

35TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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

ESL teacher understands students' plight

By Mary Stamp

When Luisa Orellana-Westbrook hears of the caravan of Central American refugees, children separated from their parents at the border, churches in the sanctuary movement, prejudice limiting immigration and people welcoming newcomers, she understands the fear, uncertainty, trauma and hope people experience.

She identifies, because she and her family left her home village of Cerro Plata, El Salvador, spent two years in hiding and then several months fleeing to the United States after her father, Tanis, was "disappeared" by a death squad.

Luisa integrates that understanding as she teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) to adults at Spokane Community College, which she has done for 13 years, overlapping with teaching immigrant and refugee children, which she did for 25 years until 2017.

Not only has she taught children, youth and adults English to help them flourish in their new country, but also she has learned from the people of many races, cultures and nationalities she has met.

Her first students were Hmong and Vietnamese children. Now she teaches students from 11 na-



Luisa Orellana-Westbrook teaches refugee children, youth and adults.

tionalities, including Sudanese, Congolese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Egyptian, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Burmese and Chuk.

She knows that many like her may have fled war and violence, but also come from villages where they flourished, running freely as children and gathering in the evenings in the village square to sing, sit together and visit, seeing "each other eye-to-eye," she said.

In her encounters with refugees, Luisa continues to emulate and follow the newest Catholic saint—Saint Óscar, the martyred El Salvadoran archbishop who championed social justice for the poor and challenged government violence and oppression.

Her family had to flee because of their association with him.

Luisa's mother, brother and sister—Transito, Tanis and Sister Ana, SP—were at the Vatican in Rome with thousands of Salvadorans and others on Oct. 14 when he was canonized as a saint. They did not have tickets, but Transito held a picture of St. Romero and prayed. They were let in. Luisa said her mother's prayers are powerful.

In 2015, Luisa had gone to San Salvador when he was beatified. It

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Pastor gathers interfaith leaders for ongoing efforts in 'moral revival'

By Kaye Hult

Genavieve Heywood has had a passion to stand up for justice throughout her life and now in her leadership as pastor of Veradale United Church of Christ in Spokane Valley and in the community beyond its doors.

Last January, Gen attended a meeting that the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) hosted to introduce the Poor People's Campaign (PPC): A National Call to Moral Revival to explore ways people in Eastern Washington could become involved.

She realized there was little presence from people with a spiritual perspective, so she invited spiritual leaders in the area "from A to Z—Atheists to Zoroastrians," as she put it, to gather and discuss how they could offer spiritual support and advocacy for what PJALS was planning.

With the invitation, she included the principles for the Poor People's Campaign to make it clear what the group would stand for.

The PPC principles say that "moral revival is necessary to save the heart and soul of our democ-

racy." They outline a number of issues that need to be addressed for this to happen, and the need for local individuals to become involved in addressing them.

"This is non-partisan, not about left or right, Democrat or Republican, but about right and wrong," say the principles. It is based on nonviolence.

The PPC suggests four areas of focus: systemic racism, poverty, militarism and ecological devastation.

"As a diverse group of spiritual leaders, we can model what it means to repair the breach and move toward developing the beloved community," Gen wrote in the letter. She suggested they could broaden their focus to Eastern Washington and North Idaho.

Gen sent a second letter, asking faith leaders from a variety of viewpoints to advocate for their common concern about the separation of children and families at the border.

Eventually 50 representatives of different faith communities signed on.

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International Holy Names leader promotes justice and education

Sister Catherine Ferguson, SNJM, settled in Spokane in 2017 after years of study, teaching and justice action.

The previous 15 years she educated people and advocated for justice through UNANIMA International, a non-governmental organization (NGO) with the United Nations, and through her leadership with the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) in the United States, Canada and worldwide.

Catherine headed UNANIMA from 2001 to 2011, then served from 2011 to 2016 as superior general of the SNJM based in Longueuil, Quebec.

UNANIMA connects 20 congregations of Catholic sisters to educate and influence policy makers at the United Nations on behalf of women and children—especially those living in poverty—immigrants and refugees, and the environment. It brings voices, concerns and experiences of 20,000 members in more than 80 countries—women who work as educators, health care providers, social workers and development workers—to the UN headquarters in New York. Two of UNANIMA's campaigns are Water = Life and Stop the Demand (for human trafficking).

SNJM international justice commitments focus particularly on the struggle against human trafficking, access to water, and advocacy for refugees and migrants. The Holy Names Sisters have a network of schools, a university, clinics and community centers based on their commitment to "educate, contemplate, liberate."

In January 2017, Catherine moved to Spokane, where she previously studied at Fort Wright College, taught two years at the Academy and served from 1989 to 1995 as Washington provincial leader at the Convent of the Holy Names.

For 18 months beginning in 1987, her commitment to justice was deepened by research engaging with base communities

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Religion News Briefs

Around the World

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WCC Executive Committee adopts statements

The World Council of Churches (WCC) Executive Committee met in Uppsala, Sweden from Nov. 1 to 8 to approve the 2019 program plans, discuss world affairs and issue seven statements in response to current situations.

They discussed programs on racism and a report from the September World Conference on Xenophobia, Racism and Populist Nationalism co-sponsored with the Vatican.

Agnes Abuom, moderator of the WCC Central Committee, spoke of "Praying, Walking, Working and Remembering Together," filling in with issues and global trends.

"Waves of populist nationalism pose threats to human life and dignity, but stand also to erode democratic and human rights gains so far achieved and for which WCC has been an advocate for many decades," she said.

WCC general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit offered a look back, as well as forward.

"The ecumenical movement has been seen as emphasizing that we are called to live in discipleship here and now for the transformation of the world according to God's will today," he said. "God wants the world to believe, to receive, to be renewed and united according to God's love."

He called for a renewed commitment to justice and peace.

"Time is passing, and we with time," he said. "Yet we remain one with the many believers who came before us, those who have shown their hope as an anticipation that leads to their participation in the mission of God."

The Executive Committee said that, although much work has been done since the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women was launched, there are increasing problems and major challenges. They called for strengthening the work on creating "just communities of women and men" through more advocacy, theological reflection and action on the worldwide, national, regional and local levels. WCC leaders emphasized Thursdays in Black, a global campaign for a world free from rape and violence.

The council's prophetic voice came in seven statements. They included pleas to the international community and churches to focus their advocacy and activism toward climate justice, economic justice, health care, reconciliation in Ethiopia/Eritrea, gender justice, economic transformation and impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific.

Ofelia Ortega tells of WCC's achievements

The Rev. Ofelia Ortega Suárez may be 82 years old, but after the students at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey heard her speak Nov. 12 about the WCC achievements and hopes in its 70th year, they said she has the spirit and enthusiasm of a 20-year-old, as she urged them to "dream of a better world."

Ofelia said the WCC's commitment to defending life has been in its theological "alignment with the world's poor through programs of churches promoting health, education, cooperation and the unity of humanity."

She knows the institute, having graduated from the 1967-1968 class at Bossey, having been a professor there from 1985 to 1988 and serving on the WCC as executive secretary for theological education until 1997. Ofelia represents many firsts, including being the first Presbyterian woman to be ordained in Cuba, the first Cuban at Bossey, and facilitating an early meeting of the WCC at the Vatican.

"The WCC is an organization with no equivalent in the history of Christianity," said Ofelia, who was also regional president from the Caribbean/Latin America from 2006 to 2013.

"The WCC constitutes the most important, best organized and most representative realization of the will of Christianity to visibly express the unity that Christ wished for his church," she said.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Legislative Conference is January 26

"Inform, Inspire, Involve" is the theme for the 2019 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 26, 2019, at Spokane Valley United Methodist Church, 115 N. Raymond.

The Rev. Jim CastroLang, Eastern Washington representative on the Faith Action Network (FAN) Board and member of the planning committee with representatives from The Fig Tree and Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington, will moderate a panel discussion on how a religious grounding helps generate policies that improve lives and society.

Panelists will be Episcopal Bishop Gretchen Rehberg, the Rev. Walter Kendricks of Morningstar Baptist, D.R. Michel of

Upper Columbia United Tribes and Catholic Bishop William Skylstad.

Workshop plans include:

- A Faith Action Network presentation on health care and nutrition;
- Jessica Zimmerle of Earth Ministry on environmental issues;
- Judy Bryon of the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center on gun safety;
- Ryan Murphy from Save the Children Action Network on immigration and family separations;
- Jim Dawson of FUSE on tax and revenue issues;
- Homelessness advocacy;
- Criminal justice and the jail.

The afternoon includes an overview of issues coming before the 2019 Washington State Legislature from FAN and a presentation on

tools for effective advocacy.

For a small extra donation, community agencies may bring displays to share in a resource fair.

The Fig Tree partners with Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington, the Faith Action Network of Washington, the Spokane District of the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Conference, the NAACP and Earth Ministries to plan the annual event.

The planning committee has meetings scheduled at 1:30 p.m., Thursdays, Nov. 29, and Dec. 13. They will make final arrangements in January.

For information, call 535-4112, or 535-1813, email resourcedirectory@thefigtree.org or share the flier online at www.thefigtree.org/FigTreeEvent.pdf.

Fig Tree seeks hosts for Benefits in March

Plans are underway for The Fig Tree's 35th Anniversary celebration at the 2019 Benefit Lunch and Benefit Breakfast.

The theme is "35 Years of Informing, Inspiring, Involving."

The Benefit Lunch will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, March 8, and the Benefit Breakfast will be held from 7:15 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 13.

Both events are held at Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University through the Religious Studies Department.

Speakers who are chosen from among the people interviewed for stories during the previous year will share about the impact of The Fig Tree in their lives and work. A video will celebrate the contributions of volunteers that make The Fig Tree monthly newspaper and annual comprehensive Resource Directory possible.

The Fig Tree is currently recruiting hosts to sponsor tables and invite guests. In addition, it is reaching out to the community to invite businesses and agencies

to help underwrite the costs, so The Fig Tree can reach the goal budget of \$50,000.

"Our goal is to raise enough so we can support additional staff to partner with us and help build The Fig Tree's reach, its base of support and the diversity of stories," said Mary Stamp, editor.

The Fig Tree is also seeking volunteers to help on the days of the events and to help promote the events.

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

Christmas Bureau gives gifts to families

Catholic Charities, Volunteers of America and the Spokesman Review are collaborating again this December for the annual holiday assistance program to provide donated funds, toys, books and grocery store vouchers for thousands of low-income individuals and families.

From Wednesday, Dec. 12, to Friday, Dec. 21—excluding Sunday, Dec. 16—the Christmas Bu-

reau is open from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center, 404 N. Havana in the AG Building.

There is one grocery store voucher per family, books for children 14 and under and toys for children 17 and younger.

Since 1945, the Christmas Bureau has offered "help and hope" to thousands of needy families—26,103 in 2017.

More than 500 volunteers work to review required documentation, sort gifts and distribute them. Volunteers interested in assisting in 2019 may fill out a volunteer application.

After Thanksgiving, the Spokesman-Review publishes articles about the bureau and names donors.

For information, call 358-4270 or email bkrause@ccspokane.org.

World Relief plans fundraiser on Dec. 5

World Relief in Spokane is planning a fundraising event, "Around the Table: A thousand remarkable stories, one city we call home" from 5:30 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 5, at the Daven-

port Grand Hotel Ballroom.

The event features Mandy Manning, the National Teacher of the Year, who works with refugee and immigrant students at Ferris High School's Newcomer Center.

The Neema Refugee Choir will perform and there will be a chance to meet refugees, eat dinner with

them, hear their stories and donate to support them.

"When we know people's story, we are connected to them in a special way," said Mark Finney, executive director.

For information, call 484-9829 or visit World Relief Spokane on Facebook.

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Holy Names sister continues her commitment to educate, seek justice

Continued from page 1

in the capitals of Chile and Peru as their dictatorships became democracies, and Mexico during its presidential election.

In the fourth grade at Holy Names St. Mary's Grade School in Seattle, Catherine was inspired to be a sister and teach. She followed this inspiration during in high school at the Seattle Forest Ridge Convent taught by the Religious of the Sacred Heart. After graduating in 1961, she entered the convent at Marylhurst, Ore.

Her group of 38 was one of the larger groups of postulants. Many were from Seattle and Spokane.

In 1962, the Oregon-Washington province split by state. Being from Washington, she went to Fort Wright College in Spokane.

"We traveled to Spokane in a 20-passenger green school bus we had purchased in 1962 with Betty Crocker coupons. I remember after dinner soaking the cardboard to take the coupons off, so there was less weight to mail the millions needed," she said.

Catherine, whose degree was in math, taught grade school French two years in Spokane, and high school geometry, algebra, literature, world literature and religion 15 years in Seattle.

After completing a master's degree in 1970 at Champaign Urbana, Ill., she taught two years in Seattle and five years in Walla Walla. She was vice principal and taught at Sacred Heart Academy in Salem, Ore., before beginning master's and doctoral degrees in international studies at the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

Oregon schools had mandated global studies, but had no curriculum, so Catherine developed one, because she was concerned that students were voting but ignorant of international issues.

Thinking it was important to know Spanish in this region, she did field work in Latin America for her dissertation, "working with Christian base communities to assess whether they helped marginalized people be in charge of their own destinies," she said.

She spent six months each in Santiago, Lima and Mexico City. "It was life changing," she said.

"There were two kinds of Christian base communities. Some did political activism, worked in soup kitchens and carried out self-help activities. Others were more sacramental, teaching religion because there were few priests," said Catherine.

In Chile, she lived with a family



Catherine Ferguson, SNJM, retires in Spokane.

in charge of a base community. The father had lived two years in exile in Argentina, because he was on a death list. After she left, Pinochet lost a plebiscite ending his dictatorship, despite attempts to detain people to prevent them from voting. The next election restored civilian rule in Chile, which was historically a democracy.

She was in Lima at the end of a military dictatorship as a new president was democratically elected. She also saw how inflation made it "impossible for people to live."

In Mexico City, some base communities were engaged in activism to challenge electoral fraud. On election day, they observed at precincts. With two-thirds of the count posted, Social Democrats were winning over the party that ruled since 1917. The computers went down. When they came up, the ruling party had the lead.

She returned to the U.S. expecting to have a year to write, but was elected to serve as provincial superior for Washington at the Convent of the Holy Names in Spokane from 1989 to 1995.

After that, she finished her dissertation and returned to international work, first serving a year as an English language intern at the Pax Christi headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, going to consultations in the Philippines, Asia, Latin America and Europe. She learned not only about European countries but also about the United Nations.

She is sad that U.S. news does

not give "nuances of where we fit in the big picture, but focuses on presidential politics."

After returning, she worked from 1997 to 2001 with the Inner City Law Center in Los Angeles, addressing homelessness and aiding the lawyers to force slum landlords to compensate families for harm they suffered in their slum apartments, such as cockroach bites and damage by rats.

Following the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, Holy Names Sisters and other religious communities had explored starting an NGO to lobby the United Nations and to influence international policy being made by world leaders there.

Alone, the Sisters of the Holy Names believed they were not big enough or international enough to be an NGO, so they partnered with the Franciscans International. Catherine, still in Los Angeles, began working half-time on that effort. She recruited other congregations to form such an NGO.

One weekend in September 2001, representatives of those congregations met in New York City to design an NGO. They developed a mission statement, budget and priorities, and asked for \$50,000—\$10,000 from five communities for each of three years.

"The name, UNANIMA, means being harmonious, not the same or unanimous," Catherine said.

It includes "anima," the feminine principle that animates life. "Unanima," expresses the desire

to work together in a collegial way, especially related to the UN.

In February, the communities said "yes" to UNANIMA International. They became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2002 and affiliated with the UN in 2006.

As coordinator, Catherine lived in a studio apartment owned by the Cabrini Sisters in New York City and rented an office with two other NGOs. She focused on UNANIMA's priorities for social development, the status of women, sustainable development and HIV/AIDS.

"We gathered information from the grassroots to have impact on UN statements," she said.

In 2010 in Addis Ababa, she attended a meeting of UN experts and NGOs on poverty eradication. Materials developed there provided resources for the Commission on Social Development's policy statement on the eradication of poverty.

UNANIMA also worked with grassroots activists from member communities to provide information on governments' lack of compliance with women's rights as stated in the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This information helped UN experts give recommendations to governments on how better to provide for the rights of women.

UNANIMA collaborated with lobbying efforts of the Blue Planet Project in Canada for the UN General Assembly to recognize that water is a human right, as a step to counter privatizing water.

"We had success lobbying smaller governments," Catherine said. "In 2011, the General Assembly recognized water as a human right, with abstentions but no negative votes."

"Sadly, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights is one of the few UN documents the U.S. has signed. The U.S. helped negotiate other documents affirming various human rights, such as the right of children, but because the Senate has refused to sign on to them, we have no internationally acceptable way to show our accountability for these rights," she said.

At UN meetings, UNANIMA often provides informed speakers to educate delegates on issues from the status of women's rights to how runoff from copper mines in Peru destroyed the environment.

In 2011, Catherine's election as superior general of the Sisters of the Holy Names took her to the international headquarters in Longueuil on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River across from Montreal. Over five years, she traveled to visit every place in the congregation once or twice—Lesotho, Peru, Brazil, Canada, the U.S. West Coast and U.S. Mid Atlantic. She also represented the congregation at meetings in Rome.

"In the late 1950s and 1960s, our congregation was its largest, with nearly 6,000 members, many using their gifts in teaching and parish work," Catherine said. "Like other congregations, the number entering decreased, while those in the community aged. After Vatican II from 1962 to 1965, many more career options opened for women, so fewer felt a vocation to be a nun. Many realized they didn't have a vocation and chose to leave religious communities."

After her term ended in December 2016, Catherine did a sabbatical year with some travel.

Now in Spokane, she volunteers with World Relief and helped with the Lisa Brown campaign.

"I feel a call to do religious and community service," she said, adding the importance of the spiritual dimension of service.

"Education is not just about schools. Our work with the UN is education," said Catherine, who in April began serving on the board of NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby.

"Education is an important part of who Holy Names Sisters were and are. We still have academies at Oakland, Tampa and Seattle," she said, "but education now is seen more broadly as 'community education,' teaching wherever sisters can make a difference in improving people's living conditions and speaking out for justice.

For information, email cferguson@snjm@gmail.com.

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Teacher wants to educate students so they will make a difference

Continued from page 1
did not take the usual 10 years of research to determine if he was a saint, because “there were so many miracles and witnesses, and because he was martyred,” she said. “After the celebration she and others saw a halo in the sky.”

While she was there Luisa was pleased to see her father’s name was on a wall in memory of “the disappeared” and the martyrs.

As a deacon, her father, Tanis, often went to San Salvador about 30 minutes by bus to meet with Archbishop Romero.

Tanis worked under him baptizing, preaching, teaching the Bible and theology, caring for families suffering from the war in local Christian groups, called base communities.

“My father’s preaching was prophetic and powerful, following in Romero’s footsteps,” Luisa said. “He knew that might be dangerous. He might disappear as many others did. We always wondered if we would be the next.”

“Now St. Romero is always present in my life,” she said. “I try to live his spirituality of a living gospel. I talk to him as my friend.”

“I see St. Romero when we talk about immigration to the U.S. and the caravan of people fleeing violence. I see him in those who suffer. I know he would bring hope and challenge the President, Romero challenged President Carter in his time,” Luisa said.

She believes more church leaders and community leaders should speak against injustice, but she understands their fear.

After Romero was assassinated on March 24, 1980, Luisa’s family knew they were in danger because of caring for the poor and teaching the gospel in base communities—which were associated with liberation theology.

On Easter after Romero was killed, her father preached, quoting him: “If they kill me, I will be resurrected among my people and be a seed of hope.” Some who did not support Romero reported him.

In May 1980, the Orellanas learned a death squad was coming for them. Luisa was 14. Her parents, five siblings, three nieces and nephews, and some in their community left their home village, Cerro Plata. They spent two years in hiding before they fled in 1983 through Guatemala, to Mexico City, Guadalupe and across the border into the United States to Tucson, Los Angeles and into sanctuary in the basement of St. Ann’s Parish in Spokane.

“It was an experience of many miracles,” Luisa said of the time in hiding and fleeing.

The death squad tortured their neighbors to find out where they

had gone. Even though the son was killed and 16-year-old daughter dragged behind a truck, the father did not tell.

“We need to see God in one another and be God to one another,” Luisa said. “When we keep Christ alive in our hearts, we are hopeful.”

They walked along a river where the army threw bodies. They walked five hours to a town and took a bus to Tepecoyo, where they lived for three months under a tree behind a church.

“It was a miracle we were not found because the military was in the next building,” Luisa said.

Then a death squad learned they were there and came for them. They took a bus to her grandfather’s house in Santa Ana—the third largest city in El Salvador—and stayed until 1981. In 1982, they were found again and went to an uncle, who was a priest. They lived in the parish hall basement.

Her father continued his ministry. Luisa and her sister, Ester, sang for services. Luisa went to school there and anywhere she could. She sang in the children’s choir and went to villages with her uncle and father.

“My father believed the gospel is to be lived. We cannot call ourselves Christian if we do not love and see Christ in others. He read the Bible, spoke against violence and served people in need,” she said.

In March 1983, soldiers came to the church and took her father. They thought they killed a leader who worked with him, leaving him laying on a sugar plantation field. He survived but his legs were broken so badly that he is now in a wheelchair, she said.

“We went to live with another uncle for a week. A death squad came. We left at night to a city where no one knew us,” said Luisa, who was in school there from March to July.

The school was attacked. Soldiers threatened teachers and children. When she went to school, there were bodies outside it.

“I thought I would be next. I prayed for the soldiers to be converted and see Christ. It’s hard to understand that everyone is made in God’s image,” said Luisa, who taught catechism there and decided to be a teacher.

Transito sold some land. She used the money for their escape. In July, they went by bus to San Salvador and then to Guatemala.

At the border, the bus was stopped. Some were taken out and shot. Luisa saw it.

“We prayed and prayed. It was a miracle we made it into Guatemala,” she said. “We stayed in a convent where my sister, Ana, had been before she went to Italy for 20 years. After three days we took a bus to the Mexican border.”

“We did not eat for days. We slept in a building beside the immigration building. When a man asked who we were, we feared we would be sent back,” she said, but he said to take a bus to Chiapas.

They went to a church. The priest took them in, and gave them crackers to take for the bus ride to Mexico City, where they went by taxi to the cathedral.

Because there was no choir, Ester and Luisa sang the worship songs. At the end of Mass, the priest said, “We have been blessed by a choir of angels, but I don’t know who they are.” He sent us to stay with a family, whose son was a priest in Los Angeles. That’s where three of her brothers lived. They had fled earlier to escape being taken into the military.

The Orellanas took a bus to Guadalajara, where Ester and Luisa sang in a Mass at a Franciscan parish. They stayed in a school that was burned out because the priest had said it was for the poor.

After they sang for a Mass, the priest said her family was fleeing from Salvador and needed food. Her younger brothers stood at the entry with baskets, and people put in money as they left.

The priest connected them with the sanctuary movement in the U.S. They went by train to El Museo in Sonoro, Mexico, where they were in the hands of the sanctuary movement.

Eight days later, a tall woman with long, straight blonde hair and blue eyes—the first Caucasian-American Luisa had met—took the Orellanas—plus a man with an 11-year-old son who had joined them—by van seven hours over the desert on a hot August day.

Two priests met them and told them once they were over the border to run and not look back.

Her three brothers went with the man and his son through a cemetery. Luisa, her mother, two sisters and Ester’s children—four, three and two—went across the desert. Transito, Luisa and Ester carried the children,” she said. “We ran for miles. It seemed like forever. Two vans with people from different churches were

waiting for us.”

It was Sept. 14, 1983. They were in Arizona. They went in the vans to a building where they waited for her brothers. Her mother prayed, and they came.

That night they went in different cars to Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, where the Rev. John Fife, a leader in the sanctuary movement, was pastor for 35 years.

“He is a saint, too,” Luisa said.

After two weeks they went to her older brother in Los Angeles. While with him until 1985, Luisa went to high school. Because they were undocumented and in danger, Transito agreed to become a sanctuary family.

People from St. Ann’s in Spokane came and drove them to Spokane. The Orellanas lived from 1985 to 1990 in the basement of St. Ann’s rectory.

“Fr. Gino Piccoli, the priest at St. Ann’s was another saint,” Luisa said. “He embraced us. The community welcomed us, people of different churches and faiths. It was like Pentecost—the true gospel of welcoming strangers.”

During high school, Luisa listened to teachers and others talk, repeating and writing down what they said. In six months, she could have short conversations.

In high school, she thought about being a nun, but decided not to follow that path.

Luisa completed her studies and earned a diploma from Ferris High School.

Friends talked of going to universities, but she because she was undocumented she could not officially go. A parishioner suggested she sit in on classes. She talked with one university president, saying she just wanted to get an education so she could teach, even if she did not earn credits.

A professor invited her to come to his class. He was teaching 1 Corinthians and talking about the first Christian communities. He asked Luisa to tell the class about base communities. After that, he helped her find classes to sit in.

Eventually, an immigration attorney from Arizona, Father David Meyer, took the Orellanas to Tucson to fill out paperwork to get permits to stay, but they were not permits to work or study.

They then moved to a house on Montgomery. For nine years their case was being considered. In 1999, they were able to apply to be citizens. Luisa was engaged for five years to marry her husband, Christian, whose family were active at St. Ann’s. She postponed the wedding until she was a citizen.

Luisa studied for six years, first majoring in psychology to deal with the trauma she experienced, and then studying to be a teacher.

One day in a store, a woman asked, “Are you Luisa?” She suggested that Luisa could teach ESL in Spokane Public Schools.

“I fell in love with my first job. Mornings, I taught K to 3. Afternoons, I taught 4th to 6th graders. Later I taught at the Newcomers Center at Ferris, traveling every week to teach ESL at seven high schools,” she said. “Then I began teaching adults evenings at SCC.”

“I look forward to giving my students hope. Like me, many went through a silent period for months before they started to talk,” she said.

Now Luisa just teaches ESL for the Community Colleges of Spokane Institute for Extended Learning at SCC, working with people, who have experienced war and trauma, and left their countries with sadness. She wants them to learn English so they can be educated and make a difference in the world.

Now her siblings are teachers, physical therapists and in other work in Spokane and in Seattle.

“Some say immigrants come to take people’s jobs, but we worked hard to have the jobs we have,” Luisa said. “We came here to give and to help those who suffer.”

“I hope that by telling my story more people will live in love, compassion and understanding, so other immigrants will not go through so much to find freedom and a safe place to live,” she said.

Twice a month, Luisa attends St. Ann’s to sing Mass with her brother. Twice a month she attends St. Aloysius, which supports and visits a village in El Salvador each year. Once a month, she leads a children’s choir at St. Joseph’s.

Knowing a modern saint, she continues to carry St. Romero’s message of love for all people.

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Public broadcasting connects, educates, enlightens, engages people

Weaving his way through a career in commercial news broadcasting from on-air reporter to general manager for CBS and NBC stations in Dayton, Norfolk, Dallas, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Buffalo, Houston, Birmingham and back to Norfolk from 1980 to 2005, Gary Stokes found his niche in public broadcasting first with Alabama Public TV in Birmingham and then in 2011 with KSPS-TV in Spokane.

For him, the pressure to produce a targeted bottom line for a corporation was much less appealing than the mission-driven focus of public broadcasting to broaden horizons by educating, connecting, enlightening, inspiring and engaging people.

"Public broadcasting needs to raise funds to meet its budget, but it's not the same pressure as meeting the target numbers for profits in commercial media," Gary said. "I like our mission-based work."

Now Gary feels he is better able to live up to the principles and ideals he grew up with, able to do good and able to give back to the community and world.

In commercial media, he asked the questions he was supposed to, knowing they might bring not the depth of answers needed.

"I now see coverage I could and should have done in a different way," he said.

He's no longer producing news, but still has a passion to keep up with news. From 5 to 7 p.m., he watches BBC News, Nightly Business Report and PBS NewsHour.

"I'm a news guy at heart," he said, noting he also appreciates how Frontline researches and tells stories, and how The PBS NewsHour gives people time to answer questions.

"Public broadcasting does journalism that focuses on the answers, not the questions, giving people interviewed time to build up answers layer on layer," he said, contrasting it with journalism that "peppers one question after another, asking the next question before a person has a chance to answer the first one."

Gary considers that type of journalism a disservice.

"It's important to give people time to answer questions in their way, rather than an interview demonstrating a reporter's ability to ask questions," he said.

For Gary, it's about doing what



Gary Stokes finds niche in public broadcasting.

he can to fulfill KSPS' mission to "improve the quality of life" for viewers in the 2 million households it reaches in Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho, Alberta and South-eastern British Columbia.

Values are important to Gary, who grew up Episcopal and went to church every week. On Sundays, he would go to church with his mother and then bowl with his father. Marrying into the Catholic church, he regularly attends the Cathedral of Our Lady of Lourdes.

He lived in Philadelphia through high school, graduating in 1974 and then earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 1978 at the University of Dayton.

For two years, Gary was a probation officer for the Montgomery County Juvenile Court. Realizing he was taking it home with him, he was looking for another career path when he met with the news director of the CBS News affiliate, who had heard him announcing for a band concert.

"He said if I ever wanted to be in TV news to contact him. So he did, and after a series of writing tests and an on-camera audition, He started as an on-air reporter for WHIO in 1980. He worked in different positions in commercial television until 2005, when he was hired as the corporate support manager for Alabama Public Television.

When he started at Alabama Public TV in Birmingham in 2005, he said that he found it "refreshing to use the power of

media for good."

Gary has been at KSPS for seven years, the longest of any job. Others at the station have been there longer. Some started as interns and stayed.

He came to KSPS to be director of the Friends of KSPS, following Patty Starkey who had been in the position for 38 years.

When Claude Kistler retired as president and general manager, Gary took that role in 2013. That year the license for KSPS was transferred from Spokane Public Schools to the Friends of KSPS.

Gary said KSPS first went on the air on April 24, 1967. Soon after that, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, which set up the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and eventually the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR) to offer noncommercial, educational programs.

Spokane Public School District #81 created most of the programs offering classes, community education programs and interviews with teachers, along with programs from the CPB.

In 1972, after a bond to fund the station failed, the Friends of 7—now Friends of KSPS—was born and took on fund raising. Patty started as a volunteer and then became director, working until 2011.

Friends of KSPS formed as a

separate nonprofit that worked with the station until 2013, when they combined into one entity, operating with the KSPS station licensed to Friends of KSPS.

About 20 percent of funding comes from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The rest comes from viewers, corporate sponsors, foundations, grants and planned giving.

"The bulk is from individuals who give \$60 to \$1,000 a year. More are 'sustainers' giving monthly contributions," he said.

"We have a smart, creative production team of five who talk with each other and with people in the community to learn about needs and how to fill them to benefit KSPS and the community," he said.

"We need to figure how to operate in the new normal," he said.

"We use part of the PBS learning media system, but also have our own programs, such as 'Northwest Profiles,' workshops for home-school teachers, 'Health Matters,' 'Stories of Service,' local candidate debates, conversations on education and forums."

Education continues to be a priority, so the station hired an education director, Bukola Breczinski, to provide educational programming and resources for all ages.

She develops culturally responsive curricula for educators to use with programs at ksps.org. KSPS is also offering station tours for educators.

As part of the lead up to Ken Burns' documentary on the Vietnam War, Gary helped bring the traveling memorial Vietnam Wall to Spokane and gathered Vietnam vets to talk about their experiences in the war and since. KSPS held a series of forums in the community with Eastern Washington University, giving veterans a chance to

share their experiences.

KSPS produced a documentary on homelessness, "Hidden in Plain Sight," followed by a town hall with people affected.

"We look to create community conversations that can have impact," Gary said. "We want to provide a regular forum for people to have difficult conversations in a civil way. In the real world, people not only have different views of issues but also have areas of common ground.

Now programs are available by broadcast, cable, satellite and online. The online information adds to what is broadcast, but those who access programs online may miss on-air pledge programs that attract new supporters.

Viewers who donate at least \$5 per month have access to Passport—a KSPS/PBS streaming service to watch programs at any time.

KSPS is more than on air and online. In addition to tours for educators, it reaches out to build community connections in person.

In 2013, KSPS decided to bring Daniel Tiger from the national program "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood" to Spokane for an early August event with activities for children from the local station's "FitKids, Healthy for Life" series of commercial-like messages educating children on fitness and health.

The first year, KSPS expected 50 to 100, and 500 came to the baseball field behind the station. Now 2,000 come, and KSPS brings characters from other national programs, like Curious George and Clifford the Dog.

It's an example of KSPS offering events, as well as programs, to entertain, engage and enrich the community, Gary said.

For information, call 443-7725, gstokes@ksps.org.



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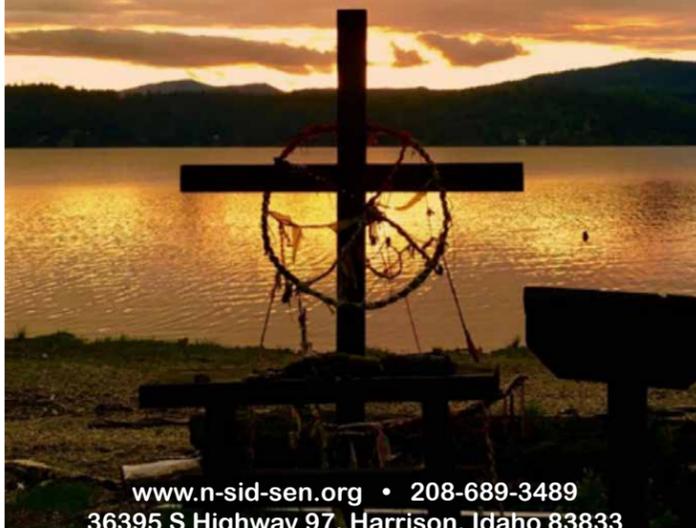
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Interfaith group plans events to address Poor People's Campaign priorities

Continued from page 1

This group is now Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience (FLLC).

After sending the letter demanding the reunification of children with their families, they developed a meditation booklet for people going from Spokane to Olympia to take part in the Poor People's Campaign Moral Mondays last spring, to keep them centered on the campaign's principles and issues.

"We hoped to include quotations from atheists, Wiccans, non-spiritual traditions, as well as Muslim, Jewish and Christian," Gen said.

"We hoped to send spiritual companions along to be available to people needing help re-centering. The PPC is a moral call committed to nonviolence," she said.

Barbara Miller, from the Silver Valley Community Resource Center, began attending the meetings and talking about how the Silver Valley, the Coeur d'Alene area and Spokane were all a part of the largest Superfund site in the United States, a major ecological concern for this entire area.

By June, the Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience began to talk about how to address that situation, which also touched on issues of poverty and health for the region.

The group is now planning an event to address those concerns on Earth Day, April 22, 2019.

The FLLC has other events planned.

From 1 to 8 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 13, 2019, the leaders are planning a workshop on "Why Race Matters" at Veradale United Church of Christ, 611 N. Progress Rd.

On Thursday, Feb. 21, they will show the movie, "The Sultan and the Saint," at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave. This is the story of Francis of Assisi meeting with the sultan of Egypt in the middle of the Crusades.

"Is it fact? Is it legend?" Gen asked. "That's not clear. It describes individuals of two different faiths crossing battle lines, listening to each other, and being changed by the conversation."

The movie will be shown for the temple's youth night, followed by a small panel representing Jews, Muslims and Christians, who will answer questions.

In March, the FLLC plans to hold a workshop on the "Strength of Nonviolence." That is still in the planning stages, as is the April Earth Day rally on the superfund site.

"I struggle with the reality that most of the participants, though not all, in the FLLC are Christian," Gen said. "Some people are the single representatives of their group. The invitation is still



Gen Heywood seeks to involve her congregation in the community.

out for atheists, Wiccans, Zoroastrians and leaders of other groups to join us in being a moral voice."

Gen invites representatives to join the planning meetings, which are at 9:30 a.m., on first Wednesdays at the Veradale UCC.

Recently the group worked by email to edit a statement to read at the Oct. 30 vigil at Temple Beth Shalom as a memorial to the 11 Jewish people shot at a synagogue in Pittsburgh (see p. 10) and shortening it for a letter to the editor.

Soon after Gen came to Veradale UCC in June 2014, she began to expand the church's outreach into the community.

"I want the church's threshold to be a fluid place, where the going out and the coming in are natural and easy," she said.

To that end, the church, which has about 25 attending Sunday worship, extends a welcome to the community, opening the labyrinth in its yard to the public and renting spaces in its community garden to the community. The church shares produce it raises with the community members and N-Sid-Sen, a United Church of Christ camp on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

Veradale UCC members also participate in an ecumenical Days for Girls program with a nearby Latter-day Saints church, in the annual Martin Luther King Day March, the Women's March, the March for Science, the March for our Lives and the Pride Parade.

In the fall, they collect coats and backpacks for Progress Elementary School across the street. They also take monthly collections of supplies for homeless women at Hope House and of food for Spokane Valley Partners.

On fourth Saturdays, Gen offers photography workshops with field trips. She began it as a way to gather people of the church and the wider community to build relationships based on a common interest.

At a recent celebration of Fran-

cis of Assisi, the congregation brought pets to be blessed. Members in the photography workshop took pet portraits.

Programs do not specifically have a Christian emphasis.

"I continually make it clear that all people are welcome at Veradale, because all are God's children, no matter what they believe," she said.

Gen has known since she was 11 that she was called to ministry. When she told her parents, they responded by telling her three things: "Women don't do those things." "No one will want to marry you." "You can't live off the collection plate."

The last two concerned her more than the first, because she wanted to marry and have children, and her father often reminded the family that they lived on the edge of poverty.

"I decided that, whatever I did would be my ministry," she said.

She grew up in Durham, Me. During her senior year of high school, she spent six months in Germany. She attended Emmanuel College in Boston, graduating in 1979 with a double bachelor of arts in German and music therapy.

While there, she attended worship one Sunday at Old South Church in Boston. An obviously pregnant pastor was preaching that day.

"Right then and there, all the objections of my family to my being a minister went away," she said.

After graduation, she supported herself as a music therapist while she attended Andover Newton Theological School part time.

She earned her master of divinity degree in 1989.

In 1999, she married. They had two children. The marriage did not last, so Gen has raised the children on her own. Her son recently began college. Her daughter is in high school.

Gen said she has had "a long relationship with the Holy Spirit," beginning in childhood, through college, ministry in churches in Maine, moving to California, marrying and divorcing, and then moving to Washington state.

"God is with me, real in my life as a gift, a light in human form," she said.

"I was always advocating for justice and fairness," she said. "I feel compelled to bring people be-

yond the threshold of the church, sending people in the congregation into the community, as a repairer of the breach."

For information, call 408-593-9556 or email genheywood@att.net.

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Rabbi awed by community support

Rabbi Tamar Malino of Temple Beth Shalom recently said her congregation was simply awed by the amount of support they have received in the wake of the Oct. 27 shooting that killed 11 and wounded six in the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Temple Beth Shalom seats were filled and many stood along the sides as nearly 1,000 joined in the Oct. 30 Vigil in Memory of the Massacre at Tree of Life Synagogue. The following are excerpts from Rabbi Malino's words at the vigil:

The Tree of Life Synagogue, like Temple Beth Shalom:

- is a place where people come to greet God, and to greet each other for the Shabbat morning prayer;
- is a place where children run down the aisles, teenagers socialize with their friends, elderly are accompanied to their seats, and members lead Hebrew chanting and study sacred text;
- is a place where members celebrate important moments in their lives, and
- both house multiple congregations, who often worship at the same time.

The Tree of Life Synagogue, like Congregation Emanu-El which shares the Temple Beth Shalom building, hosted a National Refugee Shabbat to acknowledge and learn about the suffering of those fleeing persecution around the globe, and what we can do to help.

The Tree of Life Synagogue, like every synagogue in the country, is a place where Jews gather to be in the company of one another, to connect to the Divine, to be inspired and to feel safe.

When that synagogue was attacked, our safety was shattered.

We grieve with the victims and their families. We grieve for the violence that has been done to us as a people and the violence that has been done to others. We grieve, and we are frightened.

The Anti-Defamation League documented a 57 percent rise in anti-Semitic incidents in the United States in 2017, compared to 2016—bomb threats, assaults, vandalism, and anti-Semitic posters and literature.

Anti-Semitism is more visible in the U.S. than it has been in many decades, perhaps more than it has ever been. Whether it comes from ignorance or hatred, we cannot now, even if we want to, ignore its presence.

As Jews, our response to anti-Semitism, as it has been for centuries, is a refusal to be cowed. Instead we celebrate our heritage, strengthen our Jewish identities and live joyful, rich, meaningful Jewish lives.



Vigil expresses concern about hate, lights candles for 11 who died.

We know this situation is not unique to us. As Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the former chief rabbi of the UK, put it, "Anti-semitism begins with Jews, but it never ends with them. A world without room for Jews is one that has no room for difference, and a world that lacks space for difference lacks space for humanity itself."

So we are frightened, not just for ourselves, but for everyone living in a world where this kind of anti-Semitism, along with so many other forms of racism, bigotry and hatred are rampant and have evoked violence.

It is particularly horrible when it occurs in houses of worship, where individuals are at their most vulnerable, most open and most trusting. Recently, there was a shooting of two African Americans in a grocery store in Kentucky, and before that, the perpetrator tried to enter a predominately black church, but fortunately couldn't get in.

In recent memory: 26 people were killed by a shooter in a Texas Church in 2017, and nine people in a historically black church in South Carolina in 2015.

We are not only frightened. We are outraged in the face of such evil.

As Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union of Reform Judaism, commented, it is outrageous that "we live in a time when we have to temper our loving welcome of strangers" in order to "protect our communities from violence and hate."

Tonight we invite you into our tent, the tent of our synagogue and the tent full of Spokane residents, the tent that seeks to be a safe, welcoming place for everyone of every race, religion and ethnicity.

We are frightened, we are outraged, but we are also grateful:

- that so many reached out to us in all kinds of ways, from heartfelt

letters of support, to flowers, to donations;

- to law enforcement, who risked their lives and limbs in Pittsburgh, and those in Spokane, who continually work to keep us as safe as they can;

• to all who do so much work in the greater Spokane community to combat anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry in all its forms;

• to all of us who live honorably and intentionally in our daily lives, speaking respectfully with neighbors, and rooting out the anti-Semitism and racism that reside in our own souls however we can, and

• to each other for coming together to grieve, console one another and stand up for the values we all hold dear.

Orthodox Rabbi Yitz Greenberg reminds us that the Jewish tradition values every human being as created in the image of God with "three inherent dignities: infinite value, equality and individuality."

He added that the Jewish vision of Tikkun Olam imagines improving the world—until it fully sustains these dignities for everyone. He said that "we can turn inward or reach outward. We (Jews) are a nation of immigrants. We are stronger because of our diversity... The most challenging times are also the most critical times for building bridges and relationships, growing compassion and understanding."

As we share our voices, we remember the dead, articulate our communal values and gather the strength to be not just frightened, outraged and grateful, but also hopeful.

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Fairfield churches sell 'extra' building, focus on serving community

After merging four years ago as one congregation, Zion Lutheran and First Presbyterian Church—now Fairfield Community Church—had both buildings for sale.

For a while, they alternated worshipping at both buildings, but two years ago chose to worship at Zion Lutheran, where they have a preschool serving 18 children. The previous summer, they worshipped in the First Presbyterian building.

In March, two weeks before Easter, they sold the Presbyterian building to the Stillwater Mennonite Church in Plummer-Worley. Three years ago, six Mennonite families had moved there from Ohio when their original community grew to 25 families. The tradition is that when they have that many, they split and some move to relocate. The group now has 11 families.

"It's interesting how God works," said Paul Anderson, pastor of the combined church that continues to affiliate with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Presbyterian USA denominations.

"We kept it on the market waiting for the right price. The Mennonites bought it for \$180,000 cash. It was a good deal for both churches, because it's God's church," said Paul who has served in Fairfield 14 years, his first church after graduating from Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, in 2004.

The Fairfield Community Church now saves on costs of maintaining and heating two buildings, and "the beauty is that the building is still being used as a church and God is being worshiped there," he said.

The proceeds are being invested and 10 percent of the amount was sent to the Synod and Presbytery. Some funds will be used to support the church and some to support outreach.

For the decision to sell the Presbyterian building, the vote was close to unanimous to accept the offer.

"These are faith-walking people," Paul said, "not relying on how they feel, but willing to sell the building grandpa helped build. God is not about a building. Some lament what was, but many are excited about a new experience of being the church."

The process of bringing the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches together continues, including plans to have a new sign.

In addition, they had hanging on the walls at their building, the former Zion Lutheran, confirmation pictures going back to the



Sign welcomes children, youth and adults to vacation Bible school.

Photos courtesy of Fairfield Community Church

early years in the 1890s and early 1900s. Members decided those pictures needed a new home.

"Someone's grandmother might be in the picture, but it's not who we are any more," said Paul, who talked to the directors of the Fairfield Museum and History Center.

The museum welcomed having the pictures to display as part of the community's heritage.

With Fairfield increasingly a bedroom community for Spokane, Spokane Valley, Pullman and Plummer—where many work at the casino—there are many new people in the community.

Some new residents have retired, while some long-time older residents are moving closer to town. Young families from the urban areas are also buying Fairfield houses, which are affordable.

Houses in Fairfield do not stay for sale long. Most of those who commute to work also commute to church and shopping.

Paul noted that only one member of the Fairfield City Council has lived there all his life. The others have no roots there.

"Our challenge is to minister outside the walls to new people," he said.

"We are leading folks in a new direction that is Lutheran and Presbyterian. We continue in making transitions, walking by the Spirit and seeking guidance," he added.

One new dynamic has been to meet on 5th Sundays, read the Bible, go out into the community to do service and return for a meal.

Serving the community through the fifth Sunday and preschool have drawn some new people.

Outreach projects have included raking a woman's lawn, cleaning the park at Waverly, cleaning the cemetery and picking up trash along one mile of the highway.

"It's where God is in the com-

munity, putting hands and feet to work," Paul said. "People have been appreciative."

The church uses the verse about Jesus healing a man with a withered hand in the temple on a Sunday.

"How does it look to do something out of the ordinary to help someone during the normal worship time?" he said. "We need to think outside the box and still maintain the integrity of worship. How do we move outside the walls? God is always with us."

The October service project each year is the hay ride food drive.

Another regular outreach is calling on people at the Fairfield Care Center.

In June, the church hosted young leaders from Lutherhaven Ministries' Camp on Lake Coeur d'Alene coming to lead an all-day vacation Bible school that drew 69 children.

There is discussion with leaders in Spokane County about starting a lunch program in the church.

Many of the 30 or so who attend the church are still farmers, whose attendance varies with planting and harvesting.

The wheat crop affects the community. It is good this year, but there are uncertainties about the impact of tariffs, Paul said.

"School athletics is hard on church activities," said Paul, who grew up in Newark, Ill., a town of 500 about 50 miles south of Chicago. There the school had a Wednesday church night with no sports—a practice many Palouse communities once had.

Through his years in Fairfield, Paul has connected with pastors of the Seventh Day Adventist church in Fairfield and the United Methodist Church in Rockford.

Other area pastors are part time and don't stay long. The

Adventist pastor serves Farmington, Fairfield and Ritzville. The United Methodist pastor is new and part-time. As the only full-time pastor, he serves people living in several communities.

"We are all ministers," he said, "and we are to find ways to share love for God in Christ. We are God's hands and feet. We need to be good followers as God leads and guides us."

"A leader needs to be open to new ways to lead. We look for new ways to do ministry always," he said.

People from area churches worked together after the shooting a year ago in Freeman High School. While there were no students in the church, members were affected. Some went to a vigil in Spokane Valley, but Fair-

field Community Church opened that evening as a place for people to come to pray and be together, and 250 came.

"Spontaneity opens us to do ministry in new ways," he said, "so the shape of our ministry evolves and changes."

For information, call 283-2209 or email pastorpaul6@gmail.com.

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Catholic Charities appeals to public for funds because it serves everyone

Stories of the miracles that transform people's lives, because of the generosity of the community bring tears to Susan Foster-Dow, vice president of mission and strategy with Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington.

The goal in raising funds for Catholic Charities' Annual Collection is to share those stories.

"We appeal for donations from the general public to support the work of Catholic Charities' staff and to serve clients based on "need not creed," she said in a recent interview. "About 90 percent of clients and staff are not Catholic."

The Collection, which is gathered from Nov. 15 into January, will fund Catholic Charities programs for all of 2019—from crisis response and emergency services through promoting stability through housing, food and care for seniors, to programs that advocate for people to improve their lives.

"The portal to stable housing for many who are experiencing homelessness is our shelter system with the House of Charity, Rising Strong and St. Margaret's Shelter," Susan said, adding that Catholic Charities also provides disaster response and emergency services.

"Rising Strong provides up to 18 months of shelter and programming for families who appear in court because of substance use or disorders impeding parenting. Using wrap-around services, we help families stay together and heal through counseling, job training, education, child care and health treatment for substance abuse and other disorders," she said.

Catholic Housing Communities provides apartments for low-income seniors, people living with disabilities, farmworkers and chronically homeless individuals and families in Eastern Washington.

Through funds from tax credits, Catholic Charities has built Father Bach Haven, Buder Haven, Donna Hansen Haven, Sisters Haven in Spokane; Pope Francis Haven in Spokane Valley; St. Michael the Archangel Haven (for veterans and families) in Walla Walla; Desert Haven and Guadalupe Haven in Othello, and Tepyac Haven and Bishop Topel Haven in Pasco.

The Catholic Charities Collection provides funding for the social services for housing residents, as well as the dozen other programs of Catholic Charities throughout the region.

In addition to Spokane, Catholic Charities provides services in Walla Walla, Pasco and the many



Susan Foster-Dow promotes Catholic Charities' Collection.

smaller communities in the Catholic Diocese of Spokane.

That includes Volunteer Chore Services, counseling, immigration and legal services, CAPA/PREPARES and parish social ministry.

Susan said that CAPA (Child-birth and Parenting Assistance) and PREPARES (Pregnancy Parenting Resources) serve women and children from pregnancy through a child's fifth birthday, as a pro-life approach designed to help end the cycle of intergenerational poverty. CAPA serves people in Spokane and PREPARES serves people through more than two-thirds of parishes in the diocese.

"What we do is tangible," said Susan, noting that the community can see how the support of people makes miracles happen inside the "haven" housing units, inside shelters and in their lives.

"We are focusing on and celebrating the miracles that happen as we support people," she said. "All day, every day, people come by and drop off diapers for CAPA, books or dishes for families in housing, and checks from a book club or church group. The same day, those donations may go back out to people in need."

Someone who walks in and needs a jacket, umbrella, or help with a utility bill or plane ticket to a relative's funeral can receive that help through the parish social ministry office.

While some organizations have stopped doing direct service for a lack of funds, Susan said that Catholic Charities is able to leverage monetary and in-kind donations to do them.

"We can't do that without the support of the community," Susan said.

"We help to give people a home, because without a home address and place to feel safe, people find it hard to access and benefit from other services," she said.

"People in incredible suffering often do not know where to turn. A woman experiencing domestic violence may come with her children seeking a safe place to stay," she said.

For 2018, the Collection raised \$1.3 million.

"We are committed to our mission of offering dignity to every person as part of our Catholic social teaching, so we can provide assistance on a wet spring day or dry summer day," she said.

Susan's family lived in small towns in Montana, North Dakota and Wyoming before they settled in Spokane so their children—four daughters—could have a Catholic education. She first became involved with Catholic Charities while attending Gonzaga Prep, volunteering to help people by giving her time and energy as her parents encouraged her to do.

At Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., she studied foreign service and diplomacy, specializing in China. After a graduate fellowship in Taiwan, she finished a master's degree at Gonzaga University.

"I believed working on a global diplomatic level was important, and it is, but I am called now to work in my own backyard to improve my community," Susan said of her involvement with Catholic Charities.

When she returned to Spokane, she immediately heard Donna Hanson, who was then the executive director of Catholic Charities,

speak at Assumption Parish to raise funds for the Catholic Charities Collection.

"Donna enthusiastically welcomed me, and I began volunteering with projects as a way to get involved," Susan said.

While her parents are still at Assumption Parish, Susan has attended St. Aloysius Parish since 2000.

She has continued her involvement with Catholic Charities for more than two decades and has worked there for the past three years.

While she is Catholic and sees her work as an outgrowth of her faith, she said: "I take pride in the fact that Catholic Charities does not push any version of faith or religion on people in need.

"Rather its focus is to provide help as people seek to improve their lives," Susan said.

Catholic Charities reaches out to foster dignity and to break the cycle of poverty in the community today and in the future.

For information, call 358-4250 or email development@ccspokane.org, or visit cceasternwa.org.

House of Charity changes the number it can shelter

In addition to discussing the Catholic Charities Collection, Susan offered some clarification about recent changes at the House of Charity.

"It did not close, but the funding from the City of Spokane for 24/7 operations stopped after 20 months. Sometimes in the winter during that period, 400 people slept on beds and on the floor," she said.

"It was unsustainable for us to do this in a safe and healthy way," she said. "Now House of Charity is open seven days a week, and only closed during the day to clean. More people are on the street as a result. We now host 125 men and about 50 women in the

emergency sleeping shelter, providing meals, case management and support services."

Meanwhile, the city is looking at opening shelters in more locations, rather than concentrating services in just one area of the community, Susan added.



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I am with you, but I am not you. I am in solidarity with your suffering

Today and always...

I am Jewish. I am Muslim.
I am Christian. I am Buddhist.
I am African American.
I am Native American.
I am Asian American
I am Pacific Islander American.
I am European American.
I am Hispanic/Latin American.
I am a Guatemalan/Salvadoran American.
I am Mexican American.
I am an immigrant American.
I am a global American.
I am a woman American.
I am a man American.
I am a straight American.
I am an LGBTQ American.
I am a young/an elder American.
I am a homeless American.
I am a poor American.
I am a rich American.
I am a middle class American.
I am a conservative American.
I am a moderate American.
I am a liberal American.
I am underemployed and need justice.
I am overworked and need time.
I am sick and need care.
I am with you, but I am not you.

I have a unique story
unique experiences
a unique heritage
unique relationships
that include many
cultures, peoples
stories, lives
from a unique path
in American history
in today's politics
in civil rights
in peacemaking
in justice seeking
in global ties
in immigrant heritage
in indigenous roots.

I am not you,
I have not suffered
what you have suffered
but I know suffering—
I am with you.
I have suffered
because society suffers
the world suffers..
I suffer
because you suffer.
We all suffer
from oppression
fed by hate

from violence
fed by fear
from injustice
fed by greed
from inequity
fed by power
from pollution
fed by expedience.
All those dynamics affect
your life and mine
our families
our communities
our society
our nation
our world.
No, I am not you
but I can be
in solidarity
with you.
I can walk
beside you.
I can be
your partner
So when 'they'
come for you
I'll say no.
I'll protest.
So when 'they'
steal your land, wealth

I'll say no.
I'll protest.
I'll speak out.
So when 'they'
deny your rights
cut your opportunities
I'll say no.
I'll protest.
I'll speak out.
I'll share your story.
Those in power
Will foster your tribalism,
Your racial, cultural ties,
Your separate identity
To wedge and divide us.
Because I'm not you,
I'll be there.
I'll say no.
I'll protest.
I'll speak up.
I'll share the stories
that connect us
that bridge our gap
that build understanding
that celebrate
our diversity
our unity
our solidarity as people.
Mary Stamp - The Fig Tree editor

Bus ride becomes a spiritual practice, a service opportunity

In order to free myself from the stress of driving downtown and looking for a parking place which costs two dollars an hour, I ride the bus. It has become a spiritual practice for me, much to my surprise!

Do you know that just about every person who rides the bus calls out "Thank you!" as he or she gets off the bus? And every time, I smile.

Thank you
for the ride, for bringing me safely
for this community of travelers
for the gracious preparation for handicapped persons who need space in the front—
for seats put up and bars aside to accommodate walkers and wheel chairs
for the thoughtful passengers who leap up to assist the driver in preparing that space
for the day,

for somewhere to go, do, be
for life—here I am, part of a world on the move
for the diversity that includes us all—
bus riding is a great leveler
for acceptance
some smell good, some don't;
some are quiet, some are not;
some are mainly on this trip,
some on other trips inside their heads;
some are able, some are not;
some seem to think they are alone, they are not;
I have choices, some do not
—I have a reliable lovely blue Subaru!
I ride to serve others,
some ride to secure needed services
when I get off the bus, I am headed home,
some are looking for a protected corner

somewhere to shelter

Riding the bus is a microcosm adventure, an opportunity to reflect on how very blessed is my life.

It is almost better than a book for inspiration, for pop-up reminders, invitations to enter into a wholeness that is not otherwise part of my very secure life. For the duration of the ride, we are an enclosed community of people. What we hold in common is our blessed humanity, and we are all doing our very best to be as fully our human selves as we know how. Our many differences pale before that one thing we hold in common. We are all human.

By what design, accident, sequence of circumstances am I so very blessed?

What do so many blessings ask of me?

Thank you! Amen.

**Mary Ann Farley, SNJM
The Fig Tree Editorial Team**



Faith Leaders, Leaders of Conscience, Pastor express grief at shooting

Sr. Pat Millen, OSF; Naghmana Sherazi, a Leader of Conscience, and Venerable Chodron, Abess of Sravasti Abbey, read a statement from the Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience at the Oct. 30 vigil at Temple Beth Shalom.

We, the Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience of Eastern Washington and North Idaho stand in deepest sorrow with you, our Jewish neighbors and friends.

We mourn the 11 Jews who died in the massacre at The Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. We ache, also, for those injured, for the families, and the congregation—knowing that they are in physical, mental and spiritual pain. Challenging though it is, we ache for the confused and tortured heart of the killer, whose hatred has wrought so much sorrow.

The attack comes at a time when we are seeing anti-Semitism rising in our country. In recent years, overt expressions of hate have intensified, escalating to this point. Like you, everyone here and the people of Squirrel Hill, we are devastated.

This terrorism makes us particularly aware of the hate you, our Jewish neighbors and friends, have experienced in this region. We grieve when even one Jewish person's humanity and dignity is threatened. We grieve for our country.

We stand together in the compassion that is rooted in each of our different moral practices to declare that love for every human being will triumph over hate. Each of



Faith leaders surround Venerable Chodron, Miillen OSF, and Naghmana Sherazi.

us will look inside ourselves to root out our own pockets of prejudice and hostility, replacing them with love. We unite with you in our collective responsibility to work to mend our world.

We lift up our voices, hearts and souls to a higher way that is known in many practices and by many names. May we gain the needed strength, even while we grieve, to be transformed from fear to love, from division to unity, from desperation to hope. Let us declare through the way we live each day that love for every human being — a love that dwells within every human being — will triumph over hate.

The Rev. Scott Starbuck of Manito Presbyterian Church then said the following at Temple Beth Shalom:

I am a friend, a neighbor, the pastor of Manito Presbyterian Church, and one ordained to be a theologian for the Church, so

I hope I might dare to speak on behalf of so many gathered here as Christians.

I remember gathering together four years ago in response to the graphic violence done against this congregation. Since then, I have enjoyed many other gatherings of learning, fellowship, and faith—joyous times.

Tonight, we gather in mourning and with renewed resolve. After learning of the tragic shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue, I sent word to Rabbi Tamar and Rabbi Elizabeth that the members of Manito Presbyterian Church were outraged and that we would stand by you, that we are with you in solidarity and love.

On Sunday morning at the beginning of our services, we lit a candle for those killed, and we implored God to help us rise up and resist evil with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength; to help us confront the hate within and without that is overtaking our

land. We beseeched God for an outpouring of compassion and love to overwhelm the scourge of violence besetting our communities.

We vowed to tirelessly speak up for and reach out to our Jewish brothers and sisters and all of those reeling in fear as they simply go about their daily living. Particularly, we prayed for you, our friends and neighbors who are members of the Jewish community here in Spokane.

I want you to know that we deeply appreciate the work and mission of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society that helps refugees of all faiths even as we seek to support their resettlement here in Spokane through World Relief.

Speaking for your neighbors at Manito Presbyterian Church, it is without hesitation and with full and undeterred resolve that we condemn white supremacy and anti-Semitism in all of its forms—especially acts and attitudes of racist hatred and violence. It is with deep sadness that we recognize that hate crimes and acts of anti-Semitism are on the rise and, because of this, working against this growing evil requires renewed focus and constancy in our Christian churches. In this commitment we pledge a love that knows no fear.

You are our dear friends. You are partners in social justice and in faith. You are infinitely important to us.

For comments of Mayor David Condon, see online at thefigtree.org.

Calendar of Events

- Nov 29, Dec 13 • Eastern Washington Legislative Conference Planning Committee**, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1:30 p.m., 535-4112, info@thefigtree.org
- To Dec 17 • Tree of Sharing**, pick up tags with gift requests at Riverpark Square, Northtown and Valley Malls, 808-4919, mconnelltos@gmail.com
- Dec 1 • "Healing Racism: Multicultural Responses in a Local Context,"** Ana Hernández, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., revmonica@saint-andrews.org
- Dec 3 • Gonzaga Symphony Orchestra**, Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox, 7:30 p.m., 624-1200, foxtheaterspokane.com
- Dec 5 • International Human Rights Day 70th Anniversary**, Bonner County Human Rights Task Force and the Foundation for Human Rights Action and Advocacy, "The Role of Journalism," Sandpoint High School Auditorium, 1 to 3 p.m., 208-347-6592, fhraaidaho@gmail.com
- **Mandy Manning** and the "Neema" African Refugee Choir, "A Thousand Remarkable Stories," benefit dinner for World Relief, The Davenport Grand Hotel Ballroom, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 5:30 to 8 p.m., worldreliefspokane.org
- **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Dec 6, 13, 20, 27 • "Diverse Voices Writing Group,"** Spark Central, 1214 S. Summit Pkwy, 5:30 p.m., 279-0299, sparkwestcentral.org
- Dec 7-16 • Holiday Nights at Gaiser Conservatory**, Manito Park, 4 W. 21st, noon to 7:30 p.m., 625-6692, thefriendsofmanito.org
- Dec 7-8 • Children's Christmas Joy Drive**, Mission Community Outreach Center, 1906 E. Mission Ave., Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., 535-1084, www.4mission.org
- Dec 8 • Advent Day of Reflection**, "For Unto Us a Child Is Born," Sr. Patricia Novak, OSF, The Ministry Institute, 405 E. Sinto, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., 313-5765
- **Winter Baroque Celebration**, Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, 7 p.m., 624-1200, spokanesymphony.org
- **Christmas Concert Shalom Ministries Benefit**, Moran United Methodist Church, 3601 E. 65th Ave., 7 p.m., 710-0204, healingpen@comcast.net
- Dec 8, 9 • Whitworth University Christmas Festival Concert**, Martin Woldson Theater The Fox, 8 p.m., Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday, 624-1200, foxtheaterspokane.org
- Dec 9 • Winter Baroque Celebration**, Spokane Valley Church of the Nazarene, 15515 E. 20th, Spokane Valley, 3 p.m., 624-1200, spokanesymphony.org
- **Gingerbread Build Off**, Christ Kitchen Fundraiser, The Davenport Grand, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., competition 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., children's activity 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., christkitchen.org/events
- **Affiniti, Celtic Christmas Concert**, Bing Crosby Theater, 901 W. Sprague, 7 p.m., 496-4866
- Dec 10 • Human Rights Day 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, Human Rights Education Institute, 414 W. Fort Grounds Dr., Coeur d'Alene, Breakfast 7 a.m., visit the Institute during the day, hrei.org
- Dec 11, 13, 15, 20 • Ornament Making and Decorating**, 11th at North Spokane Library, 44 E. Hawthorne, 4 p.m.; 13th at Otis Orchards Library, 22334 E. Wellesley, 3:30 p.m.; 15th at Argonne Library, 4322 N. Argonne, 11 a.m.; 20th at Spokane Valley Library, 12004 E. Main Ave., 4 p.m., 893-8390
- Dec 12 • Hispanic Business/Professional Association lunch**, Perkins at Division & Olive, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., hbpasokane@gmail.com
- Dec 12-21 • Christmas Bureau**, Spokane County Fair and Expo Center, 404 N. Havana, AG Building, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., 354-4270, bkrause@ccspokane.org
- Dec 13 • Showing Up for Racial Justice**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **Jingle Books Donation Deadline**, collection boxes around Coeur d'Alene, 208-964-4823, heartofcda@gmail.com
- Dec 15 • Handel's "Messiah,"** First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, 1:30 p.m., Sing-along rehearsal, 3 p.m.
- Dec 15, 16 • Singing Nuns**, "Christmas Around the Globe," Mt. St. Michael, 8500 N. St. Michaels Rd., 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, 7 p.m., Saturday, 467-0986, singingnuns.com
- Dec 16 • German American Service**, Eberhart Schmidt and the Concordia Choir, St. Mark's Lutheran, 314 E. 24th Ave., 3 p.m., 928-2595
- **"Messiah,"** St. John's Music Series, Kantorei Chancel Choir and Collegium Orchestra, directed by Timothy Westerhaus, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 3 p.m., 838-4277, spokanekantorei@gmail.com
- Dec 17 • NAACP Membership Meeting**, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m., spkncpbr@gmail.com
- Dec 18 • Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane Holiday Party**, 35 W. Main, 6 to 8 p.m., 838-7870
- Dec 21 • "How Saint Nicholas Became Santa Claus,"** Cocco and Contemplation with children, parents and grandparents, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., 448-1224, kparker@ihrc.net
- **"Winterfest: A Celebration of Holiday Traditions"**—Filipino, Norwegian, Bulgarian/Russian, Italian, German, Guam, Chinese, African-American, Coeur d'Alene Tribe traditions, Riverpark Square Mall, 4 to 7 p.m., 928-9664, charity@thefamilyguide.org
- Dec 29 • "Winterfest: A Celebration of Holiday Traditions"**—Persian, Indian, Hispanic, Chinese, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Japanese, Tai Fellowship traditions, Riverpark Square Mall, 4 to 7 p.m., 928-9664, charity@thefamilyguide.org
- Dec 31 • Spokane Symphony Special:** Beethoven's Ninth on New Year's Eve, Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, 7:30 p.m., 624-1200, spokanesymphony.org
- Jan 2 • The Fig Tree mailing and delivery**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E 24th Ave., 9 a.m., 535-1813, mary@thefigtree.org
- Jan 3 • The Fig Tree Benefit/Development and Board meetings**, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon benefit/development, 1 to 3 p.m. board, 535-1813, mary@thefigtree.org
- Jan 26 • Eastern Washington Legislative Conference**, 535-4112

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Spokane nurse volunteers with the Red Cross in his retirement

When there are hurricanes, volcanos, floods, wildfires, mudslides and other disasters, John Jonckers “deploys” as a volunteer with the American Red Cross.

Previously, on active duty in the Air Force and with the Washington Air National Guard (WA ANG), he “deployed” in his career years to serve where needed.

Retiring in 2015, he decided to volunteer with the Red Cross.

Since then, he has gone on the first wave of 21 disaster responses and is on call for Disaster Action Team (DAT) calls locally for the Red Cross after house fires.

During eight years with the Air Force, John moved to Spokane to teach in the Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape program. While in the WA Air National Guard, he deployed for three months at a time when the refueling tankers went to Desert Storm, Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia and Iraq.

When he was discharged from active duty, he studied nursing at Spokane Community College, graduating in 1982. For 32 years, he served with Lifebird and MedStar critical care air transport nursing teams responding to emergencies. For 28 of those years, he was also in the WA ANG, deploying two weeks a year and one weekend a month.

On Oct. 20, he returned after two weeks with the Red Cross at Panama City and Tallahassee, Fla., after Hurricane Michael. On Nov. 24, he returned from wildfires in California.

As a nurse, he is usually the “health serve lead,” setting up health service centers and shelters.

In 2017, John went to Beaumont, Texas, after Hurricane Harvey, but not to Puerto Rico, because he uses a C-Pap and the power was out.

Last year, he also responded after wildfires in California.

This fall, he spent two weeks in North Carolina after Hurricane Florence, organizing response in two districts. He was home just 10 days before going to Florida.

He usually goes six times a year on the first wave team, which stays two weeks. That gives him more time with family. Second wave teams can stay longer.

The Red Cross was finishing a year after Harvey, when there was more flooding in October.

“Every disaster is different and clients’ needs differ,” John said. “In the 2017 California wildfires, many nursing homes evacuated to a Red Cross shelter.

“We first deal with people. I manage a team of nurses and health service personnel, who work with other teams to do shelters,” he said. “I make many phone calls, guide people, make suggestions to fix things and ask questions. I have to find creative solutions. I know the Red Cross, how to solve problems and whom to contact. Multiple teams make a response successful.”

The Red Cross mobilizes people from around the United States and from American Samoa. They come together to work as a team. John has worked with many of the same people on different disasters.

“When we get a call, we find out who is going. Relationships help. We know each other’s strengths and weaknesses from working and spending evenings together,” he said.

Red Cross volunteers are there to support clients. It’s the worst



John Jonckers has responded to 21 disasters.

time in their lives, John said.

“Nothing is more devastating than to lose everything and not know what to do next. If they lose their driver’s license or ID, they can’t cash checks or withdraw money,” he said. “We help people focus so they make informed decisions. We don’t make decisions for them. We identify barriers for them and mobilize resources to

assist. We support local governments who run the response and nonprofits who support the disaster response.

“We start or mobilize Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs). Some volunteers in the area may be affected,” said John, who attends VOAD meetings in Spokane and North Idaho.

The Red Cross arrives first

and begins to assess the damage before FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) does anything, John said.

“We set up Multi Agency Resource Centers where clients access resources in one place: FEMA, the Red Cross, DMV, housing, food and other resources,” he said. “One agency sends babysitters so parents can meet with agencies to discuss their needs.

The Red Cross is multi-faceted, so John also responds locally and in the state when there are fires. As a part of a Disaster Assistant Team (DAT), he takes calls from people who may be neighbors and friends with wild fires and house fires.

“We respond to twice as many people in house fires, as in disasters,” he said. “Big disasters get press, but it’s as devastating to lose your house in a fire here as to lose a house in a major disaster. The feelings are the same, but the support system is better, because others are not affected.

“For big disasters, there are three days of media coverage, then none, but everyone is still devastated,” he said.

“We work with many faith-based organizations that come to disaster areas to help with immediate and long-term recovery,” John said. “It never ceases to amaze me the number of faith based organizations that come.”

Every one of them wears a different color T-Shirt, so John refers to them as the rainbow crews.

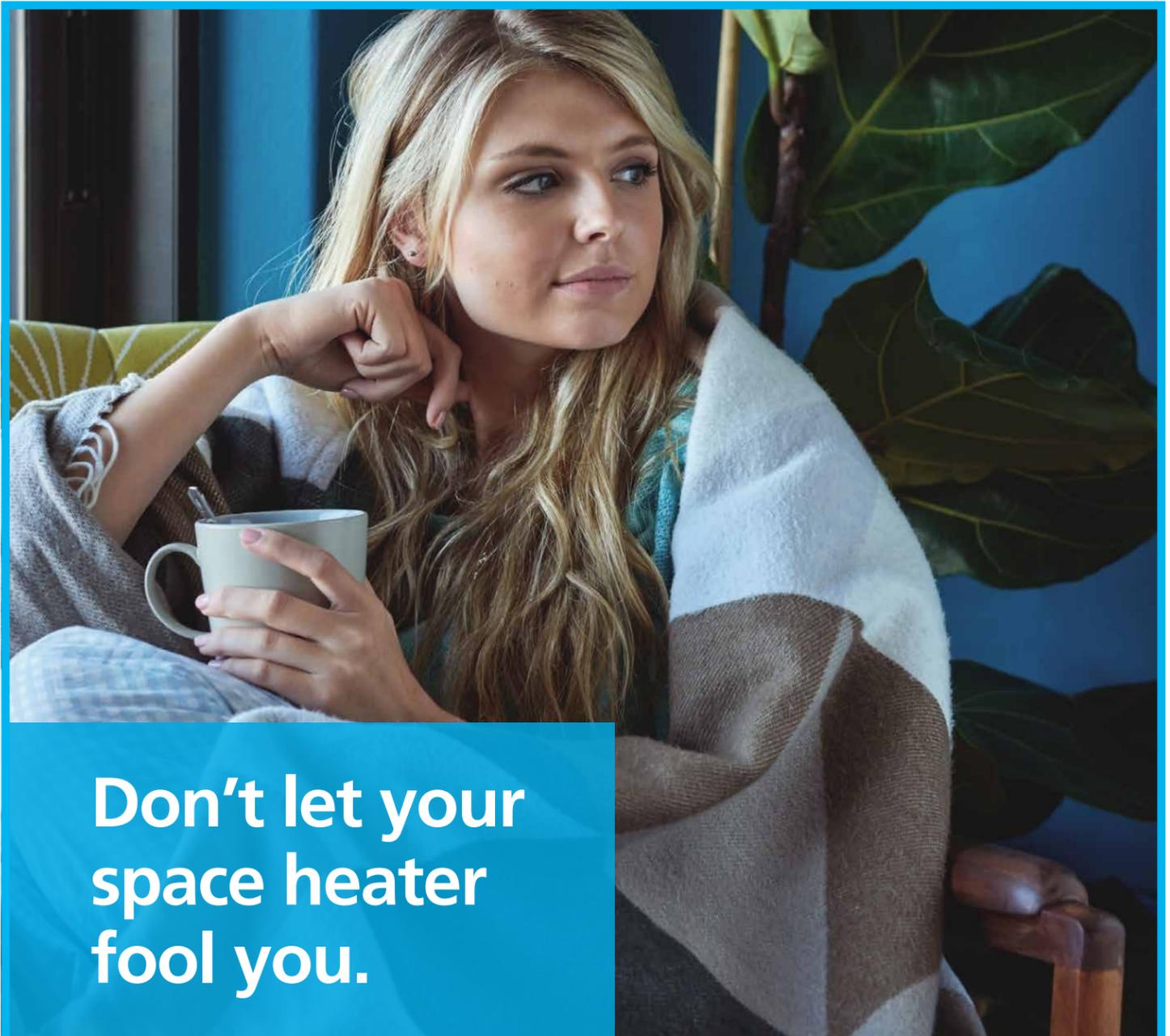
“Some help muck out houses. It’s neat to see how they are organized,” John said. “It restores my faith in humanity to see the people who come out to help others.”

John grew up in Texas, Puerto Rico and Ohio, where he went to high school and met his wife. They married, moved to Spokane, and have lived here ever since.

When their six children were young, they went to Kings Community Church. John took teens for week-long campouts in the woods, canoeing, backpacking and biking.

“I’m blessed to be able to retire comfortably, so faith motivates me. We are always supposed to be giving, to take care of one another and to give back,” he said.

For information call 326-3330, email megan.snow@redcross.org or visit redcross.org.



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