lack of job experience.

The goal is to reduce poverty, stabilize families and build leaders, said Sharon.

Through gourmet dried food products, catering services, a food truck, a cafe and a coffee house, Christ Kitchen enables women to become employable.

For information, call 325-4343 or email [sharon@christkitchen.org](mailto:sharon@christkitchen.org).

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# YWCA Spokane events held through Domestic Violence Month

YWCA Spokane will uplift October as Domestic Violence Action Month (DVAM) to increase awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence in the community, inspire action to create lasting change and encourage community-wide participation.

Individuals and businesses are invited to take action throughout the month of October.

**“October is a critical time** to unite in solidarity with survivors and advocate for change,” states Jeanette Hauck, CEO of YWCA Spokane. “We encourage everyone to participate in our events, utilize our resources, and spread awareness to help create a safer and more inclusive community.”

An original sculpture, “Un-

quenchable Hope” by The Tattooed Potter Cori Schuman will be on display at YWCA Spokane, 930 N Monroe St., through October.

The piece embodies the journey of survival and empowerment as a personal reflection of Cori’s experience with domestic violence, trauma and the transformative power of hope.

**With purple the recognized** color for domestic violence awareness, it represents to survivors peace, courage, survival and a commitment to ending violence. The YWCA invites people to join a visual campaign by wearing purple, illuminating their homes and business with purple lights, and showcasing DVAM materials.

YWCA Spokane offers an online action kit with materials and resources to print or share online at [ywcaspokane.org/2024dvam](http://ywcaspokane.org/2024dvam).

**“Courageous Conversations:** YWCA Spokane’s Pathways Forward” is a virtual conversation at noon, Wednesday, Oct. 23, on Zoom, with community leaders discussing reporting domestic violence to law enforcement. Registration is at [ywcaspokane.org/dvampathways](http://ywcaspokane.org/dvampathways).

**To build understanding** of the complexities of intimate partner domestic violence, YWCA Spokane offers virtual training.

• Domestic Violence 101, “Recognize, Respond, Refer,” on the dynamics if violence is held from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, Oct. 8 and 2 to 3:30 p.m., Thurs-

day, Oct. 17.

• Domestic Violence 201, “Learning In Action,” applies lessons from DV 101 by looking at complexities and seeing scenarios through a trauma-informed lens from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, Oct. 29.

**To assure resources** are available for more than 14,000 women, men, children and families the YWCA Spokane serves, it invites donations and partnering with its awareness campaign, said Erica Schreiber, community engagement director.

For information, call 789-8275, email [ericas@ywcaspokane.org](mailto:ericas@ywcaspokane.org) or visit [ywcaspokane.org/dvam](http://ywcaspokane.org/dvam).



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## Programs highlight South Asian culture, music

The South Asia Cultural Association (SACA) of Spokane is presenting two fall programs to educate people on the heritage, traditions and cultures of South Asia, particularly India.

**“Jugalbandhi: A Night of North Indian Classical Music and Odissi Dance,”** will be performed from 6:15 to 9 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 19, at the Spokane Community College (SCC) Lair Student Center, 1810 N. Greene, following an Indian Vegetarian

Dinner at 5 p.m.

Artists will also conduct a workshop demonstrating their artistry, 6:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 18, at Shadle Park Library, 2111 W. Wellesley.

**A dance and drama** program, “Devi: Goddess within Me,” will be held from 3:30 to 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 26, at the SCC Lair.

It features a Bharatanatyam style dance drama, combined with Chau dancing that illuminates the paradox of femininity

through the blurred boundaries between the revered figure of the goddess and the lived experiences of present-day women.

**SACA promotes cultural** programs to enhance the quality of life in Spokane, expand international awareness, break stereotypes and build global understanding, said Sreedharani Nandagopal, president of SACA.

For information, call 467-5558 or email [sacaspokane@gmail.com](mailto:sacaspokane@gmail.com)

## CdA Chorale concert features American hymns

Chorale Coeur d’Alene will feature many well-known American hymns in its concert, “The Servanthood of Song,” at 2 p.m., and 7 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 12, at Trinity Lutheran Church, 812 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., in Coeur d’Alene.

The concert is in honor of the release of former chorale director Stan McDaniel’s book, *The Servanthood of Song: Music, Ministry and the Church in the United States*, and includes selections of

American church music from the colonial era to the present.

In the book he discusses the evolution of American hymns.

Stan and the chorale’s artistic director, Joshua Chism, chose the repertoire of hymns and Stan will direct several of the hymns.

The program includes such classics as “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” “When Jesus Wept” and “Steal Away,” accompanied by the chorale’s collaborative

pianist David Brewster, Coeur d’Alene Symphony’s cellist Anna Seppa and Spokane’s Edward Hurd on the organ.

The concerts are opportunities to learn about American church music history.

For information, call 208-446-2333 or visit [choralecdca.com](http://choralecdca.com).

## Food bank has high demand

The Salvation Army’s Food Bank in Spokane reports that as food costs have risen, there has been an increased number of households seeking food boxes.

In a recent comparison, The Salvation Army noted that households seeking food boxes had risen from 2,703 families with 5,310 individuals for the year ending July 2023 and 3,482 families with 8,149 individuals for the year ending July 2024.

There has also been an increase in requests for Grab & Go bags for homeless individuals from 429 bags to 511 in that same period.

To meet the increasing de-

mand for food, The Salvation Army seeks donations of shelf-stable food—peanut butter, tuna or other canned meat, canned soup, canned fruit, canned vegetables, pasta sauce, spaghetti, oatmeal, cereal, mac & cheese and shelf-stable milk.

Its Family Resource Center at 204 E. Indiana Ave., receives donations from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Donors are asked to ring both bells on the back loading doors.

Financial gifts can be sent to The Salvation Army, 222 E. Indiana Ave., Spokane, WA 99207.

For information, call 325-6821.

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**You donate \$10.**  
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**It’s that simple!**

To feed hungry Spokanites, go to <https://donorbox.org/carecampaign>




2360 N. Stone Street



Join us on **October 14th** at **2:30 PM** for **RiverCare’s** debut and ribbon cutting!

**Come for an open house & learn more about RiverCare!**



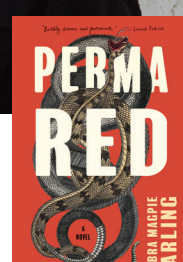
For more information call 509-482-8159  
[www.RiverviewRetirement.org](http://www.RiverviewRetirement.org)



**SPOKANE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT**

Spokane Is Reading Presents

## Debra Magpie Earling & her novel Perma Red

During this author visit, Debra Magpie Earling reads from her novel *Perma Red* and answers audience questions. The novel’s themes include the traditions of the Bitterroot Salish, challenges of reservation life, disappearances of Indigenous women, and ghosts.

**This event is free and open to the public.**

**SPOKANE VALLEY LIBRARY**  
22 N Herald Rd, Spokane Valley  
Thursday, October 24, 1pm  
Doors open at 12:15pm



scl.d.org

# Whitworth hosts Election Year Speaker Series to build discourse

Whitworth University will hold an Election Year Speaker Series to help the campus and community engage in civil discourse ahead of the 2024 elections.

• Faculty Patricia Bruininks and Megan Hershey host “Hope and Democracy” at 4 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 2, at Dixon Hall 206.

• On “Polarization and the (Im) Possibility of Christian Hospitality,” Matthew Kaemingk, political ethicist and theologian

at Fuller Seminary, speaks at 10 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 12, at the Seelye Mudd Chapel.

• David French, author, opinion columnist and former constitutional law attorney, and Whitworth President Scott McQuilkin will lead a conversation on “Politics, Christianity and Moral Formation: Finding a Path to Restoration” at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 15, online. They will engage people of opposing views.

• “Exploring the 2024 Presidential Election” features Aaron Hitefield, assistant professor of political science, at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 16, at Weyerhaeuser Hall 111.

• “Social Architecture: Creating a Scaffold of Social Life for the Common Good” is the topic of Anne Snyder, editor-in-chief of Comment Magazine, at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 22, at the Bing Crosby Theater. For tickets,

visit [spokane7tickets.com/enwp-anne-snyder/tickets](http://spokane7tickets.com/enwp-anne-snyder/tickets).

• For “The Soul of Civility: Toward Meaningful Engagement and Change,” Erica Salkin, professor and interim dean of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences,

interviews Alexandra Hudson, author of *The Soul of Civility: Timeless Principles to Heal Society and Ourselves*, at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 30, online.

For information, visit [whitworth.edu/election-year](http://whitworth.edu/election-year).

## Spokane Alliance prepares for fall listening season

The Spokane Alliance will begin listening sessions for members to build relationships, share stories and discern common issues, said Laurel Fish, senior organizer.

“Every time I do a relational meeting, I’m struck by the collective wisdom, energy and ability of everyday people,” said Laurel. “It’s our work to discover and develop leaders to make good on the power of our coalition.”

The alliance is launching a city-wide listening season in November after the elections to set priorities and build energy for the future. The issues the Spokane Alliance works on come from the lived experience within the alliance’s member institutions.

Its Delegate Assembly program with house meeting training is from 6 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 29, at the Spokane Education Association, 230 E. Mont-

gomery Ave.

The event is for institutional leaders, core team members and anyone interested in leading house meetings in their institution. There will be limited business for official delegates—two per institution—but the assembly will focus on preparing leaders for a listening season.

For information, call 532-1688 or email [laurel@spokanealliance.org](mailto:laurel@spokanealliance.org).

## Shalom Ministries Dining with Dignity marks 20 years

Susan McFadden, a Washington State University nurse educator, will discuss how Shalom Ministries provides solutions as it cares for vulnerable neighbors through its Dining with Dignity Gala Event, from 5 to 8 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 26, at the Southside Community Center, 3151

E. 27th Ave.

Since 1994, Shalom’s Dining with Dignity has provided more than 65,000 meals annually for homeless and low-income people in downtown Spokane.

A team of 58 volunteers and outreach partners work with Shalom Ministries to renew broken

lives, help fight food insecurity, reduce homelessness and prevent fentanyl deaths.

The event includes a beef stroganoff dinner, a live and silent auction and an inspirational video on Shalom’s impact.

For information, call or text 881-8710, visit [shalommeal.org](http://shalommeal.org).

## Spark Central benefit theme is ‘Rooted in Creativity’

Spark Central’s eighth annual Salon fundraiser, on the theme, “Rooted in Creativity,” features a conversation with author Jess Walter, one of its founders, at 5:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 18, at Hamilton Studio, 1427 W. Dean.

The event includes locally-sourced food catered from Greenbluff Fresh Catering Co. and entertainment from Level Up, a neighborhood youth program.

Participants from Spark pro-

grams will share music, art and poetry. The evening will close with a small, live auction to launch Spark’s online auction fundraiser that runs Oct. 19 to 26, on Spark Central’s website and in its social media.

Spark Central is a nonprofit that “ignites creativity, innovation and imagination,” as it breaks down barriers to creativity like cost, confidence and access. Its programs provide

access to technology for youth, teens and adults.

Located in Kendall Yards, Spark Central Station focuses on serving the historically underserved West Central neighborhood.

For information, visit [sparkcentral.org](http://sparkcentral.org).

## How do our faith and values impact our media consumption?

What is our media diet in this campaign season? What headlines grab our eyes? What outlandish, racist lies will media repeat? What gets a candidate's name mentioned repeatedly?

Starting in journalism in the 1960s, I understood "mass" media had a responsibility to be "objective" and give equal time to candidates. Reporters were to ask questions to elicit values, ideas and policies, not "gotcha" questions to show how astute the reporter is by trapping the interviewee.

Today most media build a candidate's celebrity (popularity) by quoting outlandish comments of those who create chaos as they seek free, frequent coverage. Whose name is most often in headlines each day. I counted one source one day and it was 10 to 3. The 2024 campaign began just after the 2020 election with one candidate running for office four years. The other did the job of President, working behind the scenes, negotiating bipartisan solutions—hardly headline grabbing.

One would think fact-checking would discredit a candidate, but as media crowd their space with one candidate's bizarre comments, many forget their responsibility to give equal time for the other candidate. The idea that the current administration has done little comes from limited media coverage the day-to-day work of the person in office.

Why are so many media gullible? Do they really gain ratings and income by focusing on conflict, violence, sex, celebrity, popularity, the unusual, the outrageous? Those definitions of news make the unusual usual but may not lure the wise or numb to click at the bait.

Do media know they are falling into age-old traps, doing the bidding of propagandists?

It matters if media continually repeat racism, lies and conspiracy theories, because keeping a candidate in the spotlight—whatever the content—might sway the election. It's how dictators can "win."

Merriam Webster defines propaganda

as "spreading ideas, information or rumor to help or injure an institution, a cause or a person."

Thesaurus synonyms for propaganda are "disinformation, hype, indoctrination and publicity." It's communication to manipulate opinions to influence.

There are seven propaganda techniques.

- Name-calling: Do media repeat slurs or ignore them to avoid stereotypes?
- Glittering generalities: Do media expect one candidate to discuss specific policies but repeat the other's generalities that stoke fear and prejudice?
- Transfer: Do media quote one candidate blaming the other for doing what they, in fact, are doing to deflect attention from their misdeeds?
- Testimonial: Who do media consider credible to endorse a candidate?
- Plain-folk: Do media not question when a billionaire claims more understanding of workers than the opponent?
- Card-stacking: Do media just repeat a candidate's claims to be the best or great-

est in history?

• Bandwagon: Do media report elections as popularity contests, as if polls of a few unidentified people predict the outcome? Are elections popularity contests?

As a young journalist, my choice was to work for a major media outlet, driven by a limited definition of news. Journalists want to hold jobs, so they often play by the rules of publishers and producers. Even though there are faces of women and people of color among journalists, the news criteria and content are still predominantly set by a few media owners out for profits.

"Divide and conquer" is the adage for the power hungry. Do we just gobble up the diet media set before us? If we're queasy or numb, we can just not bite (click) on the sensational online bait.

Some food for thought: just as we are what we eat, we are what we read, see, hear, follow and believe.

How do we let our faith guide our media diet and consumption?

Mary Stamp - Editor

## Stories repeating collective history of united action save South African area

Columnist Cameron Conner completed Watson Fellowship in Spain, the United Kingdom, South Africa and the Philippines to observe community organizing. Back in the U.S., he continues sharing stories on how everyday people are organizing to fight multinational corporations, save their cultural heritage and rebuild democracy. This column is on South Africa.

"My name is John the Blessing," he said, extending his hand. "I am the body-guard," making clear the stakes at play.

I climb in the back of his four-wheel-drive pickup as the rest of our party walks out of the hardware store opposite us.

Nonhle Mbuthuma, who leads the group and brings spare batteries for the microphone, joins me in the back seat. Another guard takes her other side.

At 7:30 a.m., it was hot, typical for May in South Africa. As we pull out, Nonhle signals to the black SUV waiting in the shade of the gas station across the road. They roll in behind us. After five hours on washed-out dirt roads crossing a green, rolling tundra, we arrive at a hilltop in the heart of Amadiba, South Africa's Wild Coast region.

The black SUV and the small caravan of vehicles behind it stop. Out of each vehicle steps a parliamentary candidate,

each dressed in their party's colors.

Atop the hill, a crowd of several hundred gathered under the shade of an enormous white canopy. For over two decades, the people under that tent lived on the front lines of a battle to protect their homeland from the pressure of international mining companies eager to exploit the titanium-rich earth.

Many traveled hours by foot or cramped truck-bed. Their presence and closeness gives an impression of unity as the candidates walk from their vehicles. The politicians were not invited to give their typical stump speeches but to be evaluated on their support for the community.

They sit at folding tables. Nonhle opens the meeting shouting: "Amandla!" (Power!) In unison, the crowd roars: "Ngawethu!" (To the people!).

I met Nonhle three weeks before at a sports bar in Port Edwars, a small town halfway up the Eastern Cape. I had driven over 1,800 kilometers across the southern tip of Africa for the conversation. She had come from a community discussion on how to handle the increasing number of death threats directed at her. As leader of the community's anti-mining activities, Nonhle is targeted, shadowed by John the Blessing. Yet, she remains committed.

Earlier at a local bar's patio, I asked the question on my mind since learning about the Amadiba community's victories against international mining companies, Shell Oil and the South African government: What made her community different?

I thought about my hometown in wheat fields of rural Eastern Washington. "Forever chemicals" had for years been leaching into the community's water from the Air Force base, but public outcry changed little. Why, in the face of bribery, violence and brutal political reprisals, had Amadiba succeeded against corporate Goliath?

"Unity," she told me. From the beginning, the greatest danger was division—that corporations or their political allies would bribe, threaten or ensnare enough people to set the community against itself.

"The first battle was in the community, not the courtroom," she said. "We had to rebuild the feeling, among every member, that they were a people," and inspire a sense that it was possible to win. "So we told stories that answered two questions: Where do we come from? Where are we going?"

For the people, the stories Nonhle wove together began and ended with land. The new fight against the mining company became a part of their parents' legacy, resisting English petroleum surveyors,

and their grandparents' struggle against the apartheid state's attempted implementation of "Land Betterment Schemes."

The stories gave people a sense that they were one link in a long chain, reaching back and born out of something greater than themselves and stretching forward to support something that will outlive them.

That day on the hilltop, seeing the crowd work in unison as Nonhle addressed the politicians, the impact of these stories was clear. They hadn't made people like each other. There were still personal disagreements and political differences, but they helped people feel responsible for one another and capable of working together to protect their home.

In a world where we are constantly bombarded with stories of defeat and despair, this was different. This was a people finding deep, common strength by remembering their collective history and standing together to do the impossible. This was a story of personal bravery and collective courage.

As we drove back that evening, Nonhle nodded at the horizon: "without that unity, all this land around us would today be an open-air titanium mine." Instead, it remains Amadiba, a sea of rolling green coastal hills along the blue Indian Ocean.



Liv Larson Andrews, left, with Tumaini schoolgirls.

### Sounding Board

## Mutual ministry connects people across the miles, across the years

St. Catherine of Siena said, "All the way to heaven is heaven." Most of the way from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to the town of Ifakara is bumpy and awkward, punctuated with roadside checks along freeways and unpaved paths of varying quality. Even this section of our two-and-half-week pilgrimage to the Ulanga Kilombero Diocese (UKD) was heavenly, because we saw the face of God everywhere we looked.

For more than 35 years, the Northwest Intermountain Synod (NWIM) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)—a region including Eastern Washington, Idaho and parts of Wyoming and Oregon—has been in a companion relationship with Lutherans in rural south-central Tanzania.

"Bega kwa bega" is the Swahili phrase we have used to exemplify the mutual nature of the companion synod relationship we enjoy with our siblings in the UKD. It means "shoulder to shoulder," and illustrates how we walk together in mission.

Our recent pilgrimage to be with our

UKD siblings was a full body experience.

- Face to face, we shared our stories.
- Hand to hand, we ate together and prayed as one body, especially while hosted at the Martin Luther Spiritual Center not far from the offices of the diocese.
- Foot by foot, we traversed the road between Tumaini Lutheran Seminary and Lugala Lutheran Hospital, two essential ministries located in Malinyi that our companionship helps make possible.

• Hip to hip is how we felt every bump and rock of the roads that added a dose of earthy reality to these heavenly travels.

We also moved hip to hip in a very joyful way when our siblings led us in dancing on several occasions. Dancing erupted in the context of worship, praise, arriving and leaving. I think the joy and thanksgiving we felt for God's presence unlocked our western joints and emboldened our spirits.

• Heart to heart, we could feel God strengthening the connection between us.

Though miles and miles lay between our shoulders now, our hearts remain

kindled towards each other in faith. Having enjoyed this embodied experience, we can ask with fresh energy: How should we express this connection after our bodies have made the long trek home? What does mutual ministry mean?

One moment of our pilgrimage resonates for me as I ponder that question.

• Eye to eye, Pastor Moses Nwaka powerfully addressed our group at a going away party from Tumaini.

Before this moment, I mentioned our synod's need for prayer during the election season in the U.S. and the rising fears and anxieties in our congregations.

Pastor Moses looked at us with resolute, tender eyes that showed his heart full of truth and said, "God has placed us each where we are for a reason. God has placed us here in Tanzania, and God will use you in this time where you are, in the U.S. What happens in the U.S. happens to the whole globe. God has placed you there to be people of peace and good news."

Down to the tips of my toes, I felt both

convicted and inspired. I guess there are times we have to travel halfway around the world to learn what our purpose is right at home.

Our purpose is peace, neighborliness, compassion and hope. The mutual ministry we have nurtured over the years with our siblings in Tanzania taught me this with fresh urgency. "What happens in the U.S. happens to the whole globe," Pastor Moses reminded us, and he's right.

Whether in Swahili or English, Spanish or Salish, we together pray that God would make earth "as it is in heaven." Little by little, step by heavenly step.

The smiles of the students at Tumaini, as an emblem of the hospitality and kindness we received throughout our pilgrimage, will live in my heart and remind me to seek peace and good will here in my place. May God keep us walking the path to heaven, shoulder to shoulder.

Liv Larson Andrews  
Director for Evangelical Mission  
NWIM-ELCA

# Calendar of Events

Phone area code is 509 unless otherwise listed.

- Oct 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 • Spokane Community Against Racism** Meeting, Saranac Commons, 19 W. Main, 12 noon, scarspokane.org
- **Advocacy Workshops**, Asians for Collective Liberation and Reimagine Spokane, see article p. 2
- Oct 2, 9, 12, 15, 16, 23, 30 • Whitworth University Election** Year Speaker Series, see article p. 13
- Oct 4 • Spokane Latina Health Symposium**, Empire Health Foundation, 8:30 to 3 p.m., redcap.link/LHS2024registration
- **Interfaith Sharing Series: Restoring the Community of Creation**, Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement, Seattle University, 9:30 to 3:30 p.m., online, mtrice@seattleu.edu, see article p. 9
- **Spokane River Roll**, see article p. 3
- **Song Circle**, Harmony Woods Retreat Center, 11507 S. Keeney, 6 to 8 p.m., 993-2968
- **"60x60"**, Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 E. Desmet, 6 p.m., myrtlewoldsoncenter.org
- Oct 4-Dec 3 • Harvest Festival of Sharing**, The Fig Tree fundraiser, thefigtree.org/donate.html
- Oct 5 • The Freedom 5K**, benefit for trafficking survivors, Riverstone Park, 1800 Tilford Ln., Coeur d'Alene, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., (208) 514-2971, contact@safeharborforfreedom.com
- **Walk to End Alzheimer's**, Riverfront Park, registration 9 a.m., ceremony 10 a.m., walk 10:30 a.m., alz.org
- **Community-Supported Tree Planting Event**, Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, 26010 S. Smith Rd., Cheney, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 235-4723
- **Holistic Festival**, Centerplace, 2426 Discovery Pl., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 468-9001, clg500@hotmail.com
- **Meditation for a Peaceful Mind**, Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 10:30 a.m., jsmithson@cdalibrary.org
- **Souk!** Arabian market, food and entertainment, Mukogawa Institute, 4000 W. Randolph, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., aishaazardanceproject@gmail.com
- Oct 5-6 • Communal Grief Retreat**, Harmony Woods, harmonywoods.org/event/grief-ritual
- **Spokane Symphony Masterworks 2: Scotland the Brave!**, The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, Sat 7:30 p.m., Sun, 3 p.m., 624-1200
- Oct 6 • Costume Sale**, Spokane Children's Theatre, 2727 N Madelia, 12 to 6 p.m., 328-4886
- **Intentional Community Gathering**, Harmony Woods, 1 to 4 p.m., 993-2968
- Oct 6, 13 • Sharing the Dharma Day**, Sravasti Abbey, 692 Country Lane, Newport, 447-5549
- Oct 6, 13, 20, 27 • Spokane Community Against Racism** Coffee, Saranac Commons, 19 W. Main, 9 a.m., scarspokane.org
- Oct 7-12 • Faith, Film, Philosophy 2024**, Gonzaga Faith Reason Institute, see article p. 10
- Oct 7 • The Christianity of The Lord of The Rings**, Whitworth, 300 W. Hawthorne, 7 to 9 p.m., 777-1000
- Oct 8 • Eastern Washington Legislative Conference** planning meeting, Zoom, 1 p.m., 535-4112
- Oct 8, 23, 29 • Domestic Violence Month**, YWCA Spokane events, see article p. 12
- Oct 8, 15, 22, 29 • "Heartistry: Artistic Wellbeing,"** Spark Central, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy, 3 to 5 p.m., 279-0299
- **Folklorico Practice and Classes**, Nuestras Raices, 1214 E. Sprague, 5:30 to 7 p.m., hbpaofspokane.org
- Oct 9 • Caregiver Conference**, Frontier Behavioral Health & ALTCEW, Centerplace, 2426 Discovery, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., eventleaf.com/e/2024CGConference, 458-7450 x2
- **Information Session for Nonprofits**, SIMBA and MCAS, Saranac, 25 W. Main, 3rd Floor, 3 to 5 p.m., spokaneindependent.org
- **"Together for Good,"** Innovia Foundation Annual Reception, Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, 4 to 6 p.m., innovia.org/events/2023-annual-reception
- Oct 10 • Fundraising Luncheon**, Way of the Cross Revitalizing Lunch, 12 to 2 p.m., Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., ihrc.net
- **Immigration Clinic**, Latinos En Spokane, 1502 N. Monroe, 5 to 7 p.m., latinosenspokane.org
- **Eye Contact**, Volunteers of America, food by Inland Pacific Kitchen, Washington Cracker Co. Building, 304 W. Pacific, 5 to 8 p.m., 624-2378
- **CD/AIDE Chef Challenge**, Hagadone Event Center, 900 S. Floating Green Dr., 5:30 to 8:30, 888-999-7998
- **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, Zoom, 5:30 p.m., pjals.org
- **Family Promise Ungala**, Shriners Event Center, 7217 W. Westbow, 6 to 8 p.m., familypromiseofspokane.org
- Oct 10, 11 • It's a Small World and We're All Connected,** World Relief events, see article p. 3
- Oct 10, 17, 24, 31 • Domestic Violence Survivor's Circle** in English and Spanish, 2 to 3 p.m. and 6 to 7 p.m., register, Trisha Martin, programs@srdvc.org
- Oct 10, 24 • Dances of Universal Peace**, Unity Spiritual Center, 2900 S. Bernard, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., 714-1770
- Oct 11 • Health & Wellness Fair**, Southside Community Center, 3151 E 27th, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 535-0803
- **Evening of Gratitude, Women Helping Women** Fund, Spokane Club, 1002 W. Riverside, 5 to 7 p.m., bit.ly/eog-2024
- Oct 12 • Reforest Spokane Day**, James Slavin Conservation Area, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., landscouncil.org, click events
- **Navratri Garba Celebration**, Spokane United We Stand, Spokane Valley Mall, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., spokaneindiacomunity.org, spokaneunitedwestand.org
- **STCU Family Day**, Indigenous Contemporary Dance, Gonzaga Dance Club, NW Museum of Arts and Culture, 2316 W. First, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 456-3931
- **Lincoln Center's 20th Anniversary Gala**, Gonzaga Lavender Alumni, 313-5760, lavenderalumni@gonzaga.edu, gonzaga.edu/lincolncenter20th
- Oct 12, 26 • Showing Up for Racial Justice**, PJALS, Zoom, 5:30 p.m., slichty@pjals.org
- Oct 13 • Death Café**, Spokane Public Library, 906 W. Main, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., 425-3904, deathcafe.com
- **Spokane String Quartet**: Beethoven, Tate & Dvorak, The Fox Theater, 1001 W. Sprague, 3 p.m., 624-1200
- **Monthly Women's Hearthtenders Group**, Harmony Woods, 5 to 8 p.m., 993-2968
- Oct 15 • People Who Care Luncheon**, Transitions, jburke@help4women.org, see article p. 3
- **Medicare Workshop**, 1 to 2:30 p.m., jsmithson@cdalibrary.org
- **Rural Nonprofit Gathering**, meet new executive director Neal Mizushima, Nonprofit Association of Washington, online, 2 p.m., nonprofitwa.org/event
- Oct 16 • Unity Day, Human Rights Education Institute**, 414 W Fort Grounds Dr., Coeur d'Alene, 12 p.m., (208) 292-2359, jlaster@hrei.org
- Oct 16, 17 • Spokane Symphony Chamber Soiree**, Historic Davenport Hotel, 10 S. Post, 7:30 p.m., 800-899-1482
- Oct 17 • Hagan Center Speaker**, Gabby Rivera, Latinx writer and storyteller, Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene St., 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., scc.spokane.edu
- **"Operationalizing Equity Series: If White Supremacy Culture Is the Culture Norm, What Are We Gonna Do About it?"** Equity, Racial Justice & Culture Lunch and Learn Series, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, Zoom, 11:30 a.m., wiha.org
- **Fall Jazz Sampler Concert**, Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center 7:30 p.m., gonzagaperformingarts.venue.net/events/GMD1017
- Oct 17-19 • Renewing Mind and Heart: Questions for the Next Generation** in Christian Higher Education, Whitworth University, 300 W. Hawthorne, 4 to 9 p.m., 777-3298
- Oct 18, 19 • SpoCanopy and CoolCanopy Tree Planting**, landscouncil.org > events
- Oct 19 • Better World Better Vote Ballot Party**, Asians for Collective Liberation and Reimagine Spokane, The Chameleon, 1801 W Sunset, 12 to 9 p.m., acspokane.org, reimagine Spokane.org
- **Pink Haven Coalition**, see article p. 8
- **Jugalbandhi, Indian Classical Music**, see p. 12
- **Body Traffic**, global dance, Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 E. Desmet, 7:30 p.m., 313-ARTS
- Oct 20 • Praise to the Lord, with Martin Pasi**, American Guild of Organists, St. Augustine, 428 W. 19th, 3 to 4:15 p.m., 402-319-1716, ehurd1742@gmail.com
- Oct 21 • Caregiver Training Series**, Colfax Library, 102 S. Main, 777-1629
- **Dementia Basics and Community Support**, Shadle Library, 2111 W. Wellesley, 5:30 p.m., 444-5300
- Oct 22 • Rewilding the Urban Frontier: River Conservation in the Anthropocene**, Greg Gordon, Margo Hill, Heidi Lasher and Bob Bartlett, Climate Institute-Gonzaga, Livestream, 6 p.m., gonzaga.edu/news-events/events/2024/10/22/rewilding-the-urban-frontier-river-conservation-in-the-anthropocene
- Oct 23 • Dolly Parton Night at Red Robin**, Spokane County United Way, 9904 N. Newport Hwy, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., 838-6581
- Oct 24 • Boards in Gear**, Nonprofit Association of Washington, Courtyard Pullman, 1295 NE North Fairway, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., nonprofitwa.org/event/pullman-big-2024/
- **Bra-lloween**, 10th Anniversary of Breast Intentions, Montvale Event Center, 1019 W. First, 5:30 to 8 p.m., 9951295, christine@breastintentionsofwa.org
- **?Sabes Que? Monthly HBPA meeting**, Mariscos Mi Tierra, 7005 E. Sprague, 6 p.m., 557-0566
- To Oct 25 • Rick Singer: Photography Retrospective**, Chase Gallery, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Mon, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., 321-9416
- Oct 25 • Cooking for a Cause**, Greater Spokane County Meals on Wheels Fundraiser, Davenport Centennial Hotel, 4:30 opens, 6 p.m., dinner, 7 p.m. program, cookingforcausespokane.com
- **Night of Light**, Giving Back Spokane, Spokane Pavilion, 6:30 p.m., facebook.com/groups/221083762581351
- Oct 26 • El Mercado**, A.M. Cannon Park, 1920 W. Maxwell, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., latinosenspokane.org
- **Devi: Goddess within Me**, see article p. 12
- **Annual Pumpkin Ball**, Vanessa Behan, see article p.
- Oct 26, 27 • Spokane Symphony: The Music of Harry Potter and Other Halloween Favorites**, The Fox Theater, Sat 7:30 p.m., Sun 3 p.m., 624-1200
- Oct 27 • Scripture Circle** with Tara Owens, Harmony Woods, 12 to 23 p.m., anamcara.com/scripture-circles
- Oct 29 • Wellness Nights** Trunk-Or-Treat Party, The Native Project, 1803 W Maxwell, 4 p.m., nativeproject.org
- To Oct 30 • Beginning Buddhism**, Sravasti Abbey, "Open Heart, Clear Mind" by Venerable Thubten Chodron, Souls Center, 707 N. Cedar, 6 to 7:30 p.m., 447-5549
- Oct 31-Nov 3 • 4-Day Guided Ignatian Retreat** "Experiencing God: Our Interior Movements Explained Using St. Ignatius' Rules for Discernment, Fr. Jeff Putthoff, S.J., 4:30 p.m. to 1 p.m., ihrc.net
- Nov 1, 2 • Dia De Los Muertos**, Nuestras Raices, 1214 E. Sprague, hbpaofspokane.org
- Nov 2 • What is a Chief?** How Native Values Can Teach Resilience, John Halliday a Muckleshoot Tribal member of Suwamish ancestry, 2 p.m., humanities.org
- **Blessings & Beyond Ball**, Night of a Million Dreams, Coeur d'Alene Casino, 37914 Nukwalqw, Worley, 5:30 to 10 p.m., blessingsandbeyond.org
- Nov 6 • The Fig Tree distribution and mailing**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., kaye@thefigtree.org
- Nov 7 • The Fig Tree Benefit/Development and Board** meetings, Zoom, 12 p.m. benefit, 1 to 3 p.m. board,

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# Professor captures college students' interest with play and comedy

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

One Gonzaga University communication studies professor applies the techniques and practices of humor and improvisation to express a commitment to social justice.

Jonathan Rossing (they/them), who is also associate dean of faculty affairs for the College of Arts and Sciences, said people tend to associate a commitment to social justice with passionate, even angry speech-making, the organization of and participation in protests and sit-ins, and an in-your-face-ability to challenge powerful institutions and authorities in the face of injustices.

**Jonathan's tools are** different. Their research looks at how humor and play can break people out of the boundaries and limitations that make the injustices of the current social system seem impossible to change.

Jonathan began studying communications at Indiana University, Bloomington and focused work on rhetoric, not just as the art of persuasive speech but in a much broader sense as the variety of social, cultural and interpersonal interactions at play in areas like education, politics and media that teach values, beliefs and ways of feeling and acting. In short, the various ways that persuade people.

In their doctoral research, they looked at how people used comedy to advance education on race. Some comedians they researched were Dick Gregory, Richard Pryor and Margaret Cho in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, and Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert contemporaneously.

"When these comedians looked at things in a not serious way, they were able to turn things on their heads," Jonathan explained. "Comedy is an arena where people have the freedom to say a little more than they otherwise might. In this way, it becomes an educational tool to make people think and allows an opening for the possibility of a different way of being."

**Jonathan pointed out** some examples where sitcoms led to changing social perceptions on something previously viewed as unusual or abnormal.

In the 1970s, The Brady Bunch sitcom helped normalize the situation of blended families. The show dealt with the awkward adjustments, accommodations, gender rivalries and resentments



Jonathan Rossing brings play into classes at Gonzaga.

in blended families. For example, the mother, Carol, tells one of the children, Bobby, that the only "steps" in their household lead to the second floor. In other words, that the Bradys were not a "stepfamily," only "a family."

In the 1980s and 1990s, The Bill Cosby Show challenged the stereotypes of the genre and of race. Audiences viewed comic situations in a Black upper middle-class family, the Huxtables, where both the husband and wife were well-educated and successful professionals—one a doctor and the other an attorney—and the children were smart, but the parents were smarter.

**Besides looking at humor** as a social justice tool, Jonathan examined play as a method of resistance. One question they raised, "What is the purpose and value of play?" led Jonathan to explore key questions in the humanities: "What does it mean to be human? How do we best relate to one another? How do we best prepare ourselves for life and our role in society?"

"Play can be a safe way to become aware of, practice and experiment with roles, rules and boundaries," Jonathan said.

An example in Spokane of play that allows participants to explore some rules and boundaries is the annual Spokane Pride Parade and Rainbow Festival. According to organizers, the festival includes music, dancing, festival booths, delicious food and fireworks. Jonathan describes it as a joyous day full

of love, laughter and support. It is a party, and it is play that changes perceptions and leads to greater inclusion and justice towards all.

**In Jonathan's classes**, they use forms of play and encourage humor in the interactive exercises they give the students.

"My teaching uses techniques of applied improvisation," they said. "I teach interactive, experiential courses and training sessions on identity and equity, communication for social justice and transformation, media messaging, critical message analysis, public speaking and group/team communication."

Although as associate dean of faculty affairs, their work is with faculty education, student ratings of Jonathan's course show their approach is effective.

**Ratings typically were** high and one student's comments were repeated often in the comments of others: "Rossing is determined to make his class a fun learning environment. There is always a game played at the beginning of each class to get students smiling and ready to participate. I learned so much from him and he inspired me to become a Comm major. He is insightful and knows what he is talking about. One of the best GU professors."

Jonathan's path to professorship in communications at Gonzaga was circuitous and marked by insightful mentors who recognized their talents and interests and suggested different trajectories they might follow.

Jonathan was born in San An-

gelo, Texas, a state not known for its openness to diversity. As a young person, Jonathan entered the University of Texas at Austin expecting to study medicine and become an orthopedic surgeon.

By the time they graduated with bachelor's degrees in zoology and French, it was clear this was not going to be their path. Jonathan's experiences working at the university as an undergraduate led them to pursue graduate study in administration in higher education. They went to Indiana University at Bloomington and earned a master's degree in higher education administration.

**While studying** for that degree, one mentor, aware of Jonathan's interests, suggested they explore graduate programs in the communications department. They eventually earned a doctoral degree in rhetoric and public culture there. Then Jonathan taught in the communications department at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, until coming to Gonzaga as chair of the communications department in 2016.

Throughout their academic career, Jonathan has participated in activities involving diverse students. While at Austin, they

worked on the New Student Orientation Multiculturalism Task Force Career Center and, as a graduate student at Indiana, Jonathan was co-chair of the Commission on Multicultural Understanding and a participant in the LGBT anti-harassment team.

**They also received** awards for excellence in teaching and for excellence in multicultural teaching. For four years after joining Gonzaga's faculty, they were also the improviser and director of education at the Blue Door Theatre in Spokane.

Jonathan self describes as a spiritual person who does not connect with any organized religion and recently became a certified yoga professor.

**They also share elements** of their meditation practice with the Gonzaga University community by regularly leading a short prayer/reflection on Monday afternoons.

For that, Jonathan uses a template for the liturgy that highlights practices for staying human, like awareness of breath, mindfulness, listening to the wisdom of elders, celebration and moving to community practice.

For information, email rossing@gonzaga.edu.

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