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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

Some doctors may 'prescribe' an attorney

By Mary Stamp

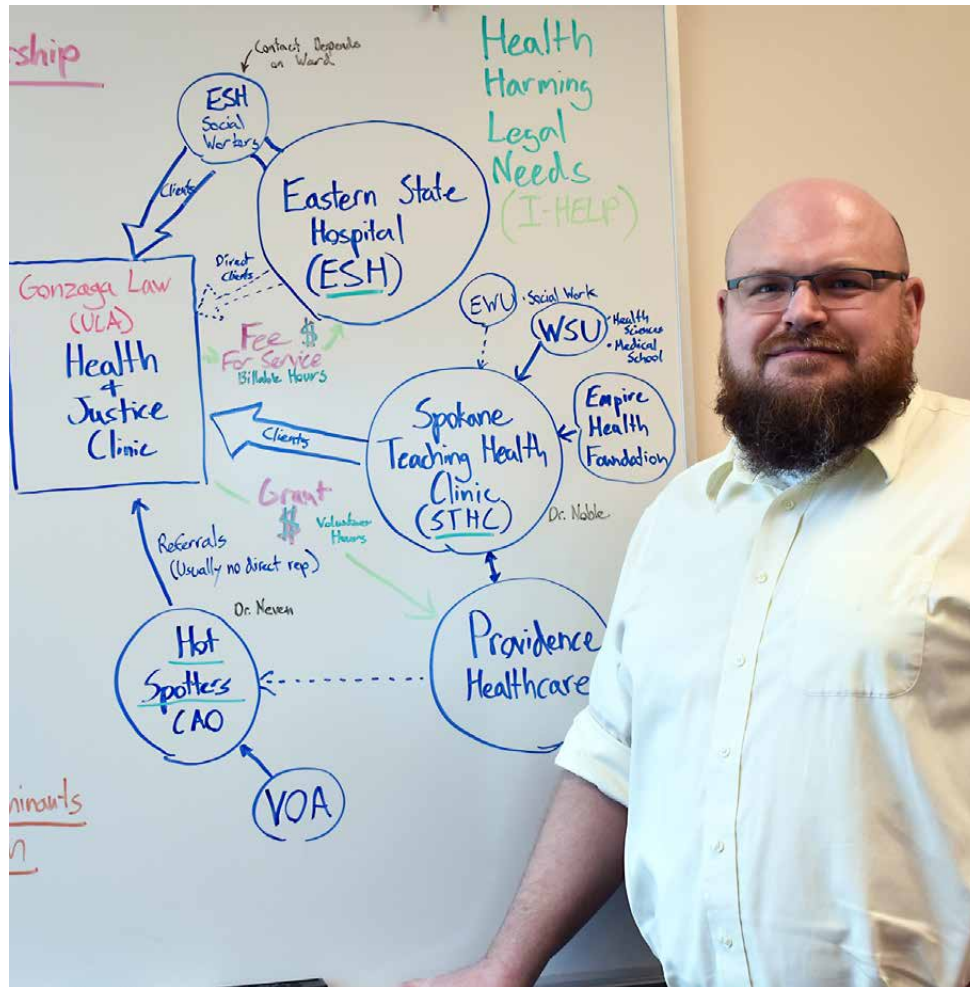
Spokane's Health and Justice Initiative, a medical-legal partnership program at Gonzaga School of Law, is designed to integrate legal advocacy into health care, training doctors, medical residents and other health-care staff to identify patients' legal needs and refer them to lawyers and legal interns.

For example, if a physician's assistant (PA) asks a few questions about the home environment of a girl with asthma symptoms, she may learn that mold and lack of heat may contribute to the problem. The PA refers her to an attorney who contacts the landlord to let him know he is legally responsible to make repairs.

Then, instead of regular nebulizer treatments, the girl's symptoms can be managed with infrequent use of an inhaler. The cost of care goes down and her quality of life goes up.

Barry Pfundt learned about such partnerships at a Northwest Justice Project conference in the Tri-Cities and thought it would work in Spokane where there is much poverty and a large medical community.

"For example, I have been in Spokane homes where mushrooms grow in the carpet, there is raw



Barry Pfundt has helped Spokane develop the Health and Justice Initiative through Gonzaga University's Law School.

sewage in the basement, weatherization is poor and there is no heat," said Barry.

"Instead of prescribing a nebulizer, a doctor can 'prescribe' an attorney to investigate the home and compel a landlord to make repairs or help a family relocate."

Rather than treating just symptoms, a doctor, working with an attorney, gains power to treat the root cause of an illness. Studies show that health care providers' job satisfaction rises as they are involved in addressing the root causes of poor health, he said.

Barry works with social workers, nurses and doctors who provide evidence to address issues before legal proceedings begin, keeping cases out of court, which is expensive and time consuming.

"We look for solutions through better relationships," said Barry, who grew up in Bellingham.

A fifth generation commercial fisherman, he was a commercial salmon fisherman in Southeast Alaska for five years. A second-generation U.S. Navy veteran, he spent six years as an electrician on nuclear-powered surface ships.

"In the Navy, I felt like a pawn in a larger game I had no say in and I

Continued on page 4

Big disasters stir people's generosity, but fires are most frequent disasters

In response to the many major disasters of 2017—hurricanes and floods in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean, the California wildfires, shootings in Las Vegas, Texas and Freeman High School, and the Amtrak derailment—the American Red Cross deployed 56,000 disaster workers, provided 658,000 shelter overnight stays, 13.6 million meals and snacks and recovery assistance for more than 624,000 households.

While big disasters draw media coverage that stirs people's generosity, the most frequent disasters the Red Cross responds to are

60,000 house fires a year, said Megan Snow, executive director of the Greater Inland Northwest Red Cross.

For Central and Eastern Washington and North Idaho, there are offices in Spokane and Wenatchee, 4.5 staff and more than 600 volunteers trained to "deploy" locally and nationally.

Over the last 10 years, the Red Cross has shifted from each chapter operating as an independent unit under the national Red Cross mission to chapters aligning such functions as their human resources and accounting systems

into the national organization to be more efficient and collaborative so they can serve more people more effectively, Megan said.

Chapter borders define service areas, but boundaries do not matter when there are disasters, she said.

"When the Oso landslide hit, our chapter's volunteers who were trained went as soon as they were needed," she said. "Now we are watching Rattlesnake Ridge near Yakima and have volunteers ready to go there."

Megan said that 97 percent of those responding nationally are volunteers, and 99 percent locally are volunteers.

"Staff recruit, interview and screen volunteers to fill specific job descriptions. About two-thirds are on call to respond to disasters," she said.

Some are trained to run Red Cross shelters. Others are trained to feed people. Some are trained to assess needs after larger disasters, such as a wildfire. Some are case workers working with people through recovery.

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The Fig Tree announces 2018 Benefit speakers

Along with recruiting hosts and guests for the Benefit Lunch, Friday, March 9, and Benefit Breakfast, Wednesday, March 14, The Fig Tree announces the eight 2018 speakers, four at each event. The theme they will address is "Including Everyone: We Need Each Other."

Lunch speakers will be:

- **Sima Thorpe** is executive director of The Arc of Spokane, which helped deliver directories last summer.
- **Hershel Zellman** plans the annual Yom Hashoah commemoration at Temple Beth Shalom;
- **Christina Kamkosi** is program coordinator of Empire Health Foundation, which helped underwrite the Resource Directory as a 2017 community partner,
- **James Casper** of Habitat for Humanity of North Idaho, was featured in a recent article.

The breakfast speakers are:

- **Mark Kinney** of Thrivent is a new writer, an advertiser and community partner.
- **Kristine Hoover** is director of Gonzaga University's Institute of Hate Studies, which has been featured in recent articles. She also helped lead a workshop on responding to hate at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference.
- **LaRae Wiley** of Spokane's Salish School was featured in an article and later a report on a rally after graffiti was painted inside the school
- **Bishop Emeritus William Skylstad**, a long time follower and supporter of The Fig Tree, continues to be involved ecumenically and in Columbia River ecosystem protection.

For information, call 535-1813 or 535-4112, or email mary@thefigtree.org.

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Religion News Briefs

Around the World

World Council of Churches News, PO Box 2100
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As the World Council of Churches (WCC) celebrates 70 years since its founding in Amsterdam on Aug. 23, 1948, Kenyan Anglican Agnes Abuom, moderator of the WCC Central Committee, said she dreams of a world where everyone's dignity is upheld.

In addition to a commemoration service in Amsterdam on Aug. 23, 2018, the WCC, member churches and partners plan events to honor and learn from the 70 years of ecumenism. They include the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, the June WCC Central Committee, and a consultation on sustainable development with the ACT Alliance in Uppsala, 50 years after the WCC Assembly there. The year offers opportunities to "envision our common future: united in faith, eager for witness, and fearless in the quest for justice and peace," she said.

Agnes' doctoral studies at the University of Nairobi were on the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in development. Because of political persecution as a student leader fighting injustice in Kenya and imprisonment in 1989 for promoting human rights, she left Kenya to earn her degree at Uppsala University in missiology on the role of NGOs.

Elected by the WCC 10th Assembly in 2013 in Busan, South Korea, she is the first woman and the first African moderator.

Q: Tell about the WCC's evolution in the past 70 years?

Agnes: The journey is one of commemoration, celebration and building on milestones and lessons for the future. The ecumenical movement has become global. Since 1961, issues of unity, mission and justice have been integrated. The Just Community of Women and Men is more visible in churches, with women assuming leadership roles. Perhaps the greatest impact on social justice issues was evident in the Program to Combat Racism when churches accompanied people in their struggles for freedom in Southern Africa and for human rights in Latin America. The WCC also provided space for churches from former communist and socialist countries to connect with the world. The Lima Faith and Order document, "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry," was a landmark.

We should also remember humanitarian work in Europe and reconciliation efforts. The WCC has been a voice on socio-economic development. The church's work for the poor provided a basis for participatory and people-centered development. The WCC holds multilateral agencies accountable, including the United Nations.

Q: What do you wish for in the coming 40 years?

Agnes: We must debunk the dominion theology of consumerism that relegates "mother earth" to an instrument of exploitation by a few individuals driven by greed. We must embrace global citizenship and community. We must care for one another and the earth for the sake of posterity. I hope humanity will acknowledge the pilgrim nature of life and that spirituality, not materialism, will be the bedrock of future generations.

Q: What do you wish for the future?

Agnes: I also dream of a world where every man and woman's dignity is upheld, every person's basic needs are secured, there is no racial discrimination, xenophobia or related violence—a world free of sexual and gender violence. Systems and rule of law will effectively deal with criminals. I dream of a global world without borders and, at the same time, security for people who want or need to move around.

Q: As you meet with youth, what are their interests?

Agnes: I see youth reaching for hope and direction for their destiny. There are differences in the levels of unemployment and desperation, but in general youth are struggling with finding space in our ecclesial bodies, in public space and in defining their destiny. Their response to the challenges is where the difference lies.

We should empower youth to celebrate icons of the ecumenical movement who, in their youth, left landmarks and on whose shoulders we now stand. These icons should inspire youth. Second, young people can restore embodied solidarity among themselves as they increasingly are networked globally but not actively connected. Third, we need clarity in discerning the role and direction youth can play in the age of technology and in combatting nationalism and xenophobia.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Conference, directory, grant news reported

About 165 attended the Jan. 27 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, sponsored by The Fig Tree with Catholic Charities of Spokane, the Faith Action Network, the United Methodist District, NAACP Spokane, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and other partners.

There will be video of the panel and some of the workshop online through thefigtree.org.

Resource Directory advertisers are confirming their support of the 2018-19 annual directory and The Fig Tree is beginning to recruit support through the Community

Partners Program, which last year drew \$11,800 in underwriting.

This year, The Fig Tree will publish 16,000 copies, because the increase of 1,500 from 2016 to 14,500 in 2017 was not enough to meet the growing demand.

Advent Lutheran Church in Spokane Valley has granted The Fig Tree \$1,000 from its Endowment Fund that supports local and synod ministries.

The funds support strengthening The Fig Tree's capacity, constituency, staff, volunteers, interns, website and Resource Directory as a tool for service

providers and people in need.

Other grants of the nearly \$13,500 dispersed went to modernize synod communication, quilt batting, the pastor's discretionary fund, campus ministry and seminary education.

Some helped fund projects of local churches like foster children gifts, summer concerts, a clothes closet and food pantry, a Latino ministry, a neighborhood youth program, a community dinner, a child center, Sunday school supplies and an ecumenical food program.

For information, call 928-7733.

African-American historian speaks at Whitworth

Dwayne Mack, author, historian and professor, will present Whitworth University's African-American History Month Lecture at 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 15, in Weyerhaeuser Hall.

"Black Women in Spokane: Emerging from the Shadows of Jim and Jane Crow" is the focus of his lecture.

Dwayne, chair of African-American history at Berea College, is the author of *Black Spokane: The Civil Rights Struggle in*

the Inland Northwest.

He earned a bachelor's in history from Methodist University, a master's in American history from North Carolina Central University and a doctorate in American history from Washington State University. His research focuses on the Black West, the civil rights movement, policing in America, and equity, inclusion and diversity in academia.

In this lecture, Dwayne will focus on African-American women

in the Inland Northwest's largest city and explore the intersections of racism and sexism in the city during the 20th century.

He is also the co-editor of *Violence Against Black Bodies: An Intersectional Analysis of How Black Lives Continue to Matter and Law Enforcement in the Age of Black Lives Matter: Policing Black and Brown Bodies.*

For information, call 777-4215 or email anitalewis@whitworth.edu.

Video conference on values set at St. John's

"Values in Action," a conference presented by Trinity Institute in New York City, will be streamed from 7 to 9 p.m., Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 2 to 3, at St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th Ave. in Spokane.

It includes content of a conference at Trinity Church in New York, local discussion groups and interfaith worship.

It features activists, theologians, authors and experts on how to integrate core values into

strategic and effective action, said Canon Kristi Philip of the cathedral.

Keynote speakers include the Most Rev. Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church; Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Pádraig O' Tuama, poet theologian and mediator; the Rev. Elizabeth Edman, Episcopal priest and author of *Queer Virtue: What LBGTQ People Know about*

Life and Love and How it can Revitalize Christianity, and Jose Antonio Vargas, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and filmmaker.

Organizers invite interfaith participation in Spokane. Local co-sponsors are the NAACP, Spokane Churches Against Racism, The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, St. John's Cathedral and Morning Star Missionary Baptist.

For information, call 838-4277 or email kristip@spokanedioocese.org.

ALTCEW offers seniors balance classes

Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW) will offer a new round of classes to train volunteer coaches to teach groups of eight to 12 seniors in "A Matter of Balance," a national evidence-based program to reduce fear of falling and increase activity levels of older adults.

More volunteer coaches are needed, said Mark Haberman of ALTCEW.

Spokane County rates of falling are greater than the state rate and

result in a high rate of hospitalization and Emergency Medical Services calls by the City of Spokane Fire Department EMS, he said.

"The average cost in the United States of falls in older adults is more than \$30,000," Mark pointed out.

After taking "A Matter of Balance," developed at Boston University, 97 percent of participants reporting they have less fear, increased activity and will recommend the program to others.

ALTCEW has offered "A Matter of Balance" in Spokane County for two and a half years.

Volunteer coaches agree to lead two classes within the next year.

Mark said coaches need good communication and interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, dependability and a willingness to lead small groups of older adults. They need to be able to lead low- to moderate-level exercise. ALTCEW staff train and support volunteer coaches.

The next training is from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, March 3, at ALTCEW, 1222 N. Post.

For information, call 458-2509, ext. 211, or email mark.haberman@dshs.wa.gov.

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Directory Editor - Malcolm Haworth
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Winter Waters 2018
Friday, March 2 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Patsy Clark Mansion - 2208 W. Second Ave. - Spokane

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Peace and Justice Conference is Feb. 23-24

The ninth annual Peace & Justice Action Conference will focus on the theme, "Building Beyond the Moment," Friday and Saturday, Feb. 23 and 24, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr.

Eric Ward, a long-time civil rights strategist and director at Western States Center, will speak on "How Racial and Economic Inequality Fuel White Nationalism in America."

An opening reception from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Friday includes food and performances.

The conference from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, includes three workshop sessions, a keynote address and opportunities to connect, said Liz Moore, co-director of the Peace and Justice Action League (PJALS), which is organizing the event.

Eric worked in community, regional and national organizing and philanthropy. From 2011 to 2017, he was a Ford Foundation officer for gender, racial and ethnic justice and an executive for The Atlantic Philanthropies U.S. Reconciliation and Human Rights Program. He began his civil rights career

when the white nationalist movement was engaged in violent paramilitary activity that sought to undermine democratic government.

As an organizer with Community Alliance of Lane County, field director of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment and national field director of the Center for New Community, Eric designed campaigns to expose and counter hate groups and their violence. He is one of a few leaders of color working to counter organized hate.

Topics for workshops include advocacy for U.S. Muslims, nuclear weapons and social justice, how-tos for campaigns, anti-racism for white people, local housing justice, strengthening relationships, rights of activists, supporting refugees, the Poor People's Campaign, digital organizing, analysis and tools for change, state's upside-down tax code, the power of stories, beyond allyship, federal budget realities, restorative justice, resistance to fascism, building networks, and facilitating peer support for trauma.

For information, call 838-7870 or visit pjals.org/2018conference.

Buddhist nuns training at Sravasti Abbey

Fifty Buddhist nuns from nine European, Asian, South and North American countries are gathered Jan. 22 to Feb. 8 at Sravasti Abbey near Newport for "Living Vinaya in the West," an historic, 16-day training program.

Coming from three Buddhist traditions—Chinese Mahayana, Tibetan and Theravada—they are exploring guidelines the Buddha set for nuns, establishing monastic communities and the role of individuals in monastic life.

The Abbey, a Buddhist monastery, is hosting Master Venerable Wu Yin, founder and abbess of Luminary International Buddhist Society (LIBS) in Taiwan, and six nuns to teach in Mandarin with English translation.

The course is likely the first such training in the U.S. for Western

nuns, said Thubten Chonyi of the Abbey. Previously, Western nuns went to Asia for Vinaya training in a foreign language.

Ven. Wu Yin has been a bhikshuni—ordained Buddhist nun—for nearly 60 years. LIBS offers study programs, translation and publishing. For the study, Sravasti Abbey and LIBS are creating resources in English to root the Buddha's teachings—the Dharma—in the West.

Buddhist monasteries are needed for Buddhist teachings to thrive. Sravasti Abbey was founded to do that, Thubten Chonyi said.

In 2012, Pew Charitable Trust said 1.2 million Buddhists live in the U.S. Chinese immigrants founded the first Buddhist temple in 1853. Now most U.S. Buddhists are European-American.

Centers and temples serve

Buddhist practitioners of many ethnic backgrounds, but there are few Buddhist monasteries. Sravasti Abbey is the first U.S. Tibetan Buddhist monastery for Western nuns and monks, she said.

Ven. Wu Yin and LIBS support Sravasti Abbey through work with Thubten Chodron, founder and abbess of Sravasti Abbey, and a Buddhist nun for 40 years. A teacher, author and direct student of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, she began the Abbey in 2003.

She first met Ven. Wu Yin in 1995 in Taiwan, requesting teachings for a Western Buddhist Nun education program in Bodhi, India. The two published the course as "Choosing Simplicity," and plan to compile teachings of this gathering for publication.

For information, call 509-447-5549 or email chonyi.sravasti@

'Coming Home' play explores vets experiences at GU

"Coming Home: A Soldiers' Project" by Kathleen Jeffs and directed by Charles Pepiton is a new theatrical production exploring what it is like to return from war to study at Gonzaga.

"It is the story of transitions and perceptions: from base to basketball, from service to civilian," said Kathleen, who is chair of Gonzaga's theatre and dance department. "The play is about how veterans' senses process new sights and sounds of the university environment. Small moves make big waves.

Connections are made and unmade. Our construction of the meaning of events, past and present, is made in transitions."

"Everyone knows someone who has been to war and sees the world differently than someone who has not, but how does this work at Gonzaga?" Kathleen asks. "What is it like to sit in a class next to a veteran, or for veterans to sit next to a student who has no idea about the people and places they encountered? What are perception gaps between those who have and haven't served?"

Students in her fall 2016 play-writing class helped do research for writing the play, which is based on 10 years of interviews with veterans by the Oral History of Homecoming Project, a group of Gonzaga faculty and staff. Students, veterans, and student-veterans helped create the play.

Performances are at 7:30 p.m., Friday to Saturday, Feb. 2 and 3, Thursday to Saturday, Feb. 8 to 10, and at 2 p.m., Sundays, Feb. 4 and 11, in Gonzaga's Magnuson Theatre at 502 East Boone Ave.

For information, call 313-6553.

Winter Waters honors journalists

Winter Waters 2018 is "Honoring Watershed Hero Journalists" Rich Landers, Julie Titone and Karen Dorn Steele and "fact-based journalism" from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Friday, March 2, at the Patsy Clark Mansion, 2208 W. 2nd Ave. Organizers believe fact-based journalism is essential for protecting waters, forests and wildlife habitats, and cleaning up pollution in the Columbia River Basin.

Winter Waters is co-hosted by Sierra Club's Upper Columbia River Group and the Center for Environmental Law and Policy to recognize individuals, tribes, and organizations who have contributed to protecting and restoring the Upper Columbia River.

Tom Soeldner of Sierra Club said Winter Waters 2018 is honoring journalists because of the rise of "fake news" from people with "narrow political and social agendas."

"It is vital that honorable journalists dedicated to truth and the common good be recognized," he said. "In the context of business and political interests concerned only about bottom lines, and commodifying nature, it is essential that environmental journalists have rigorous ethical standards.

"Today, with the speed and quantity of news, we need reporters who not only can write a winsome phrase and paint a convincing verbal picture of wildlife and landscapes, but also love the earth and seek to support and honor its intricate web of life," Tom added.

Rich, Julie and Karen have covered stories about asbestos contamination in Libby, lead contamination in the Silver Valley, toxins in the depths of Lake Coeur d'Alene, PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) in the Spokane River, over-pumping of aquifers for golf courses, waste at Hanford, the Waste-to-Energy Plant and management by the U.S. Forest Service. They have exposed dangerous environmental practices and advocated for a just and sustainable future, Tom said.

For information, call 270-6995 or email waltsoe@gmail.com.



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Initiative advocates for patients by challenging systems and policies

Continued from page 1

was upset by the trash thrown over the back of the vessel. I wanted to help make the world a better place," Barry said.

After his honorable discharge in 1999, he finished undergraduate studies at Evergreen State College in 2000 and worked with a U.S. Congressman, a Washington State Senator and two governors.

"I thought I could help people through politics, but found it lacking," Barry said. "I realized many people who called the governor about safety or housing issues needed legal aid."

So he applied to Gonzaga's Law School and was wait-listed.

For a year, he worked in Spokane with Climate Solutions, a nonprofit working on global warming and modernizing the power grid with alternate energy.

Then he was accepted at the law school. During his studies, Barry did work-study with the Center for Justice on veterans' advocacy. He graduated in 2009. After Barry passed the bar exam in Bellevue, the Northwest Justice Project, Washington's publicly funded legal aid program, hired him to work in Spokane as a staff attorney, helping low-income people stay in their homes, secure benefits due them and advocate for consumer protection.

After learning about the medical-legal partnership model, he left the Northwest Justice Project in 2012 and started the Health and Justice Initiative in 2013 through

the Center for Justice. In 2015, a community collaborative effort of Empire Health Foundation, Providence Family Medicine Residency Clinic, Providence Internal Medicine Residency Clinic, Gonzaga University School of Law, Spokane Teaching Health Center (STHC) and the Center for Justice began the multidisciplinary effort to train future doctors and lawyers about the impact social determinants of health have on the cycle of poverty.

For a while, he had offices at the Center for Justice, the STHC and Gonzaga Law School. Now his office is at the Gonzaga Law School, where he is an adjunct professor and director of the Health and Justice Clinic for University Legal Assistance.

Barry teaches up to 10 second- and third-year students a semester to improve access to justice for low-income and marginalized people with health concerns. Students have case loads they manage under his supervision.

Gonzaga's Center for Law and Justice runs University Legal Assistance, a nonprofit clinical law program, through which law students practice law while in school.

The clinical law program, which began in 1974, also has clinics in Business Law, Environmental Law and Land Use, Elder Law, Federal Tax Law, General Practice Law and Indian Law. The elder and tax programs take walk-ins, but others require referrals.

Barry and students work with

health care professionals at the Spokane Teaching Health Clinic (STHC) and Eastern State Hospital, where there are also social work students from Eastern Washington University. The medical students are majoring in pharmacy, nursing, medical and physical therapy, psychiatry, internal or family medicine.

Barry said the medical-legal partnership model 1) advocates for patients, 2) looks at systems that affect patients and 3) looks at policy issues.

- It addresses issues such as landlord-tenant relations, housing discrimination, translation for patients, health care access, refugee concerns, public benefits, and mental health hospitalization and discharge experiences.

- The interdisciplinary approach helps people deal with systems. For example, HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act designed to protect patient information, may inhibit health care coordination. Lawyers can help patients sign releases to improve their care.

- A policy issue they identified involved the city improperly interpreting its chronic nuisance law and compelling landlords to evict tenants who were victims of domestic violence, because they were part of an assault.

Students helped the city draft a notice informing landlords of tenants' rights as domestic violence victims. Under state law, a victim cannot be evicted, but a perpetra-

tor can, Barry said.

"We have saved tax money and improved patients' lives, while teaching law students about complexities of patients' situations," said Barry.

Students also work with Hotspotters, a community action organization at Volunteers of America. The program works with "super users" of emergency medical services and first responders.

"We provided consultation to help start the program and advocate for clients," Barry said. "The program collaborates with Community Court to protect clients' safety and assets."

Barry counsels students not to judge people who are experiencing poverty, but to take direction from their clients, because they know what they need.

Throughout his life, Barry has found there is not equal access to services in America or in the world. Some are held back by social determinants of health, the conditions in the places where people live, learn, work and play.

For instance, Spokane Health District's study: "Odds Against Tomorrow" reports that people living at the top of the South Hill live 18 years longer than those living downtown.

Barry believes the Health and Justice Initiative works in Spokane because it's small enough

that all the players can meet to discuss cases—prosecutors, public defenders, fire fighters, nurses, engineers, police, emergency room doctors, primary care providers, mental health providers, social workers, housing providers, homeless advocates and substance abuse servicers.

"We help people regain their lives and health," he said.

For information, call 313-5791 or email pfundt@gonzaga.edu.

Scholar in Residence
Feb. 9-11, 2018
Windows to Israeli Society
Dr. Rachel Korazim
 Freelance Jewish education consultant specializing in Israel and Holocaust education
6 p.m. Friday
'Anochi: Dialogues with God in Israeli Poetry'
6:30 p.m. Saturday
'Israel Diaspora Relations – Changing Narratives'
10 a.m. Sunday
'Connections to the Land'
Temple Beth Shalom
 1322 E. 30th Ave
747-3304
www.spokanetbs.org

Northwest Buddhist Convention to draw 300 to Spokane

The 71st Northwest Buddhist Convention, sponsored by the Spokane Buddhist Temple, will be held from 5 p.m., Friday, Feb. 16 to noon, Sunday, Feb. 18, at the Hotel RL Spokane at the Park, 303 W. North River Dr.

The three-day convention, expected to draw 300 from the Northwest and Canada, features the Rev. Henry Adams of San Mateo Buddhist Temple, who discovered Buddhism on a 1995 high school exchange in India.

Opening and closing Buddhist services will be officiated by the Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America.

There will be 12 workshops in English and Japanese, a book-

store, gift shop and banquet.

The Convention includes a shorter "Intro to Buddhism Program" for people wanting to learn about Buddhism.

Henry studied Buddhist scriptures at St. Olaf College in Minnesota and earned a master's in Buddhist studies at the University of Michigan in 2003. He worked in Miyazaki, Japan, from 2004 to 2007, completed ministerial studies at the Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin Buddhist Seminary in 2010 and serves Buddhist Churches of America.

Kodo, who grew up in Fukuoka, Japan, earned a bachelor's in 1973, served the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple until 1976, when he earned a master's. He was in

the U.S. Navy from 1976 to 1980. He then served a Buddhist church in Oakland until 2005. He served from then until 2012, when he became bishop, at the Center for Buddhist Education in Berkeley.

For information, call 270-5308 or email quilt4mari@yahoo.com.




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Happy Watkin's mark on Spokane is much more than MLK's dream

Along with being known for passionately reciting the words of Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech, the Rev. Percy Happy Watkins often comforts parishioners or lends insights in community discussions with wisdom from many proverbs and quotes he has committed to memory.

Happy is retiring as pastor and will be honored at a retirement party from 6 to 9 p.m., Saturday, March 3, at location TBA. He will serve as pastor emeritus.

The oldest of 10 children growing up in a poor family in the Bronx on a block with thousands of blacks, whites, Puerto Ricans, Irish, Poles, Italians and Jews, he was shocked by the lack of diversity when arriving in 1961 in Spokane at 19 in the Air Force.

Within a month, he began attending Morningstar Baptist Church, which lightened the depression, homesickness and loneliness he first felt. There he met his wife, Etta, in 1962, and they married in 1963.

He stayed and, while they raised their sons, Percy, James, John and Paul, he made an impact on the faith and wider community.

He worked six years with a grocery store, treating every customer with respect. Then he traveled as a salesman. As the first black person some had seen, he defused racial slurs and stereotypes, breaking down distrust and putting people at ease by his friendliness.

For two years in the early 1980s, he ran a restaurant, then a ministry opportunity opened.

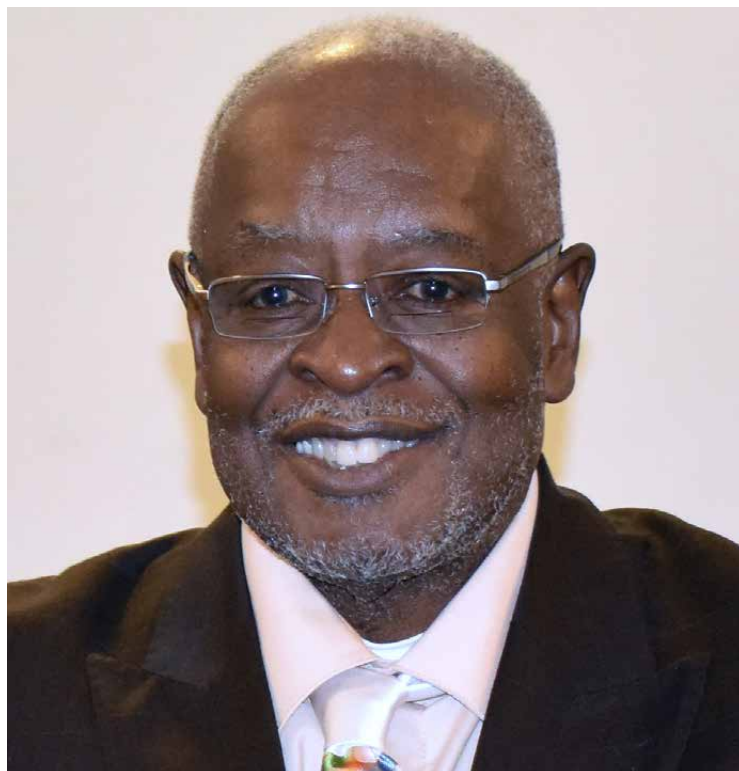
Happy restarted and served Sharon Christian Methodist Episcopal Church from 1982 to 1985, becoming licensed as a deacon, an elder and then a full pastor. From 1985 to 1990, he was assistant pastor at Calvary Baptist, mentored by the Rev. C.W. Andrews, before he began in 1990 as pastor of New Hope Baptist Church.

While working for 12 years in security at Deaconess Medical Center, he took clinical pastoral education and served several years as a chaplain at Deaconess and then as chaplain and patient advocate at Holy Family Hospital.

When Happy started as pastor of New Hope Baptist Church the church's call was for him to serve the community, not just the congregation.

So he worked in the community to improve the correctional system, police department, school district and youth programs related to racial issues. He has also served on ecumenical bodies to bring reconciliation among churches and faiths.

Connection with the correctional system was passed on to



Happy Watkins is honored as he retires from New Hope Baptist.

him by his predecessor, the Rev. Jim Sims, who led services at Pine Lodge Correctional Facility and at Geiger. Happy continued that work and brought prisoners to New Hope Baptist services for three years, until he realized some were not coming for faith reasons.

Happy has been among clergy challenging the disparity between the proportion of blacks in Spokane's population and the proportion who are incarcerated.

To promote education and overcome the achievement gap, Happy has worked to assure that children and youth of color graduate, take college-prep classes or attend trade schools, and are informed of the variety of career choices.

"Dr. King's message to young people was for them to be the best they can be," said Happy, whose message to children and youth is to work hard in studies and at work.

In 1986, when there were no black police officers, he was among pastors and community leaders who changed practices related to the civil service exam. They learned there was a requirement that if an ethnic population was not represented in the police force, but some of that ethnic group passed the civil service test, they could float into the pool.

So that year, six black, two Hispanic and one Native American went through the Police Academy and became police officers.

As pastor, Happy went to PTA meetings if parents couldn't go. He also challenged bias he met in housing sales and rentals.

He also worked with pastors and community leaders, and particularly Ivan Bush, former equal opportunity officer with Spokane

Public Schools, to start the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center, first at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and then at 845 S. Sherman.

He helped organize nearly 30 years of MLK Day rallies and marches with the MLK Center after President Reagan established the national holiday in 1983

In 1986, Gov. Booth Gardner came to a luncheon at the Ridpath Hotel. Lydia Sims, president of NAACP Spokane, asked Happy to read the "I Have a Dream" speech. He memorized it. Since then he has given it from Genesee, Idaho, to Cashmere, Wash., in schools, churches and universities—some years 30 to 40 times, but fewer times in recent years.

"It's not just a black dream. It's for all races. It's also about the fight for legalizing immigrants and respecting the first African-American president," he said.

He, Ivan and other clergy organized the first rally and march in 1989, drawing 300 to Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church for the rally. Then 54 marched from the county courthouse to the federal building. Now 3,000 to 4,000 participate.

After African-American astronaut Michael Anderson of Spokane died when Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated on reentry in 2003, Happy joined others to raise more than \$100,000 for the memorial statue that now stands between the Opera House and Convention Center.

After years of perseverance by Happy, Ivan and others, Martin Luther King Jr. Way opened in May 2012, with the first phase extending Riverside Ave. from Division east to Sherman through

the Riverpoint University District.

The second phase extended to Erie St. in 2016, and the third phase is the pedestrian-bike bridge under construction over the railroad tracks.

Mayor David Condon said Happy and Ivan brought the community together and broke down barriers: "You embody what King talked about and did. You opened many doors for the community."

Happy responded by quoting the Disney song, "When You Wish upon a Star," that it makes no difference "who you are" and said no dream "is too extreme."

Happy and Ivan had dreamed of naming a street after King.

"Over the years, there were disappointments, setbacks, roadblocks, tears and heartaches," he said, "but when you fall on your back, you can look up and get up."

The City Council approved the street in 2009, when 770 other cities had streets named for King.

Along with sharing King's dream for justice, Happy stresses the importance of family, home and the kitchen table.

In area prisons, he found many people who said they "didn't listen to Mom and Dad."

Happy realized from their stories the importance of family, having young men and women spend time with their children, and having children spend time

with grandparents.

He and Etta, who is the second generation of her family to live in Spokane, are well into that role, receiving many of their grandchildren before breakfast, so their parents can go to work. They drive them to school, pick them up and keep them until their parents return from work.

Happy said their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the fifth generation of her family living in Spokane, lighten their days.

As Happy has had an impact in the community and region in civil rights, race relations and ecumenical ties, he has also had an impact on many lives and families.

He has worked with the Ministers' Fellowship Union, NAACP Spokane, the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center, The Fig Tree Board, the Police Accountability and other community programs and organizations.

"The dream has validity," he said. "We as people need to work together toward it. We need to remember that the measure of men or women is where they stand in moments of challenges and controversies."

For information, call 535-1336.

Article compiled from stories in The Fig Tree over many years. As a Board member, Happy has contributed ideas for many stories and connections in the community.



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More than 97 percent of Red Cross disaster response is volunteers

Continued from page 1

Many volunteers are retired, but some have flexible work schedules, can deploy quickly and stay two to three weeks. When they travel a distance they stay longer because of the expense of flying. A deployment within the region may be just for a week.

Some volunteers with specialty training such as mental health counseling or nursing can be deployed for short periods because we need to care for them, said Megan, who has worked in the Spokane office for nine years, as communication manager for six years and serving as executive director the last three years.

Disaster volunteers receive training before they are deployed as members of the Disaster Action Team. Local teams have classes and online training on Red Cross procedures, personal safety and interacting with clients. Volunteers learn they need to care for themselves when they work with people experiencing trauma.

Disaster Action Team members, who live around the region, are on call as much as it fits their schedule, as part of teams on-call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If a fire happens, first responders or the fire dispatcher contacts the Red Cross. Volunteers may be called at 3 a.m. to go to a fire and help someone they don't know.

"We are typically the only service agency on scene at a disaster. Our role in the first 72 hours is to make sure people have a safe place to stay, food and clothes to start them on the road to recovery," Megan said.

The Disaster Action Team assesses the number of people affected and their immediate needs. They may offer a pre-loaded debit card to ensure the critical needs of those affected are met, from paying for a hotel to buying diapers.

"After an initial meeting, our caseworkers conduct a follow-up meeting in the next 24 to 48 hours to help a family determine their pathway to recovery," she said.

Then the Red Cross collaborates with other agencies, like the Salvation Army, SNAP and Second Harvest, to broaden the base of support.

Over the following week or so, the Red Cross checks every few days to see if the family has housing and other needs met.

"No one can manage someone else's recovery. So along with direct assistance, we guide people to resources and make referrals so they can manage their own recovery," she said. "Caseworkers help people recognize their needs."

Since July 1, 2017, the chapter has responded to 116 fires with 445 clients, which is high for the



Megan Snow is executive director of region's Red Cross.

region, Megan said.

House fires happen. Some are on the news, and some are not. When media cover disasters they tell about the situation and how to help. Many organizations help.

Sensationalizing a disaster does not help, she said. While media spotlighted the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, they overlooked other islands hit as hard. When media stop coverage, a disaster goes out of mind, when long-term help is still needed.

She is attuned to communication dynamics, having worked six years at the Red Cross in communication to build awareness, raise funds and develop relationships.

Megan came from Hawaii, where she grew up, to Spokane when her older sister came to study at Gonzaga University. In 1997, she began studies there in public relations, graduating in 2001. She worked a year with a PR firm in Portland, a year at Riverpark Square revitalizing downtown and four years with Hoopfest before completing a master's in communication and leadership in 2008 at Gonzaga.

Seeking work with an agency that had impact on the community, she learned the Red Cross needed a communication manager.

By communicating about it, she has been impressed that so many volunteers are ready to deploy, as they did for the 2017 summer and fall disasters.

The Red Cross can use people with any skills, including technology, because there is a need to

set up computers and printers at disaster operations headquarters. In the Caribbean, technology volunteers set up satellites so people could phone families on the mainland to say they were okay.

The Red Cross is still in Puerto Rico and other islands because the disaster is so extensive, she said. They rely on local chapters to shelter people.

"When we send volunteers, we have to assure their safety and that they are prepared to live with hardships like no running water or power," Megan said. "Volunteers have to be in good health, because there may be no access to medicines. Nurses check volunteers' health status before they deploy."

Everyone has a different reason for volunteering with the Red Cross. Some took swimming lessons as a child, were helped in the military or experienced a house fire. Some want to have an immediate impact on people in need. Some have volunteered for years. Some want to see other places. Some want to help locally. Some are motivated by faith, and see it as a way to be of service.

Some faith communities are partners, opening doors to shelter and feed people. The Red Cross trains them. VOADs, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, involve congregations in long-term recovery.

In larger-scale disasters, the Red Cross offers emergency aid and then hands the work to VOADs to develop Long-Term Recovery Groups, like after the

2014 and 2015 wildfires in the Methow Valley and Okanogan.

"Emotional trauma may arise as people struggle to reconcile their faith with how the tragedy could happen to them," Megan said. "Some victims have spiritual care needs, as well as mental health and health care needs because the trauma can have impact beyond the immediate disaster."

Spiritual care may be needed for a neighbor of someone whose house burned.

George Abrams, a retired United Methodist pastor who has worked with his denomination's disaster response, helps lead the Red Cross' disaster spiritual care, along with Mike Bullard, a retired Presbyterian pastor, who is chair of the Inland Northwest VOAD.

Related to religion, Megan said the Red Cross is impartial and neutral, two of its seven principles. The others are humanity, independence, volunteer services, unity and universality.

"We respect individual choices and faiths. Our volunteers help people recover based on the client's faith. Volunteers listen, support and respond," she said.

"Our work makes life better for people in the hardest times," said Megan. "I believe we should do that for each other."

The Red Cross also offers preparedness classes.

AmeriCorps volunteers go to elementary schools to teach about fire safety, smoke alarms, escape plans and evacuation.

As part of a national initiative, the Red Cross also partners with organizations such as the City of Spokane and Spokane Valley Fire Departments to install free smoke alarms in high risk communities. Faith organizations, such as the Latter-Day Saints, have supported these efforts with volunteers.

It also trains people in First Aid, CPR and how to use AEDS.

"While we are often seen as a big national organization, the reality is that the Red Cross is local. Volunteers are local people, who decide to help make our communities and neighborhoods more resilient," said Megan. "As an independent nonprofit, we receive no government funding. When there are big disasters, generosity is amazing. Local disasters need the same support."

With recent disasters, there has been a new swell in volunteers who need training to respond here and be ready to go to the next big one.

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



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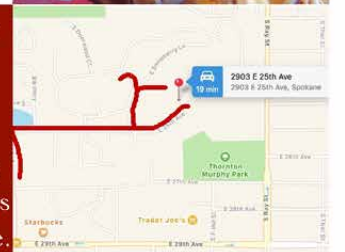
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New Hope's new pastor was mentored by his father and predecessor

Pastor Happy Watkins will pass the mantle of pastor of the New Hope Baptist church to his youngest son, the Rev. James Watkins, on Sunday, March 4, at the church, 9021 E. Boone. Happy will be pastor emeritus, continuing his work in the community. James will take over the duties as full-time pastor of the church.

Since he was ordained in 2012, James has been assistant pastor—trained and mentored by Happy and other pastors. James also works 40 hours a week at Airway Heights Correction Center.

In recent years, James filled in when Happy struggled with health issues.

James doesn't have a knack for memorizing speeches, so he likely won't recite Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, but he is involved with the Ministers' Fellowship Union and the NAACP Spokane Chapter. He was recently emcee for this year's MLK Commemoration Service.

"The challenge of ministry is to reach people who have disconnected from and lack respect for churches and ministers," James said. "To reach them, we need to change some of our ideas about ministry, church and Christ.

"People who are not in church will not suddenly start coming in the unchurched Northwest, where only 20 percent of 18- to 30-year-olds go to church," he said.

James believes it's possible to counteract low interest by meeting people where they are, even on social media. New Hope Baptist is on Facebook and has a website.

"Some churches are afraid to go on social media, but we must take Christ's message to the four corners of the world, so the church will look different than it has in the past," he said.

As it was for Happy, New Hope's call to be its minister includes serving the community, as well as the church.

While James attended Rogers High School, he played football and was a champion wrestler, leading to a scholarship to North Idaho College. He has also competed in judo and now coaches.

"I went to school to teach and coach," James said.

He worked as a youth counselor at a community center before he began working with the Washington State Department of Corrections as a corrections officer at the Airway Heights Correction Center when he was 24.

Now a custody unit supervi-



James Watkins, who will be installed March 4, with his wife, Shawn.

sor, overseeing programs for 300 offenders, James sees that experience as part of his training for ministry. He oversees GED classes, chemical dependency and sex offender treatment, employment opportunities and job training, parenting classes, the fathers program and counseling.

In 2012, James started a pilot project, "Thinking for a Change," a cognitive behavior program to build self-awareness, problem solving and awareness of feelings among inmates to reduce recidivism after they are released.

"It's effective. I have seen offenders change," said James, aware that for many of the 2,300 inmates, the prison has a revolving door and many return.

While James felt called to ministry when he was 17, he put it on the back burner. In 2000, his wife Shawn's aunt asked when he was going to be a minister.

He had no plans to be a minister. He could serve the church as a lay person, but in the prison, he gained skills for dealing with people in positive ways, hearing their needs and cries for help.

"It prepared me for what I do in the community and as pastor," James said. "I see the worst in the men there, but I know God can redeem them. Most people see those who go to jail as throwaways."

Over the years, James has learned from Scripture and life that God can save even those who commit crimes.

"Our challenge is to love people

and love humanity, not judge," he said. "It's easy to love those who look like us, but can we love others? The Gospel is about treating others with love, dignity and respect," he said. "We can 'preach God' by living the Gospel. We can't preach Christ without showing Christ."

As he grew older, after serving faithfully in many local and state church positions, he knew God was calling him to be a minister.

In 2007, he was ordained a deacon and taught Sunday school to further his study of Scripture.

James still hesitated, because he knew the challenges of people's perceptions and expectations of ministers. He knew that, even though his father was loved, some were unkind if they disagreed with a decision or stand he made.

"I also did not feel prepared to give of myself personally and financially as he has done," he continued.

From 2010 to 2011, James was ill, and doctors didn't know what was wrong.

"God needed me to be separate from everything to figure what God wanted me to do. I cried out, and God answered," James said.

When he regained his health, he announced his call to ministry and was ordained. So James was able to fill in when Happy was ill and needed time off.

"It was great training for me to preach most Sundays, make decisions, help people in need find resources, do weddings and funer-

als, visit people, attend meetings, deal with church conflicts, go to events in the community and fill his big shoes. My dad has always been busy," James said.

Along with full-time work, being pastor and serving in the community, James spends time with his family—Shawn, a stepson who is 30 and two sons, 10 and 13.

"I can do it because I have family support," he said. "My mother and father are caregivers for our boys after school. My brothers take them to sporting events. With that support, I can address church and community needs."

James' brother John is a worship leader, preparing to be ordained as a deacon. Percy III, the oldest, is a minister, but works Sundays. Paul, a singer, also works Sundays. Their children are involved in the church.

James knows the church needs new approaches. While he knows of many programs, counseling approaches and self-help efforts to effect change in prison, he believes the most powerful is to be Christ's presence through how he lives, because few are open to preaching or evangelizing.

"We need to show love so the Holy Spirit changes lives," he said. "We need to step out of our comfort zones."

One step was for New Hope Baptist to move from the converted pool hall where they worshiped for 25 years at 409 E. Greene.

Last year, a member saw a for sale sign between a house and church at 9021 E. Boone along N. Argonne. She asked the pastor if the church was for sale. It wasn't, but later the pastor was interested.

New Hope raised \$20,000 for a nonrefundable deposit toward the price of \$275,000. New Hope sold their buildings for about half that amount. They needed \$150,000 more. Two banks turned them down. They prayed. Then one bank granted a mortgage.

They moved out of the old

church in March 2017, and worshiped six months at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church until moving into the new-to-them building in September.

Both James and Happy sense excitement among the 40 to 60 worshipping on Sundays. One woman raised \$50 per chair and bought 150 chairs.

Last July at the Annual General Baptist Convention in Portland, they shared the church's story. The General President offered to match money churches gave there. They collected \$2,600, but he decided to give New Hope \$10,000.

Victory Faith Church north of New Hope Baptist on Argonne gave the church \$5,000 and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane raised another \$5,000.

"God is blessing us," said James. "We are now focusing on how the church can serve the community in our new facility. We want to be a church that has impact on its community."

For information, call 869-2941 or 535-1336, email jwatt71@comcast.net or visit newhopespokane.com.

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Martin Luther King Commemoration expresses unity and support

Pastors of the Spokane Ministers Fellowship planned for the Martin Luther King Jr. commemoration service Jan. 14 to demonstrate their unity and support for the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center as it moves services to the East Central Community Center and picks up responsibility for services there.

"I dedicate my life to the center's success to have amazing impact on children, youth and adults to keep the legacy of Martin Luther King alive," said Freda Gandy, executive director of the center, which will offer many services under one roof.

"Martin Luther King Jr. was an angel. Angels are messengers of God," said Walter Kendricks, beginning his sermon for the Martin Luther King Jr. commemoration service Jan. 14 at Spokane's Holy Temple Church of God in Christ.

Walter is pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church and president of the Spokane Ministers' Fellowship Union.

"God receives me, just as I am, not because of my color, money or education. Because I believe, I come to God," he said.

Walter agreed to preach for the service because he believes in MLK's words that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

"I am angry about a lot, because I am impatient. Many things King talked of, we are still in search of. Here in Spokane we know the battles Pastors Kinlow, Watkins and Andrews have had. We are talking about the same things today, but God remains God, and as long as I have breath and strength, I will spread the Gospel," Walter said.

In seminary he learned it's not what great theologians, televangelists or pastors say, but what matters is what God says.

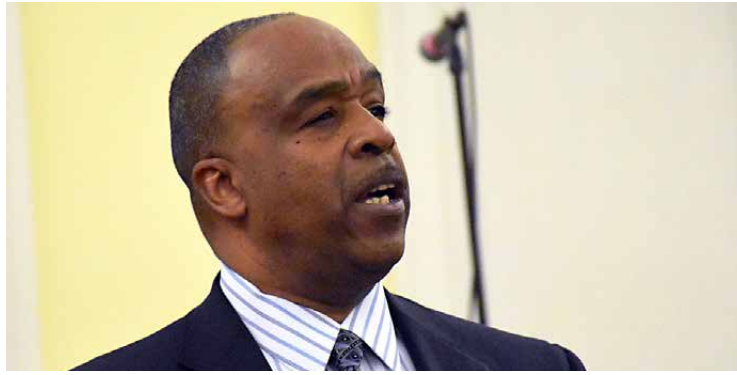
"God has the final word," he said. "We need to be quick, but not in a hurry. God's voice cannot and shall not be silenced," he said.

Walter read from Joel 3:1-3, 16, that God would bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, and gather all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat to judge them, because God's people and the land were divided.

"The Lord will roar, and the Lord will be shelter for his people and strength for the people of Jerusalem" he said.

"Our lives begin to end the day we are silent about things that matter," Walter said, concerned about the nation. "If we believe in God, we have to believe in right and wrong. The rhetoric and policies from Washington D.C. are wrong. Even so, God is still on his throne."

Walter was meeting April 4,



Walter Kendricks, pastor of Morning Star Baptist, preaches.



Spokane Community Choir was one group that sang at the service.

1968, with a Boy Scout troop with boys of different races and economic standings, bound by their oath to do their best, to do duty to God, country and others.

The scout master suddenly told them to hurry home. He expected there would be trouble, because Martin Luther King Jr. had been assassinated in Memphis.

"Dr. King's personal voice was silenced, but God is a good God and raises others to lift their voices in their generation and time to confront institutions of systematic racism, powers and principalities, and people," Walter said. "We misunderstand who we fight, so we fight each other rather than with the powers and principalities of evil that continue to suppress, oppress, enslave and subjugate."

These actions in American history stand against the words of the founding documents, words of hope and dreams for Americans: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

"Inalienable" means that the rights cannot be taken away by the current President," Walter said. "The rights are given by God, not by a man, a government or a country. You can't take them away, no matter how many people are put in jail. God will be the final judge. The concept of right and wrong comes from God."

Turning to the Scripture in Joel, Walter said that: "The day of the Lord is the day of judgment. God is loving, merciful and forgetting, but God is also judgmental, jealous, righteous and indignant."

So the day of judgment will be a day of salvation and judg-

ment, gathering all the nations and judging them because God's people have been scattered and his children sold, he said.

"God is at work. We often take credit and ignore that God gives us strength and health, anoints and appoints us, and gives us the will. There is a day and time God intercedes in the affairs of men and brings back those enslaved and brings all nations together for judgment, but God did not send his son to judge the world but to save the world.

"Many think we can do whatever we want to whomever we want however we wish, but the scattered will be returned. The people have been displaced, the land has been divided, and many people are deemed throwaway people," he said.

"We have prisons for profit. Something is wrong when we put people in prisons and make a profit. The system of bail is wrong and unfair. If I'm accused of a crime, I'm to be presumed innocent until I'm proven guilty, but when people are arrested, bail is set so high they have to stay in jail," he said.

Walter also challenged the bias in the justice and school systems.

"God will return sooner or later. There will be a day for a decision. God does not make the decision," said Walter. "We make the decision by our silence. The voice of God is not to be silenced, muffled or ignored.

"I call on America to no longer remain silent, but to keep striving for the goal of the songwriter who wrote, 'My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty... from every mountainside, let freedom ring!'

"I am thine. I have heard thy voice. Thank God for Martin,

Harriet Tubman and others. Martin's voice was silenced, but we work to put his voice in place and call for equality," Walter said.

"As we strive to live to the ideals of King, we know we are not to judge based on the color of skin but to treat each other as family.

"We need to quit allowing Satan to divide us on racial, religious and political lines, while some have position, power and money.

We must not let voices be silent. There are souls to save and people to feed. We can do so much for Spokane and the nation."

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More than 3,000 rally and march for MLK Day 2018 in Spokane

More than 3,000 gathered at Spokane's Convention Center for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day rally and march to hear a student's essay, the NAACP Spokane president, a candidate for Congress, a Congresswoman, a singer, a Whitworth minister and a pastor celebrate the legacy of Dr. King.

Freda Gandy, executive director of the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Family Outreach Center, was emcee.

Jada Richardson, a Pride Prep freshman who has been involved with the MLK Center, expressed in an essay that she is both resilient and broken. Early in her 15 years, she thought she had to be obnoxious and angry. Now she knows it does not matter how others identify her, but how she identifies herself.

"I'm on a journey of self-discovery. I realize I am more than the stereotypes placed on me. I am determined to make an impact on the world," Jada said.

Kurtis Robinson, NAACP Spokane president, said that today Dr. King would say, "Let's stay focused, not give up, lean on each other and get it done."

Dismayed at the "ridiculous things" leadership is saying and the efforts to take civil rights backwards, he challenges the system that perpetuates classism, traumatizes the poor and destroys the planet.

"We cannot afford to stand by. We need to stand up and be in social and political action until we accomplish civil rights," Kurtis said, pointing out that each person must take responsibility to find their own healing so "we can go to the table of change with an attitude to be respected. We need to hold up the country's ideals and do it by loving each other as human beings, loving even perceived enemies," he said.

"King urged people not to give up," said Kurtis, telling of new energy in the NAACP Spokane, with 14 on the executive committee, new task forces and partners.

Lisa Brown, a candidate for U.S. Representative in the 5th District, urged people to stand up and speak, because "America does not yet have Dr. King's dream. The promises of freedom and justice are not met."

Lisa came with three emotions: gratitude, sorrow and inspiration.

- "I feel grateful for our children, those who came before us, and those who serve the community, those who serve the country and many more.

- "I feel sorrow because there are still homeless vets and youth sleeping on the streets, some people cannot afford health care, the environment is degraded,



Jada Richardson shares essay.



Linda Stone sings of the power and possibilities that come with belief.

dreamers' lives are uncertain, the President uses racial slurs, protection for El Salvadorans is rescinded, and some defend these policies or are silent.

- "I feel inspired by the people here. We need to stay inspired by faith, music and poetry, founding documents and founding words of liberty and justice for all.

"Let us be inspired to keep talking, walking, marching and inspiring others to change hearts to peace and love and stand in integrity and truth for all who serve us in public life. Let's vote," Lisa said. "Let us walk, talk and march and act to change the country."

Linda Stone, a local singer, said MLK was God's representative, a Baptist pastor who laid down his life for freedom and justice for all. All things are possible for those who believe. Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. All we have to do is cast every care on Jesus who goes before us."

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rogers mentioned the prayer of St. Francis: "Make me a channel of your peace." She spoke through hecklers who called out: "Children's health!" "DACA!" or "Liar!"

"I am honored to stand with you to dream for a better tomorrow. We are to love one another," said Cathy, who couldn't confirm what the President said about immigration, but decried the language reported as "destructive, divisive profanity."

"I hope to be part of healing in the community and country," she said. "We need to work together."

After graffiti was sprayed on a wall at the MLK Center last fall, she gathered people for courageous conversations, to share life stories, hopes and frustrations, and to listen to one another.

"We each need to do more to address racism and division. Many let anger and fear divide us," she said.

She has joined in community conversation about solutions, moving from racism to racism,

from poverty to opportunity, from divisiveness to unity, she said.

"We need to be kind and caring. Anger and hostility increase divisiveness, shootings, suicides and bullying. We need to be part of healing the community and broken hearts. We need commitment to civility. Take someone who disagrees with you to coffee," she said.

Cathy plans to travel with a Congressional Human Rights March to Memphis, Selma and the Dexter Ave. Church to learn more about the history of the Civil Rights movement.

Freda then challenged those who yelled at Cathy to use their "single most important nonviolent weapon," their right to vote.

"If you want to get something done, Vote! It is not the time to yell and scream during this rally where people have come to pay respect to Dr. King," she said.

Her words were followed by a speech by Stephy Nobles-Beans of Whitworth (see page 10).

Then Happy Watkins, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, presented Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, given in 1963 at Washington, D.C.

"It's not where we stand in times of comfort, but in times of challenge and controversy," he reminded. "We have conquered space but have not learned to live together on earth."

He recited MLK's dream for the nation to live its creed of equality and for the sons of former slaves and former slave owners to sit together "at the table of brotherhood."

The dream calls for:

- places of oppression to be transformed into oases of freedom and justice;
- children to live in a nation where they are not judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character;
- black boys and girls to join hands with white boys and girls;
- the low to be made high and the high made low;
- for all God's children to sing

with new meaning: "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty...from every mountainside let freedom ring!"

As Happy listed hills, molehills and mountainsides from which freedom should ring, he added, "Let freedom ring from Trump Tower in New York City.

"When that happens, all God's children, black and white, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics will join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty we are free at last!"

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Focusing on division silences voices, while marches give people voices

When candidates spoke at the recent Martin Luther King Jr. Day Rally, the voice of one was drowned out, by some assuming the worst of her. Organizers asked for respect so both voices could be heard.

Media picked up the shouts of “liar” and the calls for “children’s health care” and “DACA”—conflict!

Hmmm! Children’s health care for six years was passed in the bill ending the government shutdown, and promises were made to address DACA—children who came to the U.S. illegally with their parents.

Meanwhile, Cathy McMorris Rogoer’s talk about sitting down at meals to listen to people and traveling in the footsteps of civil rights marches with others in Congress were lost as media picked up on the shouting, focusing on the disruption of hecklers.

The words of Lisa Brown were mostly lost in the media reports. So this issue gives voice to the content of what both said.

We also summarized Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, which we may often hear, but it’s words are rarely repeated in media. We chose to summarize the dream to call attention to its meaning.

Martin Luther King Day, 3,000 marched. Those at the rally were urged to vote.

There were 6,500 in the Spokane Women’s Persistence March on Sunday, Jan. 21, along with 400 in Omak, and tens of thousands in some cities across the U.S. and world, adding up to about 4 million women and men of all ages and races.

A record number of women have signed up to run for office, according to the Washington Post—390 for the U.S. House and 49 for the U.S. Senate.

The #MeToo movement is a force drawing many to march and to run for office.

More than 165 came to the 2018 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference—more last year—to be inspired and

empowered to act. The next issue of The Fig Tree will summarize speakers, issues before the state legislature and how people in the community can be informed to act to influence laws and policies.

Rallies, marches and conferences are what democracy looks like. Many urged people to take their voices from the streets to the polls to vote—to use their democratic power to make a difference.

Just as the civil rights movement, the women’s rights movement is stirring people to speak out, stirring visionaries, stirring people to seek and work for justice.

Resistance and persistence, vigilance and endurance are needed, because human rights, justice, equality and respect don’t come easily or readily. Once they begin to take root, opposition forces will seek to undo them. So we keep singing, “We shall overcome.” We also keep walking, marching, talking, praying and working to bend

the arc of history toward justice.

When the voice of one leader is silenced, new voices must arise to call on the next generations, to continue to challenge violence, greed, bias, disrespect and despair.

Singer Linda Stone reminds that we can do all things God calls us to do because Christ strengthens and empowers us to fulfill God’s purpose.

Happy Watkins reminds us it took 25 years to achieve a Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Spokane. Over the years there were disappointments, setbacks, roadblocks, tears and heartaches, but “when we fall on our backs, we can look up and get up,” to continue walking, marching and working for justice.

“When we wish upon a star, no dream is too extreme,” said Happy, who keeps alive the dream for each generation.

May we keep the dream alive by acting.

Mary Stamp - Editor

In marching and challenging zoning policies we need to keep on...

Women the world over took to the streets and staged rallies on the weekend of Jan. 20 and 21 around the theme of women’s empowerment. Hundreds joined the Sandpoint march, “First She Walked, Then She Ran.” Their goal was to encourage more women to seek public office.

Those in Spokane participated in the “Women’s Persistence March.” One woman there carried a sign that said, approximately, “I’ve been marching for 30 years”—persistence personified.

Women have been working for a greater voice in society for a long time. The women’s suffrage movement, which began in 1848, comes to mind.

In 1983, Mohammad Yunus started the Grameen Bank to make micro-loans to women. He had found that women making bamboo furniture in Bangladesh used these tiny loans to great advantage to build their businesses and improve their lives.

The recent marches and rallies make it

clear that women and men are marching still, with *persistence*, to use the title for the Spokane event.

In Coeur d’Alene recently, Kaleidoscope Community Services held a small celebration party. Gar Mickelson, founder, and those who have been networking with him had just succeeded in convincing Kootenai County to amend its zoning code to allow for transitional housing.

Their goal is to create a tiny house village for those who are homeless who seek to transition back to a more stable life.

This group has made progress on many fronts in bringing about this vision. However, they have been stuck for the past two years because the zoning laws of the county did not allow for the type of community they hope to build until just recently.

At the celebration, Gar reflected on seeking to surmount this hurdle. “For the past two years, just about once a week I

have wanted to drop this project and leave,” he said. Yet he chose to persist, and finally Kaleidoscope and those working with that group can move on to the next stepping stone. They hope to begin building this coming summer.

In experiencing these back-to-back happenings in January, I have been reminded of the parable Jesus shared about the widow and the unjust judge in Luke 18:1-8.

The widow had a reasonable request for justice, but the judge wasn’t interested in helping her out. Still, she persisted. Finally, the judge gave in and provided the ruling she sought, just to get her off his back. “He said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’”

Jesus then continued by saying, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not

God grant justice to [God’s] chosen ones who cry to [God] day and night?”

It’s tiring. Much of the time, it’s distressing. It can be easy to lose heart and want to quit seeking after justice.

Yet we have examples from the women’s movements over time. We can look back to when Mahatma Gandhi encouraged the people of India to fight for independence. We have recently celebrated the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. in leading the way to greater civil rights for people of color, as well as others among the last, the lost and the least. We can learn from Kaleidoscope’s success with the Kootenai County zoning code.

In seeking to make the world a better place, a more just place, a more equitable place, a more compassionate place for everyone, persistence plays a major role.

Let’s keep on keeping on.

Kaye Hult

Editorial assistant



Where do we go from here: Chaos or Community? question relevant today

Stephy Nobles-Beans, coordinator of diversity, equity and inclusion, and a campus minister at Whitworth University, began her speech at Spokane’s March 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day rally singing, “I won’t let anyone turn me around, I’m heading up the King’s highway.”

She challenged those at the rally who yelled during Rep. Cathy McMorris Rogers’ speech, saying the behavior was no example “for our children” and urged them to take their feelings to the polls. Stephy, who has 15 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, called for respect of politicians with different opinions. She knows where hate can lead. Her grandfather and father-in-law were killed because of hate.

“We are here to celebrate Dr. King. We need leaders who are not in love with money but in love with justice, not in love with publicity, but in love with humility,” she said.

Fifty years ago on April 4, she said, the world lost one of its greatest peacemakers, sending shockwaves around the world.

She asked Spokane the question King asked when reflecting on a decade of civil rights struggles, in his last book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*

“We have chaos in the White House, chaos in the church house, chaos in the school house and chaos in some of our homes. We have enough chaos. What we need is community.”

She knows the civil rights movement involved “much chaos, disorder, confusion, bedlam and turmoil, but the Dreamer had a dream of a community, a vibrant,

multiracial nation united in justice, peace and reconciliation, a nation that has a place at the table for children of every race and room at the inn for every needy child. In the midst of chaos, King’s voice and vision filled a great void in our nation and answered our collective longing to become a country that truly lived by its noblest principles.”

“Over the years of working for civil rights, people from different walks of life have come together as a community marching against the injustices, racism and brutality against those with skins of the darkest hue. People came from around the world as a community and locked hand in hand, arm in arm, singing, ‘We shall overcome.’”

“Fifty years ago in the midst of chaos, this visionary leader embraced the unity of all faiths in love and truth. He celebrated the values of equality, tolerance and interracial sister- and brotherhood. He expressed these values in his dream for America,” Stephy said.

“Where do we go from here, chaos or community?” she asked again.

“I pray we choose community. There are people from every walk of life here in our community—African American, His-



panic, Native American, Caucasian, Asian American, African, Marshallese, Russian or German,” she said.

“Whatever ethnicity you are, you are part of this community,” she affirmed. “Dr. King was a black man, but this is not a black holiday. This is a people’s holiday.”

Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as the next generations, hold the keys to fulfill his dream.

She called for her peers to teach young people how to live in community and not in chaos.

The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday commemorates a global leader who inspired nonviolent liberation movements around the world. So there are commemorations in more than 100 nations, celebrating his vision of solidarity, his insistence that all faiths have something meaningful to contribute to building the beloved community, rather than building walls.

“Where do we go from here, Spokane? We must come together to continue teaching the values of nonviolence, unconditional love, tolerance, forgiveness, unity and reconciliation which are so desperately needed to unify not only America but also our community,” Stephy said.

“We need to teach young people to fight evil and injustice, not people, and to ask themselves, what is the most loving way I can resolve conflict?” she said.

“We must help them remember Dr. King as a man who endured harassment, threats, beatings and bombing, who went to jail 29 times to achieve freedom for others, and who knew he would pay the ultimate price

for his leadership, but in spite of that kept marching, protesting and organizing,” she said.

“Where do we go from here, Spokane?” she asked again.

She calls on young people to learn from the elders, learn from both their mistakes and their visions.

“As we pass the baton on, we hope youth will run with the dream, run with the vision to make a difference in the lives of others, to make it your personal commitment to serve humanity with the spirit of unconditional love, which was Dr. King’s greatest strength, which empowered all the great victories of his leadership,” Stephy said.

With unconditional love, she believes people today can achieve the beloved community of Dr. King’s dream.

“There is no place for chaos, injustice, racism or discrimination in the community,” she asserted. “Each person has the right to sit at the table and be heard. We should make a commitment to serve humanity, promote Dr. King’s teachings and carry forward his legacy into the 21st century.”

“I’m 63. Some of us do not have another 50 years on earth to wait for change. Change needs to be now!” Stephy said.

In closing, she said, “We need to work for a cause, and not for applause, live life to express and not to impress. We shouldn’t strive to make our presence noticed, just to make our absence felt.”

“Where do we go from here? Fifty years is too long. The time is now!” she said.

For information, call 777-4568 or email sbeans@whitworth.edu.

Calendar of Events

- Feb 1** • **"Coming Home: A Soldier's Project"** Theatre Fundraiser for Our Place, Magnuson Theatre at Gonzaga, reception and auction 6 p.m., 7:30 p.m. play, 326-7267, ourplacespokane.org
- **Café Affogato Community Day**, PJALS benefit, 35 W. Main, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Feb 1, 15** • **Peace & Justice Action Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **Spokane Dances of Universal Peace**, Unity Spiritual Center Spokane, 2900 S. Bernard, 7 to 9 p.m., 496-7005
- Feb 2-3** • **"Values in Action"** Conference, St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th Ave., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., 838-4277
- Feb 2-11** • **"Coming Home: A Soldier's Project,"** Gonzaga's Magnuson Theatre, 502 E. Boone, 7:30 p.m., Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays; 2 p.m., Sundays, 313-6553, jeffs@gonzaga.edu
- Feb 3** • **"Together as One,"** Intercultural Student Union Dinner 2018, Hemmingson Center at Gonzaga, 702 E. Desmet, 6 to 8 p.m.
- Feb 5** • **Fig Tree Editors and Writers Training**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 6 p.m., 535-1813 rsvp
- Feb 5-9** • **"Enhancing the Artistic Call,"** Cohort Program/Retreat for Exploring the Mystery of the Creative Experience, Spirit Center, Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, 208-962-2000, spirit-center.org
- Feb 6** • **"Islam: History and Culture,"** Raja Tanas, Whitworth sociology professor emeritus, Rockwood Lane Retirement, 221 E. Rockwood Blvd, 2 to 4 p.m.
- Feb 6, 20** • **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, 35 W. Main, 6:30-8 p.m., 838-7870
- Feb 7** • **Police Ombudsman Committee**, City Council Chambers, 5:30 p.m.
- Feb 8** • **"Times Up Spokane Town Hall,"** Northeast Community Center, 4001 N. Cook, 5:30 to 7 p.m.
- **Coeur d'Alene Dances of Universal Peace**, The Harding Center, 115th and Wallace, 7 to 9 p.m., 509-496-7005
- Feb 9-11** • **"Windows to Israeli Society,"** Rachel Korazim as Scholar in Residence, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., 6 p.m. Friday; 6:30 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. Sunday, 747-3304
- **Family Friendly Benefit**, Spokane Valley Partners at St. Joseph's Church, 4521 N. Arden, Otis Orchards, 6:30 p.m., 926-7133
- Feb 10** • **Gospel Explosion celebration** of Black History Month, Seeley Mudd Chapel at Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4568, sbeans@whitworth.edu
- Feb 13** • **Jazz Mass**, Fat Tuesday, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 7 p.m.
- Feb 14** • **Ash Wednesday Silent Day of Prayer**, "Give Up or Give In," Fr. Philip Garcia, OFM, Immaculate Heart Retreat Center (IHRC), 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- **Inland Northwest Death Penalty Abolition Group**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **Veterans for Peace**, 35 W Main, 6:45 p.m.
- Feb 15** • **"Black Women in Spokane: Emerging from the Shadows of Jim and Jane Crow,"** Dwayne Mack, Whitworth African-American Heritage Month speaker, Weyerhaeuser Hall, 7 p.m., 777-3270, anitalewis@whitworth.edu
- Feb 15-17** • **Washington State University College of Education Annual International Globalization, Diversity and Education Conference**, "Living With(in) Borders: Immigration, Indigeneity and Education," Northern Quest Casino and Resort, 100 N. Hayford Rd., Airway Heights, 509-335-6393, khammer@wsu.edu, education.wsu.edu/globalization/
- Feb 16-18** • **Northwest Buddhist Convention**, "Coming Down the Mountain: Shinran's First Steps towards the Nembutsu Way," Henry Adams, Hotel RL at the Park, 303 W. N. River Dr., 534-7954, dcsterrett@yahoo.com
- Feb 17** • **Intro to Buddhism**, Hotel RL, 303 W North Eiver Dr., 9 a.m., www.spokanebuddhisttemple.org
- Feb. 19** • **NAACP General Membership Meeting**, 7 p.m., spkncpbr@gmail.com, spokanenaacp.com
- **"Can we disagree without being disagreeable?"** President's Colloquy on Civil Discourse, Seeley Mudd Chapel, Whitworth, 7 p.m., 777-4703, tcoder@whitworth.edu
- Feb 21** • **Go for the Red Luncheon**, Spokane Convention Center Centennial Ballroom, 10:30 a.m. to noon, SpokaneGoRedLuncheon.heart.org
- **"Climate Change and Climate Justice,"** Center for Justice Lunchbox Lecture, Brian Henning, 25 W. Main, noon, 835-5211, ricke@cfjustice.org
- Feb 21-22** • **24-Hour Silent Midweek Lenten Retreat**, "Journeying with Jesus on the Way to Jerusalem," Fr. Max Oliva, SJ, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- Feb 22** • **Post Falls Food Bank Empty Bowls Benefit**, Post Falls Senior Center, 1215 E. Third Ave., 5 to 7 p.m., 208-773-0139, willi@postfallsfoodbank.org
- Feb 22-23** • **WSU College of Education International Globalization, Diversity and Education Conference**, "Power and Cultural Politics in Antiracist and Decolonial Education and Educational Research, Intersectionality, Resistance and Survival," Northern Quest Casino and Resort, 100 N. Hayford Rd., Airway Heights, education.wsu.edu/globalization/
- Feb. 22** • **Weekend Nutrition Backpack Program**, Post Falls Food Bank Empty Bowls Benefit, Post Falls Senior Center, 1215 E. Third, 5 to 7 p.m., (208) 773-0139, willi@postfallsfoodbank.org
- Feb 23** • **Native Project Healthy Heart Pow Wow**, Rogers High School, 1622 E Wellesley, 6 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. Grand Entry, facebook.com/TheRealNativeProject
- **"Hearts for Homes,"** Habitat for Humanity North Idaho, Hagadone Event Center, 900 S. Floating Green Dr., Coeur d'Alene, 6 to 9:30 p.m., (208) 762-4663, ext. 2
- Feb 23-25** • **The Vagina Monologues** by Eve Ensler, Spokane YWCA Women and Children's Shelter of Spokane benefit, The Unfinished Space, 165 S. Howard, 7:30 p.m. Friday/Saturday, 5 p.m. Sunday
- Feb 23-24** • **Peace and Justice Action Conference**, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Ft. Wright Dr., 5 to 8:30 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, pjals.org/2018conference
- Feb 24** • **St. Lucy's Breakfast**, Shalom Ministries Benefit, Rockwood Event Center, 2093 E. 25th Ave., 9 a.m., 710-0204
- Feb 26** • **"Cultivating Civic Kinship,"** Flannery Lecture with Kristin Heyer of Boston College, Hemmingson Center, 702 E. Desmet, 313-6782
- Feb 28** • **Police Accountability Coalition**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **Painting with a Purpose**, Spokane Valley Partners benefit, 11703 E Sprague, Ste B3, paintingwithatwist.com/studio/spokane-valley/event/1412642
- Mar 1** • **Lenten Silent Day of Prayer** with Mass and Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Most Rev. Thomas Daly, Bishop of Spokane, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net
- **Fig Tree Benefit/Development and Board meetings**, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., noon for Benefit, 1 to 3 p.m. for Board, 535-1813
- Mar 2** • **"A Matter of Balance,"** volunteer coaches training, Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington, 1222 N. Post, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., 458-2509, mark.haberman@dshs.wa.gov
- **Winter Waters 2018**, "Honoring Watershed Hero Journalists, Patsy Clark Mansion, 2208 W. 2nd Ave., 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., 270-6995, waitsoe@gmail.com
- Mar 9** • **Fig Tree Benefit Lunch**, Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University, 11:30 a.m. buffet, noon to 1 p.m. program, 535-1813 rsvp
- Mar 14** • **Fig Tree Benefit Breakfast**, Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University, 7 a.m. buffet, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. program, 535-1813 rsvp

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Access 4 All seeks to make Spokane more accessible and welcoming

By Lynn Swedberg
Contributing Writer

Every time he hears that someone was excluded from a place of business because of a disability, Dave Reynolds' heart hurts.

For five years, he has been the founding and guiding force behind Access 4 All Spokane, a group working to make the region a more welcoming place for people with disabilities.

"This isn't about ADA compliance," he said, referring to the Americans with Disabilities Act that forms the basis of accessibility guidelines. Dave feels that eliminating barriers that exclude others is about social justice.

"It's about spreading welcoming and accessibility because it's the right thing to do," he said.

Rather than point out what is wrong, which raises defenses of an organization or business, Dave identifies what is being done right and steps to improve. He uses positive approaches, appealing to those who understand it isn't right to shut out the 20 percent of the population who live with a visible or hidden disability. His focus is on building relationships with organizations that want to change.

"If they have the right mindset, they can learn to do the right stuff," he said.

Access 4 All Spokane grew out of events in 2012. Dave wondered why Spokane never received an Accessible City award and what the criteria were.

In a meeting, he heard of a client who loved to shop but whose wheelchair often didn't fit through store aisles. Clerks were reluctant to assist her and once told her assistant they had to leave.

Believing there ought to be a way to identify disability-friendly businesses, they found the group Blue-Path.org, a website developed by the Northwest ADA Center in Seattle to list accessible businesses.

Dave and Alisa Padgett, who is an advocate with the Coalition of Responsible Disabled—now Spokane Center for Independent Living—reviewed local businesses for accessibility. They quickly realized they could never make sufficient progress in a city the size of Spokane, so they invited organizations to send representatives to an informational meeting.

The response was overwhelming. Thirty-five people, some of whom are still active today, attended the first meeting in October 2012. Participants came from



Dave Reynolds coordinates Access 4 All Spokane.

local colleges, state agencies, advocacy organizations, service clubs and agencies serving people with vision and hearing loss.

After meeting for several years, the group learned Washington State had funds to develop county Accessible Communities Advisory Committees. With county support, Access 4 All applied to be the Spokane County committee.

Fifteen people representing various disabilities were appointed to serve on rotating terms. This status allowed Access 4 All to apply for state grants to carry out accessibility work.

Dave is now completing the second grant cycle and has applied for a third grant for a day-long regional conference. Both monthly meetings are open to visitors and new members any time.

The work of both committees involves many community partnerships. Volunteers serve as an advisory committee to the City of Spokane Parks Department and are involved in plans for the inclusive playground to be built at Riverfront Park.

Others participate in the Community Organizations Active in Disasters committee, explaining needs of people with disabilities related to emergency preparedness.

Dave has trained people who have completed accessibility reviews at the Spokane County Fairgrounds, other county buildings and some businesses.

Access4AllSpokane.org is beginning to list accessible and disability-friendly businesses endorsed by people with disabilities.

In collaboration with other Access 4 All members, Dave offers a course called "Making Welcome," which helps employees overcome their fear of making an embarrassing mistake when interacting with a person with a disability.

The class provides tools for em-

ployees to feel confident serving customers who face challenges related to disabilities. Persons living with disabilities help class participants learn how some businesses can meet their needs.

For instance, a deaf man said round or oval tables are easier for reading lips or using sign language, and keeping TV captions on helps everyone have access.

A woman who is blind relates her pet peeve: servers who walk away without telling her they are leaving, so she continues talking when no one is there.

Finding Accessibility is another course in which Dave trains people to look for and point out accessible features of the environment.

Advocacy for All teaches collaborative problem-solving so participants learn to generate solutions to barriers they find.

Dave believes his approach has parallels with ministry, and churches also need to be welcoming.

When Access 4 All representatives visit, businesses are often pleased to learn many changes cost next to nothing. For example, they can lower a restroom sign to be more visible to a person using a wheelchair and can add a lower hook in the accessible stall.

The checklist reflects local priorities. Eastern Washington University disability studies students conducted focus groups and learned more through an online survey and interviews. The students are building a platform for recording reviews. The program will generate a report, increasing the speed of the review process.

In addition to working for Access 4 All, Dave works part-time for the Arc of Spokane, which supports his efforts. They released him to do the two grant projects and let him work out of his office.

Dave has served individuals with disabilities throughout his career, beginning with helping some find employment. He serves as an advocate for his clients. He likes to "be the one who helps them realize what potential they have."

He trained agencies on Positive Behavior Support in 11 counties. He edited a daily Disability Rights News service from 1999 to 2016.

For his work, he received an Access Spokane award for advocacy in 2016.

"I've always been a disability rights activist without realizing what that was," Dave said.

As a child, Dave wondered why some classmates didn't understand a friend who had a

speech impediment.

"You just had to take the time and listen and ask him if you didn't understand," he said.

It didn't dawn on him why he never saw some friends at his school or that they had "labels."

Except for attending George Fox University, where he earned a degree in human resources, Dave has lived in Spokane County. He graduated from Freeman High School. His family has lived in the region for nearly 150 years.

His grandmother took him to the Four Square Gospel church when he was a child. He now attends Manito United Methodist Church, where he discovered cousins. He has also joined Manito's Inclusivity Committee.

The church's theology resonates with his focus on the positive, said Dave, whose wife, Joyce, supports his work.

What the future holds is unknown, but Dave believes he will take the next steps and Access 4 All will continue to help the region become more welcoming.

From interest shown when people stopped by the Access 4 All booth at a recent national conference, he hopes the model will be replicated around the U.S.

For information, call 216-2611, email dave@access4allspokane.org or visit www.Access4AllSpokane.org.

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