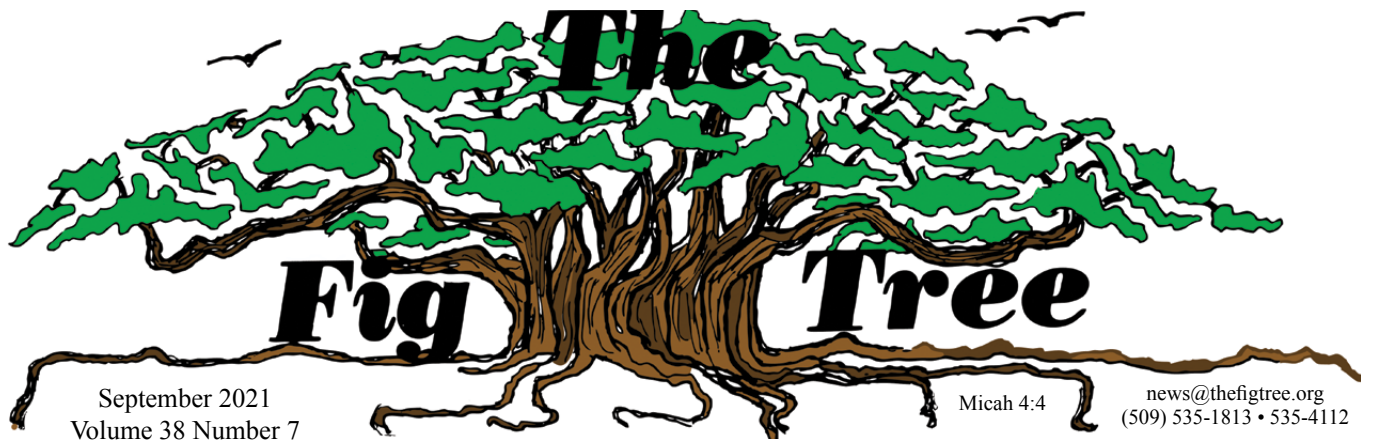


**38TH YEAR OF  
PUBLICATION**

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FEATURES 50+ EVENTS**



*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*

# Intercultural contacts embody theology

**By Mary Stamp**

Ross Carper’s half-time jobs as director of Feast World Kitchen and as director of missional engagement at First Presbyterian Church intersected with plans for Feast to cater the church’s 32nd annual Jubilee Marketplace.

However, those plans changed as organizations began canceling events with the local surge in COVID cases in August.

With pandemic protocols in mind, it was going to be held for one day, in person, outdoors on Sept. 5—instead of two days inside in November.

Now organizers ask people to shop fair trade vendors online throughout the fall for back-to-school to holiday gift shopping. Links to fair trade vendors are posted at [spokanefpc.org/jubilee-international-marketplace](http://spokanefpc.org/jubilee-international-marketplace).

For five years, Ross has helped the church plan the Jubilee Marketplace.

“It’s important for people to make purchases from fair trade vendors, because they have been hit by a lack of fair trade festivals,” he said. “Buying fair trade goods supports communities that are affected by the pandemic, as well as being impacted by ongoing poverty and oppression.”



Sajda Nelson, who came in 2010, serving Iraqi lamb dish, is at take out window with Issa Bahadin, facilities worker who came from Sudan in 2017, and Ross Carper.

“Our commitment to and celebration of fair trade is a big part of who we are as a church, because it supports people who make a livelihood creating beautiful handicrafts,” he added.

Ross’ work with Feast World Kitchen also expresses his commitment to work for justice across cultures with refugees and immigrants.

When in 2016, his full-time work at the church dropped to half time, he started a food truck business, Compass Breakfast Wagon, which brought together his neighbors on the lower South Hill.

As he did that, and connected with former refugees, many approached him about how to start a food truck or find a commercial kitchen.

In 2019, the restaurant across the street from First Presbyterian—an Arctic Circle from the 1960s to 2009 and then a sushi restaurant—was for sale. First Presbyterian owns other nearby buildings—rented by Stepping Stones, a COP Shop and an architecture firm. An elder, who is a real estate agent, helped the church buy the restaurant.

*Continued on page 4*

## Two women open The Way to Justice

**By Marijke Fakasiieiki**

Virla Spencer and Camerina (Cam) Zorrozuva, formerly with the Center for Justice, opened The Way to Justice, in February to provide representation, impact litigation, reform policies and do advocacy.

From Sept. 25 to 30, The Way to Justice is hosting a Justice Week open house to introduce their services to the community and to offer assistance through their driver’s relicensing and post-conviction programs.

The community law firm created and led by women of color addresses barriers facing individuals negatively impacted

by the justice system.

It seeks to remove barriers to access to lawyers, who are among the highest paid professionals in the country, Cam said. Many lack the thousands of dollars needed to pay retainers. The Way to Justice offers relief to clients who can’t afford an attorney.

Virla worked for the Center for Justice for more than 10 years and Cam for more than two years. When it closed, Virla told Cam, “Let’s start our own center.”

They knew their clients needed the programs that the center had offered for 20 years.

“As women of color, we see things through the lens of race equity, because it is our life. What we do now is influenced by everything we have done up until now and everyone we’ve interacted with,” Cam said.

The Center for Justice’s anti-racism mission drew them there. When no one else advocated for students of color, they stepped in. When people ran out of resources, they called it discrimination. When no one else was listening or paying attention, they did. They approached such situations as advocates and attorneys.

“If programs and services we offered were not enough, we connected clients with community partners.” Virla said.

“We are unapologetically driven by principles of racial justice. We announce ourselves as an anti-racist organization,” Cam said.

Partnering with Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, their office is at 845 S. Sherman, the MLK Center’s former site.

Their client-centered, holistic approach means they meet with  
*Continued on page 6*

## World Relief gears up to resettle Afghan refugees

**E**nroute to Ft. Lee in Virginia, Mark Finney, executive director of World Relief Spokane, saw the news that Afghanistan had fallen to the Taliban.

He was joining staff from refugee resettlement offices around the country in “Operation Allies Rescue” to welcome and complete the applications for thousands of Afghan interpreters and other allies trying to escape to freedom as their country crumbles.

“Every day I speak with Afghan friends who tell me of their family members fearing for their lives and desperate to escape,” Mark said, anticipating that 18,000 people are in process to receive “Special Immigrant Visas” (SIV’s), in addition to 50,000 of their dependent family members.

“It seems like a daunting task to evacuate and resettle that many people, but I’m convinced that we can do it,” he affirmed.

In resettling more than 10,000 refugees, he said that Spokane has succeeded because “everyone has pitched in.”

“World Relief will be welcoming Afghan allies to rebuild their lives in U.S. communities. Thousands of troops, non-profit workers and volunteers across our nation are ready to spring into action, just as we did in the 1970’s when the modern refugee program was birthed from the evacuation of Vietnam,” he said.

“Over the next few months, we will be welcoming new neighbors from Afghanistan and other parts of the world to Spokane. We are asking the community to stand alongside these refugees and other immigrants in our community,” Mark said.

He suggested three ways to help:

*Continued on page 5*

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## Pullman parish's Social Justice Ministry serves in multiple ways

At Sacred Heart Catholic Parish in Pullman, parishioners are committed to serve people through social justice action—housing, hunger and environmental projects, and advocacy.

Five members of the parish's Social Justice Ministry—Bill Engels, Kat Harris, Francy Pavlas Bose, Tim Paulitz and Bonita Lawhead—recently told of their motivations and described some of the projects.

"We use 'ministry' not 'committee' because a ministry is about doing God's justice work," Francy clarified. "A ministry serves others," Kat said.

The Social Justice Ministry began a year after Francy came to Pullman in 1993. In 1994, she attended the Catholic Conference in Spokane where she learned about the "Moving Faith into Action" program. In Pullman, she invited 12 members of Sacred Heart to participate in a six-week program to move faith into action.

"I was Catholic all my life but had not learned about the social justice teachings," she said.

Tim and Bill were inspired to do peace and justice work by the 36-week Just Faith Program, Tim in 2001 after moving to Pullman in 2000, and Bill at St. Joseph's in Seattle.

Transformative experiences abroad were another common factor for them.

Born in Seattle, Bill lived in Europe and around the U.S. when his father was in the Army. He studied English literature at the University of Arkansas and did graduate studies at St. Louis University.

After earning his doctorate in 1998, Bill taught mostly in Asia: four years in Mongolia, three in South Korea and six at a Maryknoll mission school in Bangladesh. He also served as principal of an elementary school he helped start in Bangladesh. In 2014, he came to teach at Washington State University (WSU). His wife, who is from Mongolia, is now a U.S. citizen.

Kat, who experienced little diversity growing up in Wyoming, did not have an interest in social justice until moving in 2016 from Nebraska to Pullman. After graduating in accounting in 2007 from the University of Wyoming, she went from being a CPA to teaching accounting.

Catholic all her life, she encountered other perspectives because her husband is Jamaican and the grandson of a Baptist deacon. Her interest in social justice grew as she began to see the world through another lens after visiting his family. "As a minority for two weeks, I gained



From top left to right,  
Francy Pavlas Bose, Tim Paulitz, Bill Engels, Bonita Lawhead and Kat Harris.

a new perspective," Kat said.

Her husband grew up in a farm village, where people had little or no interaction with white people. His family hand-washed their clothes. They had running water, while few others did.

"Seeing people live in survival mode, I am no longer quick to judge. We need grace to see others where they are. Life is complex," Kat said. "Social justice is walking the talk of faith.

The pandemic led me to look for the good," she said. "Now we are discussing racial justice. Racism is an issue. We need to talk about it and act."

Tim also has international ties. He came to Pullman as a wheat disease researcher with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, after teaching 10 years at McGill University in Quebec.

For him, social justice is intertwined with his faith and keeps him involved in the church. He appreciates that Sacred Heart's pastor, Fr. Steve Dublinski, encourages parishioners to talk about issues and then act.

"The social justice aspect of Jesus' message ties to what we do every day," he said. "My social justice work makes my faith concrete rather than cerebral."

His research led him to sabbaticals in Switzerland and Australia,

and to teaching in Morocco and Turkey. As an adjunct professor at the Department of Plant Pathology at WSU, he works with international graduate students.

Bonita, who grew up in South Dakota, moved to Vancouver and then to Tekoa, north of Pullman, where she lived 40 years. She worked with The Standard-Register weekly newspaper and became editor. For five years, she worked with The Inland Catholic Register, interviewing priests, visiting parishes and writing on the many ways people brings Jesus' love into the world.

Bonita studied to be a substance abuse counselor and began working in 2005 with a counseling agency in Pullman, 13 years before moving there in 2018.

"Jesus calls us to the Gospel of loving our neighbor as ourselves. Social justice is seeing children fed and having shoes, and there being equal opportunity for people of all skin colors and dispositions," Bonita said.

For Bill, Social Justice Ministry is a way to put his faith into action in a group context. Knowing he is accountable to a group means he has deadlines and the support of a group with similar goals.

Through the ministry, Francy, Tim and Bill seek to bring Pope

Francis' encyclical, "Laudato si: Caring for Our Common Home" to the parish. Through Zoom meetings, participants learn about and commit to addressing climate change and creation care as individuals and as a parish.

"Move Out, Pitch In" is a spring project, coordinated by the university with many churches and community groups.

When students leave campus, they throw away what they can't take, so churches and a thrift shop set up bins in residence halls and put up signs, "Don't throw things away. Put them in the bin in the lobby." Students put in food, clothing, dishes, bedding, toasters, microwaves, other appliances and storage bins.

Groups of 15 to 20 Sacred Heart volunteers in teams of two or three go to the halls twice a day to load items into cars and pickup trucks. They take items to distribute to individuals in need through agencies in Pullman, Moscow and Spokane. Several other churches and groups do that in other residence halls.

"It saves 50,000 pounds from the landfill," Francy said.

Another ecology project is collecting clear plastic bags for Trex, a recycling company that makes railings and decking. Sacred Heart members bring bags to the church, which takes the bags to Safeway in Pullman.

If they recycle 500 pounds in six months, Trex gives them a bench. The church has four benches and will donate future benches to care facilities.

Francy urges other churches to join them, "because it's better to recycle plastic than have it end up in the ocean."

When Pullman Disposal Service stopped accepting glass a few years ago, the Social Justice Ministry began collecting glass at the church and taking it to Whitman County Transfer, which grinds it for road construction.

Tim described the housing

programs. Sacred Heart has been active for seven years in Family Promise of the Palouse, an outreach of the Parish Council with homeless families. In Pullman and Moscow, 13 core churches rotated housing families in their facilities four times a year and 13 support churches provided meals in pre-COVID times. Now homeless families stay in hotels while Family Promise helps people find jobs, put their lives together and find housing.

The Social Justice Ministry connects with the Community Action Center (CAC), which offers emergency and low-income housing, giving bus tickets to Spokane shelters. Sojourners Alliance in Moscow has an emergency shelter. Habitat of the Palouse builds one house a year.

For hunger, there are two food banks—one at the CAC and one at Pullman Child Welfare. St. James Episcopal, Community Congregational United Church of Christ and the campus have set up and stock little food pantries. Sacred Heart's Parish Council is considering having one.


Kat's outreach includes organizing people to send cards to isolated residents in care facilities.

Last fall, Bonita was in a group praying for civility. It did a service with music and scripture on Jesus' call to love God and love neighbors, bringing awareness that "we are all one and need to be civil to those who are different."

About 12 parishioners attended the 2021 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference in January on Zoom, learning about issues before the state legislature. Bill and Francy coordinate an action alert network for peace and justice advocacy at Sacred Heart.


They email or text parishioners about actions on the death penalty, environment and other issues.

For information, call 332-5114 or email francy@pavlasbose.com.



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## Catholic Charities opens more permanent supportive housing units

Over the summer, Catholic Charities began efforts to expand housing with services to residents—opening a permanent supportive housing complex and partnering to share a grant to provide similar housing.

On July 30, Catholic Charities opened a 50-unit permanent supportive housing complex named for Beatriz and Ed Schweitzer of Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories.

It combines affordable housing assistance with support services to address needs of people exiting chronic homelessness, helping them build independent living and tenant skills with case management, substance abuse

and mental health counseling, and assistance in locating and maintaining employment.

Ed and Beatriz assisted poor and vulnerable people in Eastern Washington for many years.

Schweitzer Haven is Catholic Charities' 15th tax-credit property completed since 2010, now offering more than 700 units of housing in Eastern Washington for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Later this year, in partnership with Gonzaga Preparatory School and Gonzaga University, Catholic Charities will open Gonzaga Family Haven, a 73 unit affordable housing complex for families.

In addition, on Aug. 2, a Federal District Court Judge awarded a \$6,877,823 grant to Frontier Behavioral Health (FBH), Catholic Charities Eastern Washington (CCEW) and Pioneer Human Services (Pioneer) to provide housing and behavioral healthcare services to at-risk adults.

As the lead, FBH will ensure tenants meet eligibility requirements of the grant. CCEW and Pioneer, which provide permanent supportive housing, will manage and staff apartment units with onsite case managers and other resources.

Pioneer provides 10-single-room occupancy units or family-

sized rooms and an onsite case manager to help residents obtain treatment and resources to help them live productive lives.

CCEW will provide 24 studio and one-bedroom units as part of a larger affordable housing community near Spokane Falls Community College, funded by long-term contracts for project-based rental assistance.

Case managers will assist residents with rental obligations, therapy resources, transportation, legal assistance and other services.

Funding for the grant comes from the 2018 settlement of Trueblood vs. Department of Social and Health Services, which

challenged unconstitutional delays in competency evaluations and restoration services for people detained in jails. Since the settlement, the state has been disbursing more than \$80 million in contempt sanctions to fund community diversion programs statewide.

The housing grant is part of Phase IV of the Trueblood Diversion Plan. A total of \$22 million in housing grants was awarded throughout the state.

For information, call 838-4651 or email csavalli@fbhwa.org, call 206-766-7034 or email nanette.sorich@p-h-s.com, call 455-3039 or email sarah.yerden@cceasternwa.org.

If you know someone who seems to be

# Struggling Emotionally

here are some steps you can take to help:

## Ask

It's OK to ask a friend or loved one directly if they are struggling emotionally.



## Be There

Listen with compassion and empathy and without dismissing or judging.



## Keep Them Safe

If your friend is in crisis or considering self-harm, separate them from anything they could use to hurt themselves.

## Follow Up

Check in with the person on a regular basis. Contacting a friend who is going through a time of emotional pain can make a big difference.

## Help Them Connect

Help connect your loved one to a support system, whether it's family, friends, clergy, coaches, or therapists. You can also give them information about calling WAListens, 1.833.681.0211, to speak to a support specialist or the regional crisis line, 1.877.266.1818, if they need immediate help.



[covid.srhd.org/mental-health-and-coping](https://covid.srhd.org/mental-health-and-coping)



# At the Core seeks churches, businesses to feed region's 18,000 hungry children

At the Core and Second Harvest have recruited 120 congregations, businesses and family groups as supporters for the Bite2Go program that provides weekend meals for more than 4,500 hungry Spokane area students in 73 elementary and 35 middle and high schools.

Knowing that 18,000 school children in Eastern Washington and North Idaho communities face weekend hunger, At the Core, which started seven years ago, is ready to recruit more churches, businesses and family groups outside Spokane to feed hungry children over weekends.

**Chris and Brenna Sloan**, who were active in Timberview Church in North Spokane, started the program in 2014 when the church reached out to Meadowridge Elementary School and asked how they could "be a blessing to the community."

"We asked Debbie Wiechert, the counselor, who said the school had a United Way grant to help them feed children over weekends," said Brenna, program associate for At the Core. "She asked if we would help with logistics of picking up food from Second Harvest and delivering it to schools."

"We enthusiastically said 'yes' to helping provide weekend food for 15 children on free breakfast and lunch," she said.

After a year, the grant expired and the counselor said the school was unable to continue the program.

By then church members and the youth group wanted to continue doing it. So individuals and families in the church sponsored children for the next school year.

"We loved being able to make an impact on our community. We sponsored 25 children and it grew from there," said Brenna, who graduated with Chris from Shadle Park High School.

She started studies in Bellingham and Chris in Walla Walla. Both finished at Eastern Washington University in 1997, she in teaching and he in marketing.

Because her family helped "plant" Timberview in 1992, they attended there. The senior pastor encouraged Chris to do online studies with Northwest Nazarene University in 1999 and 2000 and mentored him to be ordained an elder.

After the program was going for a while, Chris talked to pastor colleagues in North Spokane encouraging them to adopt a local school and feed children.

Within two years, four churches adopted local schools.

After three years, they met



**Tom Stevenson and Brenna Sloan are recruiting more churches, businesses and family groups to adopt schools.**

Tom Stevenson, who retired from the Moss Adams CPA firm in 2011 after 35 years.

When Tom was chair of the Spokane County United Way board in 2013, he went on his own nickel to Amarillo, Texas, to learn about a poverty program.

"It didn't fit Spokane, but I met Dyron Howell who ran a SNACK PAK 4 KIDS program. That program inspired me to think about such a program for Spokane," he said.

On returning, he met with then Spokane school superintendent Shelly Redinger, who said Spokane needed such a program. She referred him to the Sloans to learn what they had been doing for two years in the Mead School District.

He joined them and together they helped nearly 120 churches, businesses and family groups adopt a school.

As the Bite2Go feeding program grew, Chris began working full time at Second Harvest.

At the Core formed as a non-profit with Tom as volunteer board chair, Brenna as volunteer, Catherine Klingel as program coordinator and a Gonzaga intern.

"Our role is to recruit, inspire and maintain adoptive organizations—businesses, churches and nonprofits—that adopt a school in their neighborhood," Brenna said.

"We are coaches for those organizations," Tom said. "We make it easy for a group to adopt a school and start the program. Then we support them while they successfully serve a school with little turnover in groups."

The organizations raise funds, pick up food, deliver it and wrap their arms around the school, offering mentoring and tutoring to students, too.

Volunteers from churches and businesses are in the schools each week to deliver the food and often do more.

One church does an "Undie Sunday," collecting socks, underwear and sweatpants for children they sponsored.

At high schools, eligible students use their student number to order food from an online menu. They select a teacher from whom they will pick up their order. Students in the schools' DECA (business) class, leadership class or other group pack the food and take it to the teachers.

"It makes a difference that children are fed over the weekend and they do not return to school Mondays hungry and unable to focus in class," Tom said.

Last year, they were concerned the program would not work because children were not in school. However, many churches, businesses and teachers delivered Bite2Go food directly to children and their families at their homes.

Deliveries dropped from 5,000 to 4,500—3,500 in elementary schools and 1,000 in middle and high schools.

"Realizing we were feeding 20 percent of children on free meals in Spokane and that Second Harvest covers Eastern Washington and North Idaho, we figured there were 18,000 children food insecure in the whole region—another 13,000," Tom said.

"So we want more people to know about Bite2Go in outlying and rural areas," he said. "We are looking for community champions who will help us start the program in their communities."

In October, At the Core is offering opportunities for people to visit Second Harvest, a school and meet with an adoptive church or business to see if the program might be a good fit for their communities.

"We have a wonderful model. Kids should not be going to school hungry on Mondays," Tom said. "There are many people like me who are retired and seeking something to do. We are ready to coach more groups to start adopting schools."

For information, email tom.stevenson@gmail.com or visit atthecore.online.

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## People of faith offer glimmer of hope against the bad news any day

With a summer of hurricanes and heat, tornados and typhoons, fires and floods, COVID and climate change, new refugees and new leaders, many seek to overcome feeling overwhelmed by finding ways to help those who have suffered and are still suffering.

Local, state/regional, national and global faith communities offer channels for responding with opportunities to donate, volunteer, pray and advocate.

One might be easily discouraged by the list of tragedies and by the self-centered focus of many who push their liberty over the life, health and wellbeing of the community, but seeing the responses of the faith and nonprofit communities in face of these events, one can be heartened and even hopeful.

Many media focus on conflicts, the unusual and the violence of weather and people. Discouraged by news, this editor visited the websites of several national

denominations to see their responses. Just looking at their opening pages, we found hope:

- “Action and advocacy are two ways, in addition to prayer, that people in the United Church of Christ (UCC) can assist the people of Afghanistan. National officers are urging people of faith to join their call for a swift response to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. [ucc.org](http://ucc.org)

- One Great Hour of Sharing Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has a means to donate online to Haiti for earthquake relief. [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org)

- Together, United Methodists do remarkable ministry around the world, caring for survivors of earthquakes and storms; investing, long term, in vulnerable communities; implementing effective solutions to diseases like malaria; equipping the next generation through training and education to lead the church and society. In all of this, we share the good news of

Jesus Christ. [umc.org](http://umc.org)

- With our hands, we do God’s work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ’s name throughout the world. We live in many different communities, span all ages, cultures and races and bring to this church unique life experiences and perspectives. Discover what God is calling you to do in life. [elca.org](http://elca.org)

- Amid an alarming rise in antisemitic rhetoric and violence, the Union for Reform Judaism and the Anti-Defamation League will join together in a multifaceted partnership to provide Reform congregations with the tools needed to address antisemitism in their communities. [urj.org](http://urj.org)

- Episcopal Migration Ministries, the refugee resettlement and migration ministry of The Episcopal Church, is currently working in partnership with the U.S. government to assist our Afghan allies with resettlement and direct services through a network of 12 affiliates across the U.S.

[episcopalchurch.org](http://episcopalchurch.org)

- In Haiti, Week of Compassion partners have already deployed volunteers to help with rescue operations and assess the damage. They are working to meet immediate needs. Our partners are also planning for longer term response, including construction; community-based psychosocial support and trauma recovery; reconstruction of damaged water infrastructure, and livelihood support. [disciples.org](http://disciples.org)

- “We welcome the USDA’s update to the Thrifty Food Plan, on needs of families and individuals who are food insecure. The increase in SNAP benefits will be a meaningful improvement in the lives of millions. U.S. Catholic bishops have repeatedly called for strengthening and improving SNAP ... to help people meet their essential needs.” [usccb.org](http://usccb.org)

These are just a hopeful sample of people putting their faith into action.

Mary Stamp - Editor

## Pacific Islanders hope everyone will come together to protect the Earth

Climate change devastates not only the Pacific Islands but also the whole world.

As a Pacific Islander from the small islands of Tonga, climate change is one of the most threatening issues that the Pacific region is facing now.

The Pacific Islands and their inhabitants are at the front line and most of their people are the most vulnerable to its effects.

The Pacific Island region has already experienced the effects of climate change and the rise of the sea level. For example, some islands in the Solomon Islands are already starting to disappear.

The small island of Kiribati is already starting to be inundated with sea water. The loss of an island to Pacific Islanders is to lose our identity, culture and livelihood.

Pacific Islanders are beginning to look outside their islands for places to migrate to places, like the United States, New Zealand and Australia, but those places, too, are not immune from harsh changes

in temperature and weather.

Climate change has led to the rising of the sea level and other natural disasters in the Pacific Islands. These include cyclone, hurricane, drought, warming of the sea temperature and floods.

In 1990, Cyclone Ofa hit Samoa and flooded many low-lying coastal regions. In 1997, Cyclone Gavin hit Fiji and breached the sea wall with a storm that hit the north coast of Vanua Levu and flooded the provincial capital of Lambasa.

In 2009, a major earthquake of 8.1 led to a tsunami striking Samoa, including American Samoa and Tonga and wiping out many houses, killing more than 189 people and injuring hundreds.

In 2014, Cyclone Heta hit the Island of Niue and devastated most of the infrastructure of this little island.

In 2015, Tropical Cyclone Pam with winds that reached up to 174 miles per hour devastated the Island of Vanuatu leading to the death of 16 people.

In 2016, Fiji witnessed one of the strongest recorded tropical storms, Tropical Cyclone Winston, with winds reaching up to 178 miles an hour, that left a wake of devastation and destruction in the islands. Winston killed 44 people and left more than 40,000 people homeless.

The El Nino drought of 2016 brought famine and illness to hundreds of thousands of people in Papua New Guinea.

The low-lying atoll states of Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands are already at the frontline of climate change.

The rising of the sea level and the sea temperature mean that more cyclones will happen, and they are likely to be more intense.

When the sea is warmer, fish will move into deeper waters, which means only the countries with resources are able to fish. As most of the Pacific Islands depend heavily on the ocean for both food and economy, now they will rely on bigger islands for that purpose.

The Pacific Islands are not only vulnerable to climate change but also vulnerable to the global economy. With limited economic resources, when any natural disaster hits, it takes longer to recover.

However, we have been experiencing the effects of climate change in the heat wave, drought and huge forest fires here in the Pacific Northwest and in California, flooding in the Northeast and cyclones.

Those experiences mean that climate change, although greatly affecting the small islands of the Pacific Ocean, also affects people here in the United States.

Pacific Islanders know that they contribute less to climate change, but there is no time to point fingers.

There is only time to come together to protect the whole world. Therefore, it is all our call now for stewardship and care for this Earth that we are all part of.

**Ikani Fakasiieiki**  
Guest Editorial

Letters to the Editor

## Sounding Board

Commentaries

### Faith leaders challenge pressure on local school board

Several area school boards face similar issues, shifted to online

**Faith Leaders and Leaders** of Conscience of Eastern Washington and North Idaho continue to be concerned about the pressure the Central Valley School District Board of Directors has been receiving from people who are pushing misinformed agendas.

We fully support the board in remaining grounded in measurable facts not fear.

We fully support the board in following Washington Department of Health COVID recommendations, and being willing to adjust your response when there is new scientific information. It is a hallmark of education that we make new decisions when we have additional factual information.

We fully support the board in following the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) guidelines and offering students medically accurate sexual health education. The fear around this issue has missed the reality that our children are on the internet and getting information that is not age appropriate or even factual. In contrast, age appropriate, scientifically based education on their relationships and their rights to their own bodies is a necessary counter measure.

We fully support the board in complying with the OSPI standards related to equality. Following Washington state law means that there is to be no discrimination in public schools.

We fully support the board in teaching

history factually and honestly. Teachers can tell the truth about when our country lived up to our ideals of liberty and justice for all and when we have fallen short. We can speak truthfully about our historic harms to Indigenous people, Blacks, Latinx, differently abled people, women, and LGBTQ+ people. We can also celebrate their amazing contributions to our American Dream.

Please, continue to let verifiable facts be your guide. Continue protecting the health and safety of the students as well as the teachers and staff. Continue to use the best factual information available and when there is new factual information, make new responsible changes.

Sincerely,

Rev. Gen Heywood, Convener of Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience of Eastern Washington and North Idaho

Rev. Andy CastroLang, Rev. Debra L. Conklin UMC, Rev. Rick Matters, April May, Patrick T. McCormick, Sr. Pat Millen, OSF, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Pam Silverstein MD, Quan Yin, Lynne H. Williams MD, of Spokane William Aal, Joan Broeckling of One Peace Many Paths, Lynne deLaubenfels and Charity Doyl, Spokane Valley

Joan Berkowitz, Petra Hoy, Greenacres Linda Ball, Liberty Lake  
Rev. Jeannette Solimine, UCC, Colfax  
Rev. Kaye Hult, Post Falls

### World faith webinar reflects on impact of WCC leader

continued from page 2

Religion News

from Around the World

- **Annegreth Schilling, researcher** in ecumenical and intercultural theology, met Philip when he was 85 and still bore the enthusiasm and hope of youth.

“His biography shows the interdependence of the Global North and South,” she said. “His time as general secretary was a period of conflict of world views. He was an idealist, but not naive, calling churches to see the local task within the total vision.”

Webinar participants noted that the challenge of racism, which Philip worked to stamp out, continues.

- **Boudewijn Sjollema, the first** director of the WCC’s Program to Combat Racism, said Philip was his mentor in the past and still is in spirit, inspiring him to listen to what the oppressed themselves say about their situation.

Some powerful churches in the West feared that would cost them some of their power, he said. The Program to Combat Racism was primarily a program to combat racism within churches, which he said could only speak to the world faithfully if they put their own homes in order.

People said Philip’s wisdom gave them direction and hope.

- **Konrad Raiser, WCC general secretary** from 1993 to 2003, told of Philip’s belief in a dialogue of cultures.

At the end of a 1984 “Cultures in Dialogue” symposium, Philip said: “I contain in my own self many cultures from Mongolian to Africa with Europe in between. I contain within my own self the oppressed and the oppressors, white and black and yellow. Therefore this dialogue of cultures has been going on all my life.”

- **Bärbel said her husband**, who always maintained hope, said the ecumenical movement should be about: “Only connect.” Sometimes connections bore fruit, sometimes not, she added, but he would also say there was always room for improvement in the ecumenical movement.

*The Fig Tree includes this story because editor Mary Stamp and development/editorial associate Marijke Fakasiieiki met and conversed with Philip Potter at WCC assemblies. He inspired their ecumenical/interfaith work and commitment.*

# Calendar of Events

- Aug 30-Sept 12 • **"Celebrate Curiosity" Exhibit**, The Kress Gallery, River Park Square 3rd Level, Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience Art Contest entries, 456-3413
- Sept 2 • **Heal House Wall Raising**, Habitat for Humanity and WSU School of Design, 2 p.m., events.wsu.edu
- **Moscow First Thursday**, 5 to 8 p.m. facebook.com/moscowfirstthursday
- **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, online, 5:30 p.m., amurillo@pjals.org
- **Family to Family Group**, NAMI Spokane, 6:30 to 8 p.m., namispokane.org
- Sept 3 • **First Friday**, 5 to 8 p.m. downtownspokane.org/first-friday, firstfridayspokane.org
- **First Fridays at Pend Oreille Arts Council** Gallery, 110 Main, Sandpoint, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 208-263-6139, artsinsandpoint.org
- **Fox Theater 90th Birthday Open House** Celebration, Martin Woldson Theater, 1011 W. Sprague Ave., 12 to 4 p.m., 624-1200
- **3 Minute Mic**, First Friday Poetry Open Mic, Aunties, 7 to 8 p.m. Online, 838-0206, auntiesbooks.com
- Sept 3-6 • **Labor Day Weekend Retreat**: Perfection of Generosity with Ven. Thubten Chodron, Sravasti Abbey, sravastiabbey.org
- Sept 3-Oct 22 • **"Mary Farrell – Meditation on Place: Prints & Drawings"**, Gonzaga Urban Arts Center, 125 S Stevens, 5 to 7 p.m., art@gonzaga.edu, 313-6686
- Sept 4 • **Back to School Supply Drive**, Holy Temple COGIC, 806 W. Indiana, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 828-7719, b2schoolsdrive@outlook.com
- **Second Saturdays**, Palouse, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., (509) 878-1811, palouschamber@hotmail.com, visitpalouse.com
- Sept 5 • **Virtual Jubilee Market begins**, First Presbyterian and Feast World Kitchen, spokanefpc.org/jubilee-international-marketplace
- Sept 6 • **Labor Day Concert in the Park**, Spokane Symphony, Pavilion at Riverfront, 574 N. Howard St., 6 p.m., spokanesymphony.org
- Sept 7 • **Black Lives Matter Artist Grant Exhibition**, WSU Pullman, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, 1 p.m., events.wsu.edu
- Sept 9 • **Rural Nonprofits Gathering**, Washington Nonprofits, online, 1:30 to 3 p.m., washingtonnonprofits.org
- Sept 9, 23 • **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, online, 5:30 p.m., slichty@pjals.org
- Sept 10 • **Over the Edge: Rappel for a Cause**, Habitat for Humanity Spokane, online fundraiser, habitat-spokane.org POSTPONED TO May
- **Second Friday Artwalk**, Downtown Coeur d'Alene, 5 to 8 p.m., 208-415-0116,
- Sept 10-13 • **Negative Split Marathon**, Mead, (208) 806-1311, runsignup.com
- Sept 13 • **Building Communities in a Dying Civilization**, John Cobb Jr., Climate Center, Gonzaga University, online, 4 to 5:15 p.m., Gonzaga.edu/center-for-climate-society-environment/events
- Sept 13, 16 • **Domestic Violence 101 Training**: "Recognize. Respond. Refer." virtual, Monday, 10 a.m.; Thursday, 2 p.m., 385-6623
- Sept 14 • **Eastern Washington Legislative Conference** planning committee, online, 1 p.m., kaye@thefigtree.org, 535-4112
- **Climate Action Meeting**, 350 Spokane, rooftop, Saranac Pub, 6:30 to 8 p.m., info@350spokane.org, 350spokane.org
- Sept 14-16 • **"Watercolor Journey II"**, Spirit Center, Cottonwood, Idaho, 208-962-2000
- Sept 16 • **Rock the Runway** Fashion Show and Auction for The Arc of Spokane, The Historic Flight Foundation, 5829 E. Rutter Ave., 5:30 p.m., events@arc-spokane.org, arc-spokane.org
- **Thursday Night Live**, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, 2316 W. 1st Ave., 456-3931, northwestmuseum.org
- Sept 16-18 • **PJALS 2021 Action Conference**, "No Turning Back: Radical Progress and Collective Liberation," virtual and in person, keynote speaker Ian Haney López, a founder of the Race-Class Academy, pjals.org
- Sept 16-19 • **50th Odessa Deutchesfest**, Hwy 21 & Hwy 28, deutschesfest.com
- Sept 17, 18, 23, 24, 25 • **Shakespeare in the Park**, Riverfront Park, 507 N. Howard St., 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., 625-6600, myspokanecity.org/riverfrontspokane/calendar/2021/09/25/Shakespeare-in-the-park
- Sept 18 • **Spokane River Clean-up**, Lands Council, Highbridge Park, Riverside Ave. and A St., 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 209-2851, landscouncil.org/events/Spokane-river-clean-up
- **Spokatopia**, Camp Sekani, 67070 E. Upriver Dr., 822-0123, spokatopia.com
- Sept 18-19 • **Spokane Herbal Faire**, West Central Episcopal Mission, 1832 W. Dean Ave., 998-4674, spokaneherbalfaire.org
- Sept 19 • **Hands Across the Falls**, Community-Minded Enterprises, Riverfront Park, 507 N. Howard, 1 to 4 p.m., 960-8529, community-minded.org/hands-across-the-falls
- **Hope-Full. Eat. Listen. Celebrate.** Compassionate Addiction Treatment, 112 E. 1st Ave., 4 to 7 p.m., 919-3362, facebook.com/events/s/hope-full-eat-listen-celebrate/590266712354330/
- Sept 20 • **NAACP Spokane General Membership Meeting**, zoom, 7 p.m., https://www.facebook.com/spokane.naacp/
- Sept 21 • **The Art of Rebellion**: Social Justice and Chicana/Chicano Visual Arts, Jake Prendez, online, 6:30 p.m., www.humanities.org/event/online-the-art-of-rebellion-social-justice-and-chicana-chicano-visual-arts
- Sept 23 • **"Eye Contact: A Night of Art Fundraiser"** for Volunteers of America, Washington Cracker Co. Building, 304 W. Pacific, 5 to 8 p.m., 710-8944, voaspokane.org/eyecontact
- **HRC Ministries Gala**, Davenport Grand Hotel, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 5 to 8:30 p.m. 922-0939, hrcministries.com
- Sept 24-26 • **Valleyfest**, 13500 Mirabeau Parkway, Spokane Valley, valleyfest.org
- Sept 25 • **El Mercado**, Latinos En Spokane, A.M. Cannon Park, 1511 N. Elm, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., info@latinosenspokane.org, 558-9359
- **Kids Drop In & Code**, Spark Central, 1214 W. Summit Pkwy, 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., 279-0299
- Sept 25-29 • **Justice Week**, The Way to Justice, 845 S. Sherman, thewaytojustice.com
- Sept 28 • **"The Cold Millions"** by Jess Walter, Aunties, The Hive, 2904 E. Sprague, 7 p.m., 879-6466, auntiesbooks.com/event/cold-millions-jess-walter -10% of sales to library
- Sept 29 • **Madeleine Albright**, Whitworth President's Leadership Forum, Spokane Convention Center, 7:30 to 9 a.m., whitworth.edu
- **Fig Tree Mailing and Distribution**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 9 a.m., 535-4112
- **Black Lives Matter**: An Intergenerational Discussion, WSU, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., events.wsu.edu
- Sept 29-Oct 3 • **Byzantine Icon Workshop/Retreat**, Praying the Mystery of St. Joseph, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., ihrc.net, 448-1224
- Oct 2 • **Mennonite Country Auction and Sale**, Menno Mennonite Church, 20 miles west of Ritzville, 659-0926, memmomennonite.org
- Oct 3 • **Vigil for the Healing of the Earth**, Old Mission Landing at Cataldo, 3 to 4:30 p.m., genheywood@gmail.com
- Oct 4-10 • **"Lights, Camera, Auction!"** virtual Partnering for Progress Into Africa Auction, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, livestream bidding 7 to 8 p.m., Oct. 7, partneringforprogress.org/virtual-into-africa-auction/
- Oct 7 • **Fig Tree Benefit/Development and Board Meetings**, 631 S Richard Allen Ct., noon - benefit, 1 to 3 - board, 535-1813

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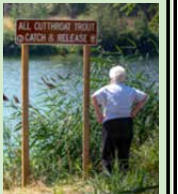
### Join Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience of E Wa and N Ida in

### Vigil for the Healing the Earth

3 to 4:30 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 3

From Interstate 90 Exit 39, go toward Old Mission State Park and follow The Dredge Road to the Old Mission Landing.

[genheywood@gmail.com](mailto:genheywood@gmail.com)



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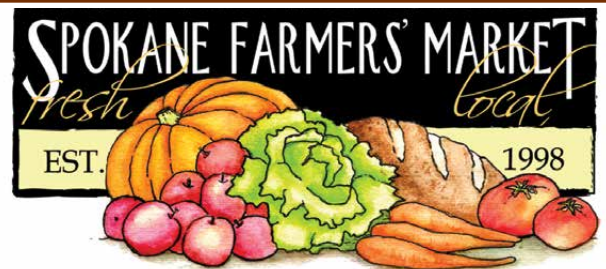


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# St. Vincent de Paul in North Idaho celebrates 75th year of serving

By Kaye Hult

The 75th Anniversary celebration for St Vincent de Paul North Idaho (SVDP) in Coeur d'Alene on Thursday, Sept. 9, which was sold out, has been postponed.

It was planned as an opportunity to learn of the agency's history, reflect on the years and invite the audience to examine how they have helped or can help the community.

Development director Barbara Smalley attributes the response to the role it has played serving the community over those years.

Since coming to SVDP 10 years ago, she has been telling the story of St. Vincent de Paul, which is known for its thrift stores in Post Falls, Coeur d'Alene and Osburn in the Silver Valley, but is much more.

St. Vincent de Paul in North Idaho is also a social service agency, offering housing, shelters and services for seniors and families with children. Most services are offered at the H.E.L.P. Center, 201 E. Harrison Ave. in Coeur d'Alene.

"Beyond the homeless, we work with all those who struggle, such as the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population," she said, noting that includes veterans and people with disabilities.

SVDP also offers parenting classes through ICARE Parenting Support, which also offers child sexual abuse prevention workshops.

In 1946, Coeur d'Alene was a small lumber and mining community. Members of the St. Thomas parish saw neighbors in need and started a clothes closet. That grew into St. Vincent de Paul, which is now the largest organization in North Idaho serving low-income and homeless people.

As they seek to provide support and compassion along with services to help people be self-sufficient, their vision is to offer "a hand up, not a hand out," as they "clothe the naked, feed the hungry and shelter the homeless"

They also help people enrich and rebuild their lives with dignity, said Barb. When she encounters people with a judgmental view of SVDP clients, she urges them to realize clients



Barbara Smalley educates community on work of agency.

did not have a goal of being homeless or low income.

Barb said housing is increasingly hard to locate. SVDP helps people find jobs more readily.

Its men's and women's shelters offer information and referral to services, job counseling and life skill classes.

Clients are expected to volunteer at the thrift store and help with chores at the shelters. They are to save half their income so they will have money for their own residence when they leave.

They are expected to find employment within 30 days of their maximum 90 days of residence, when they are to move from the shelter into a stable situation.

For those seeking work, St Vincent de Paul provides career counseling and a voucher program for job search. Job seekers gain skills and confidence for job interviews.

SVDP operates more than 300 units of permanent senior and low-income housing in the five counties of North Idaho.

Its Trinity Group Homes are semi-independent homes in Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls for those with mental health issues who need life skills training. Their goal is for residents to graduate into community living.

Angel Arms/Healing Hearts Housing provide housing for chronically homeless individuals and families. The head of household must have a documented disability. The goal is for residents to be trained, gain self-sufficiency and move into independent living within two years.

SVDP also offers rent and util-

ity assistance for people in their own homes, facing eviction or utility cut-off. Individuals may apply for this help. If Social Security requires it, SVDP helps with representative payee services.

For people with limited access to food, SVDP offers meals at Father Bill's Kitchen, a community dining hall that serves a free meal Monday to Friday evenings.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program provides children in day care with food.

Barb said a lack of transportation makes the many area food banks difficult for many to access, except people who live nearby.

"Father Bill's Kitchen is centrally located and on the bus line, as is the Coeur d'Alene SVDP campus," Barb said. "Throughout the pandemic, we

have continued all our services, including the dining hall."

The services are possible because local nonprofits work together, said Barb.

Barb grew up on a large farm in Minnesota in a loving family with 13 children. They had to help each other meet their needs and had to care about each others' feelings.

After education in Minnesota and work in Tennessee and Portland, Ore., she settled in Coeur d'Alene, where she married, had four children and has lived for more than 30 years.

She spent 10 years working in the travel industry and 10 in sales at the Coeur d'Alene Press.

After her husband's death,

Barb wanted to give back. So she decided to work with SVDP.

She likes helping people and celebrating their success stories. She appreciates the generosity of those who help.

Barb advises people to consider what they want to have, what they want to do, what they want to be and what they want to give.

"We have a responsibility to give to our community," she said.

At SVDP's Nov. 18 "Souport the End of Homelessness" Luncheon people can sample more than 50 soups and donate to support the winter's warming shelter to protect people from the cold.

For information, call 208-664-3095 or email barbara@stvincentdepaulca.org.