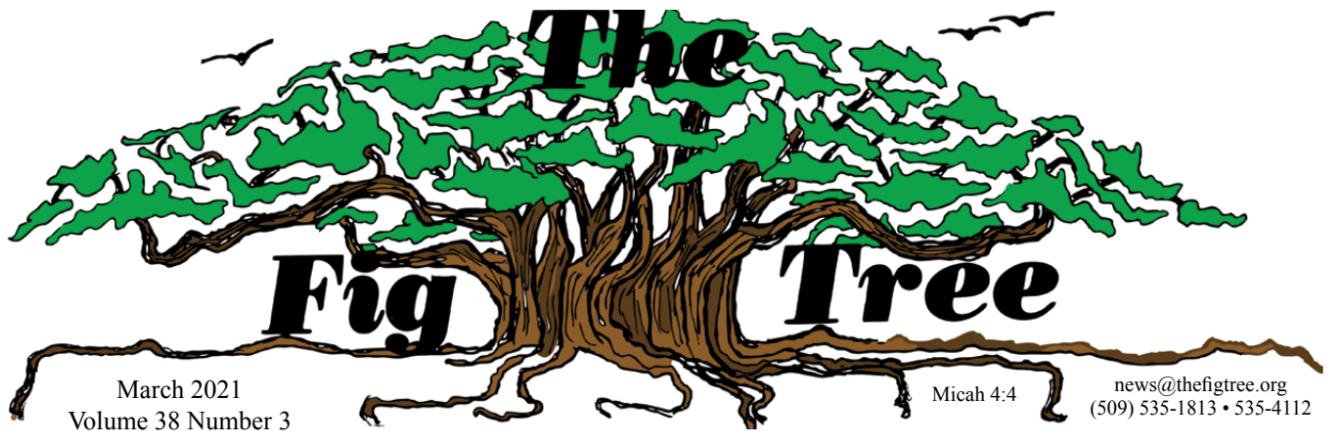


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Faith, community in solidarity with temple - p. 10
Little Libraries encourage reading - p. 12

CALENDAR ON PAGE 11
FEATURES 30+ EVENTS



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

Renters' plight stirs passion, action

By Mary Stamp

Because Terri Anderson knows the personal plights of renters, she is passionate to advocate on their behalf to change laws and hearts.

As director of the Tenants Union of Washington office in Spokane, she knows the moratorium on eviction established during the COVID pandemic is the only thing preventing mass evictions.

Talking with tenants every day, she hears their stories and truths.

"Our society values property rights over human rights in housing," said Terri, who has seen too many people become homeless. "It would make anyone passionate because the world of tenants is rife with injustices. My frustration leads to my passion.

"That drives me to fight injustice, and the greatest injustice is in housing. Systemic racism and policies such as redlining along with housing discrimination has caused a racial gap in home ownership and wealth that causes Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) households to disproportionately rent," she said. "Our society tends to shame and judge tenants. Instead of judging people for renting, we should



Terri Anderson keeps community informed on housing issues, especially for tenants.

work to assure decent, affordable housing. I've been a proud renter through my years," she said.

"Imbalance of power between tenants and landlords cause tenants to stay quiet and not speak up about poor housing conditions," she said. "Because tenants are afraid of being evicted for no cause, many accept living in substandard housing conditions when landlords do not provide decent, safe housing."

A recent report by the Spokane County Bar Association Eviction Defense Program stated that they expect 2,500 evictions a month when the moratorium lifts, compared to 80 to 100 evictions a month before the COVID-19 pandemic and the state moratorium on evictions.

Bills before the legislature address a myriad of housing issues and give her hope.

Those bills, along with federal assistance of \$1,400 per person and additional rental assistance in current COVID-19 relief before Congress, will help somewhat, she said.

"How will it help the economy when tenants are thousands of dollars behind on rent? Larger

Continued on page 4

Each generation continues, passes on traditions and advocates for rights

Darlene McCarty has Z-fans from around the world, but there's more to her than her fame having played Nana Anuk, an Alaskan grandma, for three seasons, beginning in 2016, in the Syfy TV show Z Nation.

There's also more to her than her 25 years of working in various Spokane hotels—from lobby attendant, night janitor to laundry worker. She retired in 2010.

Proud to be a full-blood Native American, Darlene is in a succession of generations in her family who have preserved Indian traditions and advocated

for Native American rights.

Her father, Spencer McCarty, was full-blood Makah from Neah Bay on the Washington Coast, and her mother, Ella McCarty Butcher, was full-blood Spokane. After they divorced, Darlene lived in Spokane and visited half siblings in Neah Bay some summers growing up.

While Darlene did not keep up speaking Salish, she has worked to keep other traditions alive and has advocated for Native American people, as her mother did, and now her daughter Barbara Gongyin does. Darlene's grand-

daughter, Symetria Gongyin, also continues the tradition of publicly advocating for Native Americans in the public health field.

Darlene's grandparents were Samuel and Effie Hill. He was the last member of the Spokane Tribe to make arrowheads, and she was the tribe's "keeper of the legends."

Her mother, Ella, advocated for Native American rights in the 1970s with leaders of the American Indian Movement like Russell Means, addressing issues of sovereignty, racism and civil rights. She was an early member of the National Congress of American Indians, which advocates for rights guaranteed to tribes through agreements with the U.S. government.

As tribal historian, Ella taught Indian culture at Spokane schools and Eastern Washington University, and led tours to historical sites.

"My mother encouraged me to learn and experience Native American ways," Darlene said. "She also taught me to go out

Continued on page 6

Benefit speakers share impact on community

The Fig Tree Benefits with speakers addressing the 2021 theme, "Beyond Words: Doing Justice" are happening on Zoom Friday, March 5, and Wednesday, March 10.

The Lunch-Time Zoom gathering opens at 11:30 a.m., with opportunity to gather in conversation groups with hosts who invite them or with random groups. The approximately 30-minute program begins at noon, followed by returning to groups to donate and converse before a closing, announcing progress toward the goal.

The Breakfast-Time Zoom gathering begins at 7:30 a.m., also with gathering in groups before the 30-minute program begins at 8 a.m., followed by group time to donate and converse before a common closing, announcing the amount donated.

Nathan Slabaugh, who has done benefit videos in the past, is preparing a video with sharing from Episcopal Bishop Gretchen Rehberg, Calvary Soup Kitchen founder Peggy Troutt, Whitworth history professor Dale Soden, Gonzaga's Hate Studies Institute director Kristine Hoover, AHANA-ME-BA founder Ben Cabildo and Spokane Riverkeeper Jerry White.

Speakers for the Lunch-Time Benefit are Holocaust survivor Carla Peperzak, Tenants Union-Spokane director Terri Anderson, holistic healing doctor Toby Hallowitz and NAACP Spokane first vice president Kurtis Robinson.

The Breakfast-Time Benefit speakers are NAACP Spokane president Kiantha Duncan, KPBX host Verne Windham, League of Women Voters member Susan Hales, and Dishman Hills director Jeff Lambert.

The video, videos of extended comments of those who share in the video, and recordings of the speakers will be posted on YouTube through thefigtree.org after the benefit events to

Continued on page 2

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Religion News Briefs

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Theme addresses world's need for love, unity

In a world crying for justice and peace, the theme of the 2022 Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity," speaks of hope for a future in which resources are shared, inequalities are addressed and all can enjoy dignity, according to a publication reflecting on the assembly theme.

An international group from different regions and confessional traditions developed a resource for Christians worldwide to prepare for the WCC's 11th Assembly from Aug. 31 to Sept. 8, 2022, in Karlsruhe, Germany.

"The love of Christ, which is central to the theme is placed within a trinitarian context and develops the vision of the WCC Common Understanding and Vision document, which states that the purpose of God's love incarnated in Jesus Christ is for the reconciliation and unity of all and of the whole cosmos (Col. 1:19; Eph. 1:10)," said the Rev. Ioan Sauca, the WCC's interim general secretary.

"It opens possibilities and concentrates on what it means for churches and for Christian unity to confront together the world's challenges and witness to Gospel values. It does not stop there, as the purpose of God's love in Christ is for the whole world. It means openness and care for the whole world, and dialogue and cooperation with people of other faiths or of no faith who share the same values."

The publication on the theme offers biblical and theological reflections inspired by 2 Cor. 5:14— "For the love of Christ urges us on"—amid critical issues confronting churches and humanity.

"This reflection encourages church leaders and congregations to meditate and discuss the significance of Christ's compassion in a world marked by the climate emergency, systemic economic injustice, the digital revolution and national populisms nurtured by fear of the other," said the Rev. Odair Pedroso Mateus, interim WCC deputy general secretary and director of the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order.

The WCC's assembly was postponed by a year because of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has exposed and highlighted both vulnerabilities of humankind and the world's profound inequalities and divisions.

It is the first time that the word "love" has been the focus of a theme for one of the WCC's assemblies, which take place about every eight years. The publication says, "Love as the language of our faith can actively and prophetically engage the world as we see and experience it today in a way that will make a difference for a shared tomorrow."

Webinar fosters interreligious relations

A webinar reflecting on recent developments in the U.S. and their significance for interreligious relations was held Feb. 9, with 20 advisers from WCC member churches from across the globe.

Organized by the WCC team for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, the event built on a meeting in Cardiff, Wales, in November 2019, which launched a network to foster mutual learning and support among those involved in interreligious work in WCC member churches around the world.

Margaret Rose of the Episcopal Church and Kathryn Lohre of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America spoke at the opening. Focusing on Christian nationalist sentiment, anti-semitism, Islamophobia and racism, Margaret said Americans cannot claim, "This is not us!" because "This is us!" Problems need to be addressed honestly.

Kathryn recognized that a range of recent challenges have had a disproportionate impact on people of color, but that amid the "extreme challenges," there were "glimpses of hope."

Both affirmed the value of being in relationship and global partnership and acknowledged the gift of accompaniment the WCC offers.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Online benefits gather people in new way

continued from page 1
 share The Fig Tree story.

Previously benefits have been limited to 30 tables of eight because of the capacity of Cataldo Hall. These events may have any number of hosts who invite and confirm eight to 15 guests.

Hosts need to send in the names, addresses, phone numbers and emails of guests, so The Fig Tree can communicate

with them before and after the events, and send them the link to the events.

Those interested in hosting a group or in attending may call 535-1813 or visit event@thefigtree.org.

Guests may register online at <https://secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/2021-fig-tree-march-benefits/lunch-time-benefit> or at <https://secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree-march-benefits/breakfast-time-benefit> and put the host's name in the line for "company/organization."

givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/2021-fig-tree-march-benefits/breakfast-time-benefit and put the host's name in the line for "company/organization."

Guests will have the opportunity to volunteer and to donate by check, text THEFIGTREE to 44-321, or give online at Give Lively (Stripe), thefigtree.org/donate.html (PayPal) or on Facebook.

Salvation Army has funds for utilities

The Salvation Army of Spokane now has funds to help families behind on their water and power bills.

Those seeking assistance must be at least 60 days past due on their bill. Funds are available only to those living in the city

of Spokane. Recipients cannot be on SNAP and may not have sought assistance for utility services from The Salvation Army in the previous 12 months.

The Salvation Army seeks to aid those in need during these times, and especially those hit

by the pandemic.

Application for funds is open between 9 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday at the Salvation Army Family Resource Center, 204 E. Indiana Ave.

For information, call 325-6821.

Corbin Center begins plans for events

In 2021, Corbin Senior Activity Center plans to engage community members to enrich and empower their lives through wellness, social, recreational and educational programs while breaking through the pandemic, said Heide Wehr, executive director.

"While our doors are closed, we are still open and have been forced to temporarily revise what Corbin is and how we reach our members," she said. "We are working on overcoming the barriers brought on by the pandemic

and social isolation by bringing digital resources, education and social fun to those in our community. Corbin Senior Center is bringing the digital world to members."

The center has applied for a grant to buy tablets and Wi-Fi ability to share with members at no cost to give them the opportunity to participate in classes, social hour discussions and more.

Plans include 1) a to-go Free Soup and Social Hour—since Jan. 19—from 11:30 a.m. to 1

p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Those wearing masks can say "hi" and pick up a bowl of soup in Phase I. In Phase II, they will begin a safe, socially distanced, in-person social hour.

2) With other senior community centers in the area they are setting up an online Zoom bingo.

3) As travel resumes, Corbin will bring people out of their houses to see the world with various tours.

For information, call 327-1584.

Environmental Justice Symposium set

Gonzaga University's School of Law and Environmental Studies are presenting online the 2021 Environmental Justice Symposium on "Environmental Justice: Race, Poverty and the Environment," from 1 p.m. Tuesday to 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 23 and 24.

In honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in 2020, Washington State Attorney Gen-

eral Bob Ferguson launched an Environmental Justice Initiative for his office, including plans to convene an Environmental Justice Symposium with Gonzaga University to discuss the environmental justice issues affecting various communities in the state and work to address them.

In addition to bringing together academics, scientists, legislators and legal professionals, the

symposium will be a platform for communities that have been impacted by structural racism and will shine a light on the hard work these communities across the state are doing to pursue environmental justice.

For information, email symposium@atg.wa.gov or visit <https://www.gonzaga.edu/news-events/events/2021/3/23/environmental-justice-symposium>.

Mall Crawl and Virtual Walk feed seniors

The annual Greater Spokane County (GSC) Meals on Wheels March for Meals Mall Crawl is Friday, March 5, for a limited number of walkers at the Spokane

Valley and Northtown Malls. Virtual walkers can start March 1.

COVID opened the idea to include dogs. Only virtual walkers can sign up their dogs to receive a Doggie Swag Bag. Adding dogs highlights the AniMeals Program that gives food and supplies to seniors with pets.

"Knowing it would be hard to recruit participants we added a

virtual walk," said Janet Dixon, director of development of GSC Meals on Wheels. Virtual walkers may walk in miles or minutes once around the block or throughout March.

Donations go to assure that seniors in Spokane County eat, stay healthy and are not isolated.

To register, visit MarchforMeals.com.

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Housing equity action effort expands funds for affordable housing

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

The Spokane Alliance's Housing Equity Action Research Team (HEART) efforts to expand affordable housing in West Central Spokane exemplify how community-based organizing gathers participants to assess needs and resources in a community, and how it involves community stakeholders to attempt to create a sustainable, equitable solution to address a community's needs.

Five members of HEART, Lynda Maraby, a governing board member of the Faith Action Network of Washington; Franciscan Sr. Kathryn Roberg FSPA; Chloe Sciammas, community organizer at Spokane Alliance; Katy Shedlock, co-pastor of West Central Abbey, and Katie Zinler, lead organizer at the Spokane Alliance, recently shared insights and achievements on affordable housing.

Their campaign grew from community organizing work at the West Central Abbey. In 2019, guests and volunteers at the Abbey's Wednesday night free Dinner Table identified the lack of stable, affordable and dignified housing as their top concern. Maraby highlighted the problem from her perspective.

"At the warming shelter run by Salem Lutheran Church, there were a number of people who had housing vouchers, but they couldn't find housing," she said.

The group's next steps were for volunteer members of HEART to explore the West Central neighborhood, identifying vacant lots and buildings that could be turned into affordable housing. They discovered 33 homes that were either boarded up or vacant long-term.

Then, even though he is not part of HEART, Rob McCann,

president and CEO of Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington, inspired the group to articulate the issue by telling them that Catholic Charities can build an entire new building faster than someone with a housing voucher can get off the waitlist for affordable housing.

"My 'aha' moment came when I heard Rob analyze the issue, saying we cannot solve the housing problem until we have money to build affordable housing," said Shedlock.

A local source of funding was present: the West Quadrant Tax Increment Funding (WQTIF), a local funding mechanism intended to create improvements in the West Central, Riverside and Emerson-Garfield neighborhoods, Zinler explained.

TIFs capture increases in local property taxes and reinvest those funds directly into the neighborhood instead of in the city's general fund. The group then learned that Washington was the only state in the country where the TIF funds were not allowed to be spent on affordable housing.

In October, Spokane Alliance held a candidates' forum for those running for Spokane City Council and Mayor. Each candidate was asked to pledge their support to working with the Spokane Alliance to increase affordable housing in the neighborhood. Specifically, they were asked to support the use of TIF money for affordable housing.

In the winter of 2019-2020, HEART successfully worked with District 3 state legislators and expanded the allowable uses of TIF funding to include affordable housing, Zinler said. Later that year, the alliance worked with a number of neighborhood partners including REACH

West Central and the Neighborhood Council to incorporate this change into the WQTIF and to extend the TIF for an additional 15 years. After 2032, half of the WQTIF funds will be used for affordable housing, she said.

Next, the team turned their eyes to a potentially greater source of funding for affordable housing in Spokane. In 2020, the Washington State Legislature passed HB 1590, which allows the city and county the ability to create a small sales tax increase if the funds are committed to affordable housing, Shedlock said.

In October 2020, the Spokane Alliance gathered more than 150 people and three members of the Spokane City Council to solidify public support for 1590 and to gain commitments from the council members to bring the issue to a vote before the end of the year.

Shedlock said that Council Members Karen Stratton, Betsy Wilkerson and Kate Burke committed their support and promised to bring the measure to a vote in December. On the night of the vote, the majority of people testifying on 1590 supported the measure and the Council approved it by a 6 to 1 vote.

On Dec. 3, 2020, the Spokane Journal of Business reported that the Spokane City Council approved a measure that will impose a 0.1 percent sales and use tax, the revenue from which will be dedicated to providing for the construction, acquisition and rehabilitation of affordable housing, as well as housing-related support services—such as more affordable housing with the city.

Even though the measure passed the City Council, results will not be seen immediately. The City of Spokane will notify the State Department of Revenue

of their approval of 1590 in April and funds will begin to be collected in July.

According to council, the tax increase raises the sales tax rate from 8.9 to 9 percent. It is estimated to cost an average family \$25 per year and raise about \$5.8 million for the city to distribute to help not only in building and obtaining new units, but could also be used for programs designed to help people move into housing, said Shedlock.

HEART members see their success in this action as a source of hope about the power of a group of ordinary people to contribute to a solution to a community problem. They also stress the need for more work to ensure that the distribution of funds has wide participation and contributes to racial equity in housing.

Shedlock affirmed that there needs to be strategic conversation because so often people of color are on the margin or are left out.

Council Members Stratton and Wilkerson, in particular, voiced this concern in comments on the bill, suggesting that the council

put together a community committee to look at applications from nonprofits and for-profit builders for wide participation. They want to be sure that the city does not continue to stand by and pretend not to see the large number of people who have been most negatively impacted by the present housing crisis.

"The historical patterns of discrimination in housing markets and housing policy, including families at risk of homelessness, has gone on for far too long and it is time we change that pattern in eliminating those barriers so that everyone has a fair and equitable opportunity at safe, clean and affordable homes," Wilkerson said about the bill.

HEART members believe that the equitable implementation of 1590 can be a step on this path.

For information, email action@spokanealliance.org or visit www.spokanealliance.org.

Note: because of the similarity of their names—Katy and Katie—we chose to use last names for this article.



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Group plans essay contest, video on Holocaust survivors

The organizers at the 2021 Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust are proceeding with their 15th annual Eva Lassman Memorial Writing Contest, which is open to middle and high school students in the Inland Northwest. Because of the pandemic, the in-person Holocaust Observance and the Art Contest will be on hiatus for this year.

They are inviting submissions on the theme, "When Character Matters: Preventing Genocide," with a deadline of May 2. Writers are asked to focus on the character traits of the "Righteous Among the Nations," individuals who protected their Jewish friends and neighbors during the Holocaust, and to identify traits they have that would enable them to intervene when they witness injustice. Scholarships of \$75 to \$400 will be awarded.

To inspire the essays, they quote Holocaust survivor and educator Elie Wiesel, who said, "We must always take sides. Neu-

trality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere."

Hershel Zellman, co-chair of the committee, encourages faith leaders to promote the contest to their youth groups.

In addition, the organizers are partnering with KSPS Public

Television to create an educational video preserving the stories of local Holocaust survivors and their families, as well as the stories of those who founded Spokane's Jewish community.

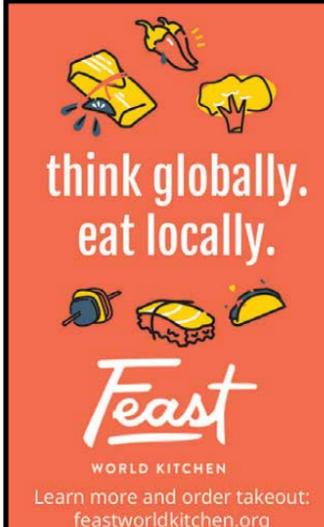
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Faith, spirituality helps Terri Anderson face opposition she meets every day

Continued from page 1
stimulus checks mostly go into landlords' pockets," Terri said. "The \$600 checks mostly went to fill cupboards."

Half of Spokane residents—110,000 people—rent, she said, and half of them are "rent burdened," paying more than 30 percent of their incomes on rent. About 25,000 pay more than 50 percent of their incomes, she said.

"With one major illness, they could lose everything," Terri said.

The City Housing Action Plan indicates that 62 percent of renters are vulnerable to being displaced compared to only 38 percent of homeowners because of evictions, 20-day no cause notices, high rents and landlords converting property from rental housing, she said.

According to the City of Spokane Housing Plan, 80 percent of all black households and more than 60 percent of indigenous and other POC households are renters, while only 30 percent of white households rent and 70 percent are homeowners.

Terri explained that "housing and racial inequity go hand in hand. Lack of access to jobs and education causes housing inequities."

She also reminded that recent Spokane Regional Health District research showed an 18-year gap in life expectancy between areas where people own single-family homes and neighborhoods where most rent.

New rentals are now being built south of 57th Ave. and on N. Nevada in areas without parks, sidewalks or access to jobs, Terri said.

COVID has exposed such weaknesses in society, she said. For example, renters are at the top of the list of those in essential jobs facing more exposure to COVID and unable to work at home.

She expects that the expected post-COVID economic recovery will uplift homeowners, but not renters.

"My work has mostly been in communities of color," she said.

Terri was born in Tokyo, Japan, the daughter of an American in the U.S. Army and a Japanese woman who met during occupation after World War II. Her mother had gone to college, spoke English and worked for the Army.

After coming to the U.S., they lived on bases in Tacoma and Richland, Wash., and in Missouri and South Dakota before going to Tehran, Iran.

While living in Winner, S.D.,

her family lived just outside the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, where her father started a Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) center with Native veterans who were excluded by the whites-only VFW chapter in town.

She and her two sisters were often mistaken for Native American as a family of color in that rural community.

Terri was in fifth grade when her father was killed in a car accident while serving in Iran. Her mother, who had become a U.S. citizen, chose to raise their children in her husband's home town, Burlington, Wash., to be near their grandmother.

With aid from the GI Bill, Terri studied at Washington State University in Pullman, graduating in 1980 in political science.

In the 1980s, she was a paralegal with Spokane Legal Services.

"I was hired as a tribal court advocate because the manager at the employment office thought I was Native American," Terri said. "I was glad, because it opened a world of friends and relationships."

She later worked for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and shared an office with Deb Abrahamson. Terri and Deb often traveled together to the Coeur d'Alene Reservation, where Deb worked in drug rehabilitation and Terri was the Indian Child Welfare coordinator.

Learning of Deb's efforts to address radiation and other toxic pollution from years of uranium mining on the Spokane Reservation, Terri joined her efforts and became a board member of SHAWL (Sovereignty Health Air Water Land) Society.

She shared Deb's concern, because of her Japanese heritage and because of the use of atomic weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Both Terri and Deb, who died in January, were from radiated communities.

Terri then worked 11 years as coordinator of multicultural student services at Spokane Community College, where she was advisor for the Native American Student Organization and Black Student Union, providing recruitment and retention services for students of color.

After working for years providing services, Terri wanted to be an organizer.

So in 2010, she joined AmeriCorps and worked as an organizer for a year with the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane. She helped them promote the Police Accountability Ordinance.

Then she was a labor organizer with the Service Employees

International Union, which "deployed" her to work in Yakima, Seattle and other communities.

Preferring to live in one place, she applied in 2013 when the Washington State Tenants Union announced a job in Spokane to work under a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant.

Her role was to preserve HUD Section 8 project-based affordable housing, which was at risk of being converted to market-rate housing, because as mortgages expire, units can be converted to market-rate housing.

"My job was to identify buildings that were at risk of losing HUD status and to organize tenants to keep rent affordable," Terri said. "In 2014, rent went up as vacancy rates dropped, so homelessness increased."

In 2016, when the Tenants Union made Spokane a permanent office, Terri hired Amber Abrahamson through AmeriCorps for a three-year placement as a tenant counselor and educator.

Amber now works full time with Terri, who seeks another AmeriCorps placement for housing preservation and tenant organizing.

"Tax credit housing is now the major form of affordable housing," Terri said. "In the HUD Section 8 project-based program, renters paid just 30 percent of their income."

Terri, whose mother was Shinto, Buddhist and Methodist, said her family attended United Methodist churches in South Dakota and in Allen, Wash.

"In Japanese spiritual tradition, we are not limited to one faith but can be Buddhist, Shinto and Methodist," she said, noting that church was important in her high school years, grounding her in a welcoming community after her father died and when her mother had cancer.

"Knowing we were a poor family, the church paid me to run the day care," she said.

As she felt adopted and welcomed in that church and community, she has felt adopted and welcomed as part of the Native American community.

The strength from faith and spirituality helps her face the everyday opposition she meets in work on behalf of tenants.

"The landlord-tenant clash is a clash of systems, the capitalist view of housing and the view of housing as a human right," Terri said. "Any policy that hurts renters hurts people of color more, but I also find cross racial collaboration on tenant issues."

"Spokane's nonprofit, faith-based and BIPOC communities agree that to have a sustainable

city, it's important to collaborate. In housing more than other areas, there is cross-racial collaboration, because schools struggle when families are evicted and students move to other schools," she said.

"If we use our voices, we can change policies to have a healthy city," Terri said.

For information, call 558-7126 or email terria@tenant-union.org.

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Walter Kendricks calls for doing justice, loving mercy, walking humbly

In addressing the theme, “Beyond Words: Doing Justice,” Walter Kendricks, pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church, spoke to 180 Zoom participants at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference on Jan. 30.

Opening, he recognized that he stands in the shoes and on the shoulders of those who came before him—his ancestors and parents, those who have struggled for justice, equality and fair treatment, marched with signs, and had dogs and water hoses set on them—and now those who cry that Black Lives Matter.

“We understand legislative priorities and circumstances that have occurred are not just in recent times but from the founding of the nation through its history,” he said.

Walter read from the prophet Micah in 6:8: “He has told you, what is good, but what does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God.”

“Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly, not to talk about justice but to do justice,” he said.

He then spoke of the importance of music to feed the soul, he cited lyrics songwriter Allen Toussaint penned in the 1970s.

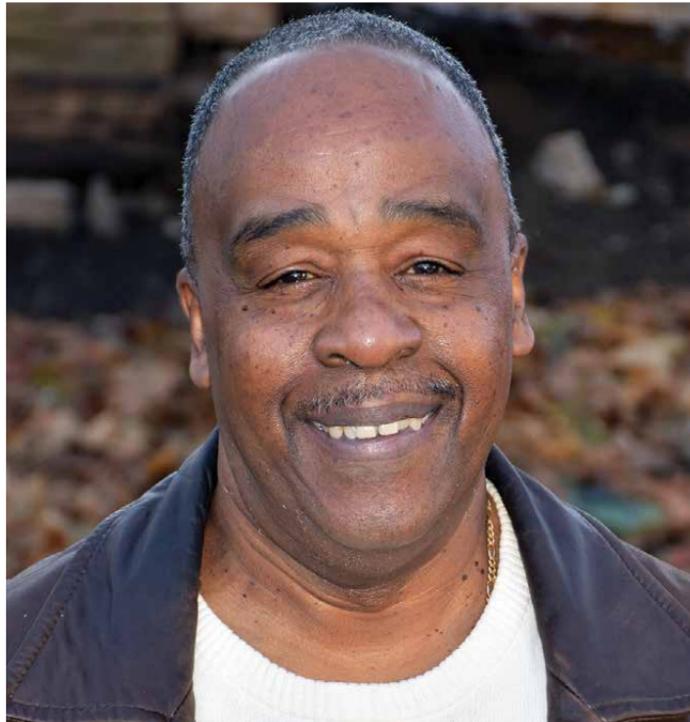
“Songs tell stories, especially in the African-American community. Music supersedes the sermon,” Walter said.

“**Toussaint’s words** reflect a cry about the reality of life for people, especially people of color,” Walter said, quoting: “Freedom for the stallion, freedom for the mare and her colt, freedom for the baby child who has not grown old enough to vote. Lord, have mercy, what you gonna do about the people who are praying to you? They got men make laws that destroy other men. They’ve made money ‘God.’ It’s a doggone sin. Oh, Lord, you got to help us find the way.”

“Toussaint talked of men making laws—Jim Crow, separate but equal, segregation—men making laws that destroy other men and make money—prison for profit, inequities in health care” Walter said. “Men making money. It’s a doggone sin. You’ve got to help us find a way.”

Walter said the lyrics reflect the centuries-old cry for justice. Then he named Trayvon Martin, James Byrd, Walter Scott, Philando Castile, Michael Brown.

“Those things happened somewhere else. Across the mountains



Pastor Walter Kendricks helps move community to justice.

in Tacoma, it was Manuel Ellis. In my home town, Cleveland, Ohio, Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old child, was playing with a gun in a park and, in 10 seconds of police appearing, he was dead,” he said.

“**Of course there’s** George Floyd, whom the whole nation saw die. It shook the nation’s conscience. For eight minutes and 47 seconds, he pleaded for his life, saying, ‘I can’t breathe,’ as life was choked out of him on a city street. What was his crime? Maybe passing a counterfeit \$20 bill. The Black Lives Matter movement, and protests up to and including the election stem from a cry for justice,” he said. “I am way beyond words.”

“Communities of color, Native, Samoan, Marshallese and Hispanic communities are all beyond words. There are no more words. It’s time for us now to do justice,” he said.

Walter told of his work on the Governor’s Task Force on Independent Investigation, the Washington Commission for African American Affairs, the Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR) and the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)—made possible because Morningstar Missionary Baptist Church shares him with the community.

The task force grew out of the death of George Floyd, Walter said, saying that Governor Jay Inslee has a heart for what is best for all Washingtonians, while some die of COVID and others

of legislation, Walter also knows morality can’t be legislated.

“**There are all sorts of laws** on the books, but if we don’t recognize a person’s basic humanity, it doesn’t matter what laws are on the books, because the killings keep occurring. Every one of us—black, white, male, female, rich, poor—all of us should recognize the other’s right to exist,” he said. “That’s what is beyond words and moves us to the cause for justice.”

Walter told of systemic racism on the task force. It was set up to be led by people of color, but “we were shoved aside as those with positions spoke. ‘Lord help us find a way,’ he said.

The Commission on African American Affairs is changing as new people join and want to push forward.

“We advocate on a state level to advance people of color,” he said. “It means spending money. Once you write a check, don’t micromanage how it is spent. We are smart, educated and trained enough to know what is best. We do not need masters. We can be the master of our own destiny. Why? We’re human. That’s how we move beyond words and into justice.”

With Black Lens editor Sandy Williams, Walter helped form SCAR in outrage about the 2015 murder of William Poindexter, a black man. He was on Altamont St. in East Central Spokane, arguing with his girlfriend. He pushed her.

A guy skateboarding in the neighborhood with a backpack containing two knives and a gun fought with Poindexter. As Poindexter walked away, the accused got in a shooting position and, from 30 feet away, shot three times hitting him in the back

twice, Walter said. He died there.

In the May 2017 trial, a jury of 12 white people said the accused was “not guilty.”

SCAR came into existence to move the community beyond words and still helps people move beyond words.

“Look at God’s Providence,” Walter said. “Without SCAR—and someone giving his life to wake us up—when 10-month-old Caiden Henry was beaten to death in June 2017, SCAR was in the courtroom that August as the community’s eyes. In that case, there was justice. The accused went to jail.”

Walter also praised the NAACP, as it transitions from the leadership of Kurtis Robinson to Kiantha Duncan, its new president.

“She is taking the community in a new direction focusing on unity beyond words,” Walter said. “The NAACP has an action focus for the unity of all people. Kiantha’s approach is to say, ‘Because I love you, I have something to tell you.’”

Walter said some people “desire to go back to yesteryear, but time continues to go forward.”

“**So how do we to build** a just society?” he asked, returning to the scripture: “What does the Lord require of us? Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.”

“That’s how we move beyond words,” he said. “We know what is right. The time for talking is over.”

Walter concluded with a call to free the marginalized, such as the children separated from their parents who still sit in cages at the border.

“The time is now to move beyond words,” he said.

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Panelists reflect on theme of moving beyond words to doing justice

Panelists Margo Hill, Phil Misner, Chalo Martinez and Kiantha Duncan, with Gen Heywood moderating, offered some of their perspectives on the keynote address and theme “Beyond Words: Doing Justice.”

Margo, who teaches urban planning at Eastern Washington University and who was attorney for the Spokane Tribe, resonated with the theme, “Beyond Words: Doing Justice,” and with the lyrics that “men make laws that destroy other men and women.”

“Indigenous people have lived on the land for time immemorial. The trouble is we opened our hearts and the land to welcome newcomers and continue to suffer injustice,” she said.

“Native Americans did not ask to be attacked on their lands by invaders who hanged their chiefs, killed their horses and forced them to move on reservations to live in poverty,” said Margo, who grew up in a trailer because the land was held in trust, so tribal members could not build houses.

“In Spokane, we experience violence. A young Native American man was shot in the back. Native Americans have higher bail and heavier sentencing,” she said.

Margo appreciates police, but questions racial bias of officers she has met in her work with Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

“There are 5,712 indigenous women missing according to FBI data, but the U.S. Department of Justice lists just 116 cases,” said Margo, telling of state efforts to stop human trafficking and access databases.

She called for churches and the community to understand that people of color experience historic trauma, high rates of violence and poor health care, leaving many vulnerable to human trafficking.

Phil Misner, previously pastor at Peace Lutheran in Colfax, has been since 2018 assistant to the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Northwest Intermountain Synod, which serves congregations in Eastern Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Wyoming.

“Caring about understanding diversity and racism is built into our structural guidelines for ministry since we formed the ELCA in the 1970s, but we are still one of the whitest denominations in the U.S.,” he said. “We have the words, but have not done well at going beyond words.”

“The synod seeks to move beyond words and so leaders become a more concrete example,” Phil said. “Words set the intent.”



Top left to right, Scott Cooper introduces panel: Margo Hill, Phil Misner, Chalo Martinez, Kiantha Duncan and moderator Gen Heywood.

In the synod, he said action is needed. One effort is a recent Color Amazed Preaching Project, bringing ELCA leaders of color to give sermons virtually to introduce diverse voices to the region’s ethnically homogeneous congregations, he said.

In addition, anti-racism was a focus of Bishop Kristen Kuempel’s recent convocation with deacons and pastors.

On criminal justice and law enforcement, the ELCA in 2013 adopted a social statement on justice addressing inequities in the criminal justice system as central to living out the biblical call to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly, Phil said.

Chalo Martinez, who worked in Los Angeles with Latino parolees, saw the impact of inequities in criminal justice on people of color and people of different social and economic standing, regardless of skin color. People of color had longer sentences.

“I hope the state of Washington will act to be sure justice is fair,” said Chalo.

“Catholics believe in equal love as love without exceptions. The catechism teaches universal equality and dignity as persons. Churches say that all deserve respect, but we also need to act,” Chalo said. “We need to meet the challenge of words with action.”

U.S. Catholic bishops have made statements calling for addressing injustices in law enforcement encounters with African Americans and Latinos.

Leaders pray for humankind to work together, but many want bishops and priests to act as well as speak out, to “go beyond words to make Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream reality faster and permanently,” he said.

Kiantha Duncan has been in leadership and civic engagement for 25 years, and is currently with the NAACP Spokane.

“Hear me with your heart. I tell you these things because I love you, I do not condemn you, but I want to convict your hearts,” she said.

“The nation calls and cries for justice,” she said. “The way it’s always been done has only got-

ten us so far.”

She invited those at the conference to join the NAACP in 2021 to be part of its action, not only as individuals, but also as congregations.

“Nationally people of color

are at a disadvantage on health. We want you to bring your congregations to the table and bring your resources.

“Do justice does not mean keep talking about justice at summits, conferences and meetings, but to get into action, movement, get busy collectively to move the city, community and world to do justice,” Kiantha said.

“It’s time to stand together. Faith based communities need to stand together and welcome us with open doors. Listen to the legislative agenda and leave the conversation knowing we will do something to move toward a more just, compassionate society.”

For information, call 535-1813. For recordings of sessions visit www.thefigtree.org and click on the link to the Legislative Conference videos in the right margin.

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Public health leaders reveal basis for race-class health inequities

Public health professionals told how COVID-19 has made obvious the disparities in public health based on socioeconomic position, race/ethnicity, nationality, nativity, immigration, citizen status, age and gender.

Eastern Washington Legislative Conference workshop leaders were:

- **Bob Lutz**, medical advisor for COVID-19 medical response for the Washington Department of Health, worked eight years with the Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) until 2020.

- **Heleen Dewey**, health equity specialist with the SRHD, focuses on racial equity for better health outcomes. She is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and is also Santee Sioux.

- **Amber Lenhart** worked with the Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Pew Charitable Trusts in Washington, D.C., and served as the SRHD health policy specialist.

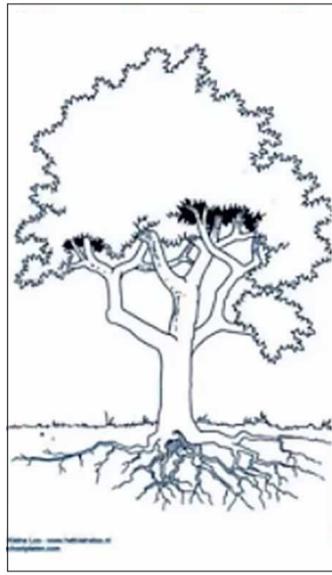
“**One’s zip code is more important to one’s health than one’s genetic code,**” Bob said. “Structural racism undergirds American society. Health begins where we live, learn, work, play and pray.

“Social determinants have impact. The country was built on the backs of slave labor and the lands of indigenous peoples. Marginalization and vulnerability mark populations impacted by structural, avoidable and unnecessary inequities, which result in disproportionate illnesses and hardships,” he added. “Health care is a contributing factor. There is racial bias in health care in terms of access and location.”

Bob said COVID-19 reflects those inequalities. In the last two months, the Department of Health released data it did not have before. Nationwide data shows significant disproportionality in black, Hispanic and Pacific Islander populations in the number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

“When we miss data, we misrepresent the impact of communicable diseases on these populations,” he said.

The disparities play out in distribution of vaccines to marginalized people and at risk essential workers. He sees vaccine resistance as an outgrowth of distrust based on historical events, such as the 1932 to 1972 syphilis experiments on African



Health Outcomes	Increased COVID-19 hospitalization & deaths
Circumstances and Behaviors	Going to work when contagious Crowded & multigenerational households
Community, Infrastructure and Environmental Factors	Workplace policies Housing costs
Socioeconomic Factors	Access to unemployment Culture
Policies and Systems	Employment status Neighborhood Educational attainment
Biased Beliefs (-isms)	School discipline COFA Housing Racism Classism Xenophobia



Health equities panel are Bob Lutz, Heleen Dewey and Amber Lenhart.

Americans at Tuskegee Institute.

Heleen looked at reasons for disparities in COVID data.

“We see racial disparities in every system, not just health care, but each calls it something different,” she said. “In health, it’s disparities. In child welfare, it’s disproportionality. In juvenile justice, it’s disproportionate contact. In education, it’s the achievement gap.

“**Racism impacts health** because of different access to resources, biological responses, chronic stress, increased wear and tear on the body, and more cancer and high blood pressure, making risk of death from COVID higher,” said Heleen, noting that interpersonal and structural racism affects decisions in communities, with explicit racism to implicit bias affecting decisions. “Racism impacts people’s biology in that chronic toxic stress leads to some illnesses. The lack of access to resources and living conditions for people of color make them more susceptible to environmental transmission of COVID,” she said.

She differentiated between public health and the medical model. Public health focuses on behaviors that impact health—like eating well, being active and not smoking. “With COVID, many are unable to follow public health guidance because social structures impact their behavior,” Heleen said.

A socio-ecological model looks upstream to see that where one lives and works has impact on behavior. Discriminatory beliefs or “isms” in societal structures—racism, classism, sexism—and status—social, economic, immigration, age—affect decisions and social messaging.

“**Those isms impact** neighborhoods, schools, housing, workplaces and family living conditions, which lead to behaviors,” Heleen said.

Biased beliefs lead to policies and practices that lead to disparities that impact communities and have medical consequences.

Public health gives guidance for social distancing, wearing masks and for those exposed to isolate at home, but some communities cannot follow the guidance because they cannot take the time off without losing their job or cannot access unemployment benefits, she said.

“Isms can lead to negative policies and outcomes, as much as behaviors can lead to disease,” Heleen said. “We need to change the narrative and policies to empower people whose voices usually are not considered in decisions.”

Growing up on the Chippewa reservation, she knows that explicitly racist policies can lead to genocide.

“Racism is also implicit in policies, hidden, but there,” she said. “We now have an opportunity to change, but we need to feel, heal and deal so we can surface truths about where we were and are as a country. Now is the time for transformative policies.

“We are all in a global pandemic, but are not in the same boat. Some are in yachts, some are in kayaks and some are treading water. It’s a catalytic moment to make changes,” Heleen said.

Amber worked 10 years in public health, focusing on policy change to move from inequities.

The U.S. does not have a good return on its investment in health, even though it spends more than other comparable na-

tions, Amber said.

“Health doesn’t happen in a doctor’s office. Educating people about healthy lifestyles may not work if they are surrounded by fast food outlets and freeways, or live with someone who smokes,” she said. “Social, economic and environmental factors lead to outcomes.

Policies shape health inequities for Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islanders and African Americans.

Amber used an analogy to a tree to show that what drives inequities in the canopy comes from the roots through the trunk and branches.

“A tree’s canopy reflects health outcomes like more hospitalizations and deaths,” Amber

said. “Some have to work even if they are contagious and some live in crowded multigenerational households. Why? Their community infrastructure sets their environment: like workplace policies, housing costs or cultural expectations.

Socio-economic factors include employment status, educational attainment and neighborhood setting.

“Keep asking why, and we see policies and systems at the roots—school discipline, inability to work from home, and housing, transportation and criminal justice policies,” she said.

In the groundwater are biases/beliefs: racism, classism, sexism or xenophobia.

“**We eliminate inequities** by changing policies, systems and environments that create them,” she said. “Then we can talk with, educate and lobby decision makers on how policies impact health.

“We can listen to and amplify voices of people with lived experience. They are the experts,” Amber said.

For information, email Bob at teamab@msn.com, Heleen at hdewey@srhd.org or Amber at amber.lenhart@gmail.com.

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Catholic theology, interfaith teachings undergird efforts to advocate for immigrants

In a workshop on immigration at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, Sr. Pat Millen OSF outlined reasons to advocate for immigration from Catholic social and interfaith teachings.

She cited the Exodus, the flight to Egypt, the Sermon on the Mount and incarnation as migration. She said “the Torah tells us strangers and sojourners are to be treated as natives.”

“The Bible shows that Jesus welcomed strangers. The Quran directs followers to do good to neighbors in need and wayfarers,” she said.

“Why do people of color flee? Why do people from El Salvador or Honduras flee? They flee violence from gangs and envi-

ronmental devastation,” she said. Pat said her Ukraine grandfather left the Ukraine to avoid being drafted into the Czar’s army and to flee violence.

“Knowing why we or our ancestors left helps us understand why others leave,” she said. “In the Exodus, people fled to escape slavery. Jesus’ family fled to Egypt to escape persecution.”

Pat said Catholic social teaching—the collected wisdom, teachings and writings of popes, councils and Catholic writers—includes seven themes: 1) life and dignity of the human person, 2) call to family, community and participation, 3) protection of human rights and fulfillment of responsibilities, 4) the preferential

option for the poor, 5) the dignity of work and rights of workers, 6) solidarity and 7) care of creation.

“A country has the right to regulate its borders, but a country must regulate its borders with justice and mercy,” Pat said.

She described the Kino Border Initiative, a Jesuit ministry promoting U.S.-Mexico border relations and immigration policies that affirm the dignity of people and bi-national solidarity. Leaders listen to stories from migrants who have crossed or plan to cross.

Sr. Pat shared information from the Catholic Advocacy Group Formation, an inter-parish group on immigration in the Spokane Diocese. It includes St. Aloysius Parish’s social ministry

advocacy committee and St. Ann’s parish, which has worked in the Sanctuary Movement.

The group meets monthly to discuss advocacy updates and plan activities, connecting with national women religious. They also hold prayer services.

The committee connects with the Kino Border Initiative as they advocate for Governor Jay Inslee to dedicate part of the state’s CARES funds for immigrant groups.

This resulted in COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund, which has \$40 million to assist Washington residents who can’t access funds because of their immigration status.

Advocacy activities address

family separation at the border, child migrants, ICE detention of migrants at Intermodal Center and South and Central American immigration.

Advocacy priorities include immigration as a fundamental faith issue and the ongoing need for advocacy in the new administration.

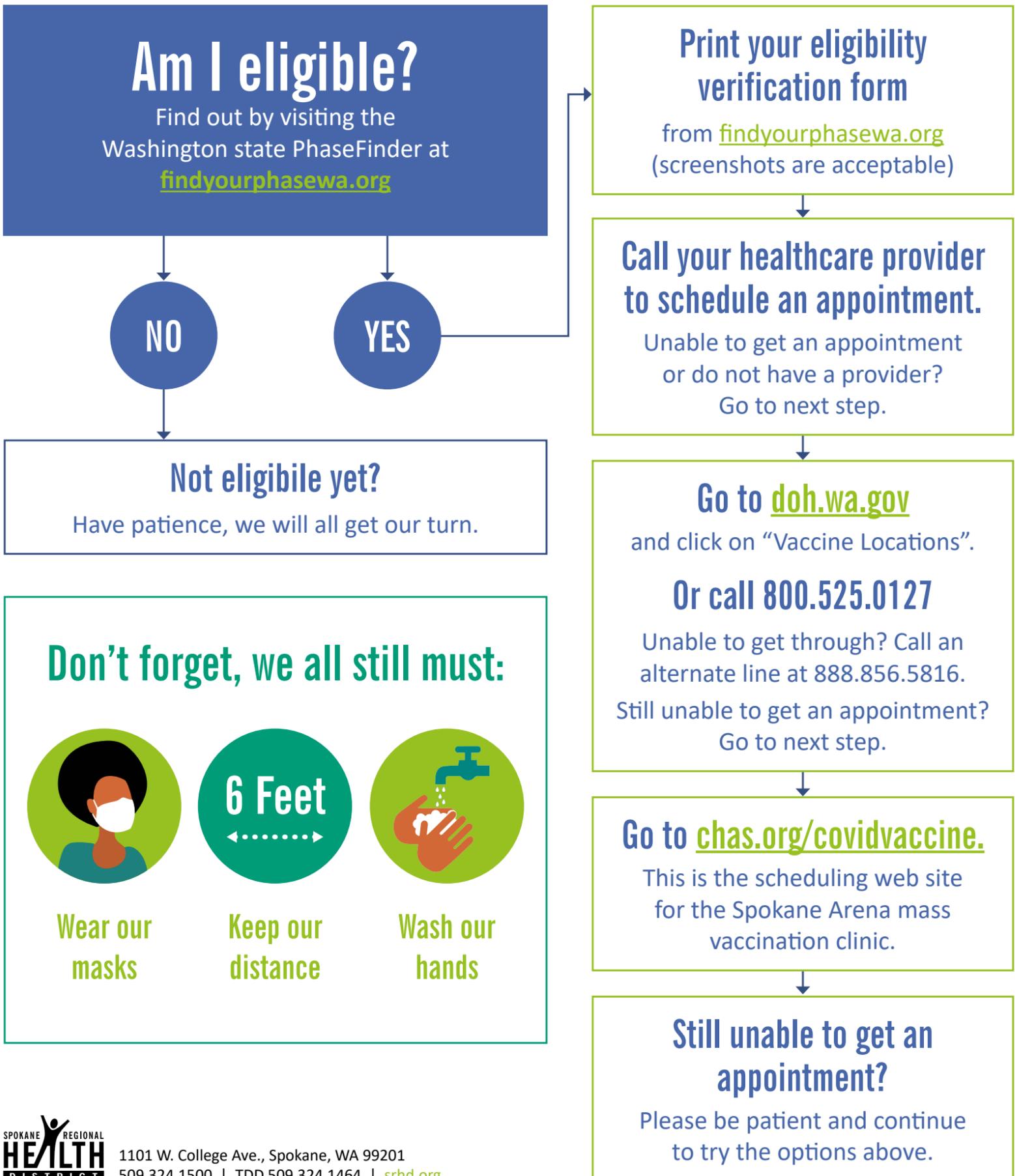
Federal priorities in 2021 include reunification of more than 600 children separated from parents at the border, restoration of U.S. refugee resettlement system, raising the refugee resettlement cap to 125,000 a year, permanent solutions for DACA recipients and comprehensive immigration reform.

For information, email pmillen@osphila.org.

COVID-19

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Traditions and advocacy have given meaning to Darlene McCarty

Continued from page 1 and fight for our rights.”

To make sure everyone would have access to health care, Darlene has traveled to Olympia to testify for preserving Medicare, Medicaid and public health programs, on which she now relies for treatment of uterine cancer that has spread through her body. Her cousin, Deb Abrahamson, recently died of the same cancer.

Now Darlene deals with the struggles for insurance coverage and health care, for which she advocated for others. She believes that everyone needs health insurance and that health care is a human right. Her family recently created a Go-Fund-Me drive to help with medical expenses.

Darlene was also involved with Deb in advocacy with the SHAWL (Sovereignty, Health, Air, Water and Land) Society, traveling to Olympia to accompany Deb when she testified at the legislature to assure the mining companies would be accountable to completing cleanup of contaminated sites on the Spokane Reservation.

“I remember going out with my mother with a Geiger counter in areas near Wellpinit,” she said. “My mother had land and a farm with fruit trees there near one of the mines.

“Several relatives have had health issues. Before the mines, there were not all the cancers the tribe now has,” she said.

Darlene has also advocated at Spokane City Council for community issues and served on the Steering Committee for the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane.

Despite her health problems, she has participated in Black Lives Matter rallies and Spokane events in solidarity with efforts to protect the water and environment and challenge construction of an oil pipeline across part of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North and South Dakota.

In addition, she and Barbara have worked to keep Native American traditions alive. Both have helped plan powwows, like the Gathering at the Falls in Riverfront Park and the annual Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration.

“I do not dance, but I love to go and watch the young people dance and keep the tradition alive,” Darlene said.

Her youngest grandson, Lance, is carving a dugout canoe in the back yard, while her eldest grandson, Uriah, is busy illustrating indigenous digital



Darlene McCarty and her daughter Barbara Gonygin cherish their moments together.

Photo courtesy of Barbara Gonygin

stories to help process grief.

Most of her life, Darlene has lived in Spokane, but spent some summers and a few years in North Carolina, California, New Mexico, Arizona and British Columbia, where she helped instill indigenous traditions.

Darlene attended Rogers High School, except for a semester in Wellpinit and her senior year. Her art teacher at Rogers arranged for her to spend her senior year at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, N. Mex., in 1964. She spent another two years there after graduating, to study drama and creative writing.

“**I was always interested** in acting, so finally 50 years later I was Nana Anuk in Z-Nation,” she said. “The setting was Alaska, but the filming was done in Spokane.”

The American action, horror, post-apocalyptic comedy is about a motley group of survivors battling a zombie apocalypse.

Darlene was also in two movies, “Home Sweet Home” and “One Small Thing,” and in two plays with Stage Left, “At the Sweet Gum Bridge” and “The Controversy of Valladolid.”

In the summer of 1975, Darlene worked in North Carolina with a Job Corps program training Chickasaw and Cherokee tribal teens, taking them into nature on hikes and camping.

Another summer she worked on an Indian reservation in Bishop, Calif., where Los Angeles churches brought groups to help build buildings.

After some time in Arizona, she came home to Spokane, where she raised her daughter, Barbara, while working in hotels.

Darlene told of other involvements related to her values:

- She was involved for a while with the Native and non-Native Talking Circle that met monthly at Emmanuel Family Life Center to share with people from several churches—including Unity and Bahá’i—to learn about Native culture and stories, and hear stories of the lives of non-Native participants to build cross-cultural understanding.

- Although not Catholic, she attends the Native American Church’s Indian Mass at St. Aloysius Parish once a month to connect with Native Americans during the school year when they are not going to powwows.

- She attended the Presbyterian Church in Wellpinit, and said she goes to any church because she believes churches are similar and share much in common with Native religion.

“**I have learned** to appreciate life, loved ones and friends,” Darlene said. “People treat me well, and I treat people well.”

Because of the struggles urban Indians experience, Darlene en-

courages friends to keep open to learning and remembering their traditions, working to save the salmon, keep waters clean and protect the land.

Her daughter, Barbara, along with serving on the Gathering at the Falls Planning Committee for several years, started the Indigenous People’s March in

Spokane two years ago.

The Gathering at the Falls highlights the significance of Northwest tribes gathering at the Spokane River, a sacred tradition for generations, celebrating the river and creating or renewing friendships, she said.

Barbara, who earned a bachelor’s degree in 2003 in business administration, finance and management information systems from Eastern Washington University, carries on the family tradition of advocating for justice as a community activist and organizer to improve people’s lives.

For 16 years, she has been a project specialist in Indian country with Kauffman & Associates, Inc., a consulting company that is dedicated to improving the lives of those in underserved communities.

The work has taken her around the Indian country since 2004, with her mother and children sometimes joining her.

“**I credit my being** a community advocate to my mother and grandmother. My mother took my grandmother’s lead and said that I was to carry on bringing people together, holding the family together and bringing the community together,” she said.

Now Barbara is spending time caring for her mother, returning the love she has been given for years.

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Faith inspires and teaches people to turn words into lived realities

We have often heard that it's not those who cry, "Lord, Lord," or say I believe, but those who do God's will—do justice, love mercy and walk humbly, or simply love. It's important to have words, hear words and share words, and also to move beyond words. The Fig Tree shares stories of people telling about ways they love, care, serve, live, advocate for God's kin-dom.

Being made in God's image means we have the spirit, power and wisdom to act if and when we choose.

The Eastern Washington Legislative Conference each year, for far more than 40 years, is an opportunity to gather, to learn about ways to legislate change that will make lives better. Along with

that, we always have the tough work of changing hearts and minds. Laws for the common good are what we advocate for and are to live by.

The white supremacist's painting a swastika on Temple Beth Shalom and defacing the Holocaust memorial drew immediate response in words expressing support and solidarity, and commitment to act on those words. We are called to embody caring and love in the face of hate.

We share news—words—from the World Council of Churches and National Council of Churches, not only about their involvements but also of what people around the world are doing—because of the inspiration of words of faith—to make lives of people,

communities and among nations better. Awareness of all the ways people are acting in faith inspires us to live our faith.

Words are how we communicate, so words are expected to build dialogue, understanding, respect, relationships, reconciliation, unity in the midst of the gorgeous diversity God has given us, the diversity of God's image that permeates each of us and our many faiths, values, races and cultures. God's gift of our lives is a challenge to build the beloved community.

In the article on immigration, we are reminded of the seven themes of Catholic social teaching: life/dignity, family/community, rights/responsibilities, the poor first, dignity of work/workers, solidarity

and creation care. Teachings are words we are called to make flesh.

The Legislative Conference reminds us of the many issues in the scope of our concern: budget and taxes, reforming the police and criminal justice systems, creating housing opportunities and preventing homelessness, addressing climate change and environmental health, protecting immigrants, civil and human rights, and ensuring health care and mental health access. These words name the priorities of the Faith Action Network, which offers us ways at www.fanwa.org to join in their ongoing efforts to turn words into action that makes a difference in people's lives.

Mary Stamp - Editor.

Legislative Conference speakers give overview of housing issues

Three speakers addressed housing inequities, issues and legislation for a workshop at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference: Terri Anderson of the Tenants Union, Ben Stuckart of the Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium and Jonathan Mallahan of Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington.

Terri said ties between housing and systemic racism in Spokane housing date to 1881, when Spokane's first indigenous inhabitants were evicted by executive order, forced to leave their land and homes. A homesteader claimed the Peaceful Valley land of Spokane Chief Garry while he was away for education.

"Property rights often supersede human rights," she said. "The Tenants Union considers housing a human right. As new inhabitants settled Spokane, race dictated housing policy with white covenants and redlining on the South Hill near Comstock Park and North Hill near Audubon Park in place until court cases and then the Fair Housing Act in 1968 reversed the policies."

Other inequities relate to access to financing, displacement and exclusion.

Half of Spokane's population rent, with 80 percent of black households and 60 percent of other people of color renting, while 70 percent of white households are homeowners only 30 percent rent.

That gap arises from disparities in wealth, education and jobs, she said, so nonprofits collaborate to help make hous-

ing stable and rents fair.

Ben said three pillars of a stool for housing stability are 1) adjusting regulations to allow density in the right places, 2) tenant protections and 3) subsidies and support to build more low-income housing.

"Home and apartment prices rose double digits in 2020," he said. "As prices rise, it pressures the system."

In December 2019, the City Council postponed to March 9 discussion of tenant protections, Ben said. With the pandemic, tenant protections were postponed because of a moratorium on evictions.

With no guarantee how long the moratorium will last, Terri said there is need for city and state actions or, when it ends, there will be "a tsunami of evictions," especially because Spokane County had not used CARES funds for rent assistance.

There are proposals for the city to pass just cause eviction, rent control, fair housing, rental relocation, maintenance codes, the right to organize and on domestic violence, hate crimes and voter registration.

In the Senate, SB 5139 prevents rent increases for six months and SB 5160 provides an off ramp from the eviction moratorium, requiring repayment plans, mediation and a right to counsel.

• In the House, HB 1236 is for just cause eviction and ending the 20-day no cause eviction clause. HB 1277 increases the real estate transaction fee by \$100 to establish permanent rental assistance. HB 1220 al-

lows emergency shelters in areas zoned for hotels and motels. HB 1300 is on returning damage deposits and defining normal wear and tear, so they are not used to replace a 40-year-old appliance.

Jonathan said Catholic Charities programs and resources protect tenants and people who care for people experiencing trauma, mental illness or disability.

Project-based assistance gives a three-year tax credit for low-income housing to be built. Landlords can assign housing vouchers to make units affordable so people earning less than 30 percent of the poverty level pay no more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing, he said.

Seeing housing as integral to human dignity, Jonathan said Catholic Charities offers supportive services.

"We offer emergency housing in Rapid Rehousing when people become homeless when they are evicted. We provide permanent supportive, low-barrier housing while people receive help for trauma, disability or mental illness," he said.

Jonathan said federal programs to assist those with the highest housing needs include CARES, Low Income Housing Tax, HOME, Section 108 vouchers and Section 202 financing for seniors.

Ben said regulatory framework will be affected by HB 1220 on the Growth Management Act, established 20 years ago for cities to limit urban sprawl, but most cities have not implemented their

comprehensive plans to allow density.

"Low-income housing needs to be part of comprehensive plans because single-family zoning tends to match past redlining maps. Land use zoning also requires environmental policies," he said. "Cities like Minneapolis have eliminated single family zoning."

Ben said the three elements for housing stability—protect tenants, provide low-income housing and change regulations like zoning—need to be addressed at the same time so communities avoid negative effects, like gentrification that drives low-income people from neighborhoods.

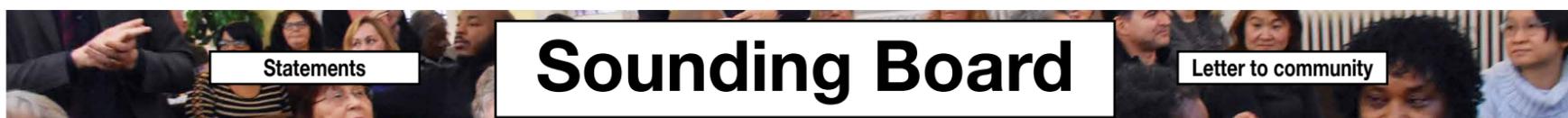
State and federal policies concentrate on poverty areas. Multi-family housing is concentrated in East and West Central Spokane, but Ben said there is a trend for more density in the city core and outlying areas. SB 5235 promotes density with accessory dwelling units on single-family property.

"The goal is walkable mixed-income neighborhoods," he said.

"The most important bill is HB 1236 for just cause evictions," said Ben. "Without protections there will be mass evictions."

"Ten Spokane nonprofits serve 500 tenants at risk of eviction when the moratorium lifts and renters have nowhere to go," he said. "We need to build more low-income housing so people who do everything right do not sit years on waiting lists."

For information, call Ben at 710-9611, Terri at 558-7126 or Jonathan at 358-4250.



Faith, community leaders express solidarity with Temple Beth Shalom

On Monday, Feb. 8, a swastika was painted on the outside of Temple Beth Shalom and the Holocaust memorial was defaced. Various community and faith groups have expressed their concern and solidarity. Temple Beth Shalom also issued a statement.

We, the undersigned regional church leaders and councils, denounce in the strongest terms the hate crime perpetrated against the congregation of Temple Beth Shalom on Feb. 8, 2021. We join with others in our community who pledge to stand in solidarity with the victims of hate, xenophobia, and antisemitism. As has happened in other times of national crisis, some seek to take advantage of fear and pain to advance racist ideologies to inspire acts of hate. "We reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel." (Confession of Belhar). We stand in loving solidarity with our Jewish brothers and sisters in honor and appreciation for their unique and irreplaceable presence in our wider community. We pray for their safety, honor, and peace.

Rev. Mike Denton, Conference

Minister of the Pacific Northwest Conference - United Church of Christ

The Rev. Sheryl Kinder-Pyle, Executive Presbyter of the Inland Northwest Presbytery

The Rev. Kristen Kuempel, Bishop, NW Intermountain Synod, ELCA

The Rev. Sandy Messick, Transitional Regional Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) - Northern Lights Region

The Rt. Rev'd Gretchen Rehberg, Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane

The Rev. Gregg Sealey, Inland District Superintendent, Pacific NW United Methodist Church Presbytery of the Inland Northwest

The Catholic Diocese of Spokane condemns today's act of anti-Semitic vandalism at Temple Beth Shalom. It is shocking to see our Jewish friends and neighbors targeted by this hateful action. The Church firmly "decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone." Vatican Council II, *Nostra Aetate*, 3. Our prayers are with the Jewish community of Spokane.

The Most Rev. Thomas Daly, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane

Temple Beth Shalom was grotesquely defaced during the early hours of Monday, Feb. 8. Vandalism would be tagging a building. This was not a simple act of vandalism. Wantonly drawing a swastika, a known anti-Semitic image, on the side of a Jewish temple and defacing a Holocaust memorial is an act of harassment, an act of terrorism. This behavior cannot be ignored or tolerated in a just society. The individual or individuals involved in this act need to be identified and prosecuted.

We call on the greater Spokane community to stand together in actively countering displays of hatred toward others and work to resolve the issues that foster such acts of hatred.

The Spokane County Human Rights Task Force stands in solidarity with our brothers and sisters at Temple Beth Shalom. We stand with all others in direct defiance to an atmosphere of hate.

Statement from the Spokane County Human Rights Task Force

Feb. 10: The Temple Beth Shalom community is both angered and saddened that this has occurred. We are

angered by this violation, but also grieve that members of our society harbor such hatred. We remain vigilant in the fight to protect everyone's right to religious freedom and promote tolerance. We will not let these events deter us from living as Jews in our society.

Antisemitism is a strike not against just Jews, but against all who cherish our society for the love and freedoms we have. Many of you have offered support. We are ever grateful.

The best response is to educate and speak out against hate crimes of any sort, directed at any person or group. Our society should not tolerate bigotry.

Feb 18: The Spokane Police arrested an individual related to the recent graffiti incident.

We are grateful to the Spokane community and to many from around the nation, for the outpouring of support. We have received many messages of support and donations to clean up the damage.

It is so important that we stand together against anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry against on any individual or group. The responses from law enforcement and the community show that we can do this!

Rabbi Tamir Malino and the TBS Board of Trustees



Calendar of Events

- Feb 25** • **Fig Tree Benefit and Board** meetings on Zoom, 1 p.m., call 535-1813 or email mary@thefigtree.org.
- **"I Am Thurgood Marshall: Ageless Lessons of a Civil Rights Giant and a Life Well-Spent,"** Robert Bartlett, retired educator, writer, storyteller and researcher, Spokane Public Library Black History Month Event, 6:30 p.m. online, spokanelibrary.org
- Feb 28** • **St. John's Cathedral Music Series** Virtual Organ Concert, 60th anniversary of installing its Aeolian-Skinner organ, lecture by organist John Bodinger, 4 p.m., <https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsCathedralSpokane/>
- Mar 1** • **Emmaus Scholars Lecture**, Esau McCaulley, New Testament scholar and Anglican priest, Whitworth Campus Ministry, Zoom, 7 to 8:30 p.m., 777-3337, dtaylor@whitworth.edu
- Mar 3** • **"Let It Not Happen Again: Lessons of the Japanese American Exclusion,"** Clarence Moriwaki, register at seattle.gov/parks, activity number 41027
- Mar 3, 10** • **"The Country That Fiction Built,"** Humanities Washington, <https://www.krl.org/events/humanities-wa-speakers-bureau-%E2%80%9C-country-fiction-built%E2%80%9D-michelle-liu>
- Mar 3, 11** • **"Tangled: Why Your Hair Matters to Society,"** Anu Taranath, University of Washington global literature, identity, race and equity professor, Humanities Washington online Speakers Bureau, <https://www.humanities.org/event/online-tangled-why-your-hair-matters-to-society-2/>
- **"Is Truth Really Dead in America?"** Washington State University professor Steven Stehr, Humanities Washington online Speakers Bureau, <https://www.humanities.org/event/online-is-truth-really-dead-in-america-6/>
- Mar 3-12** • **Spokane Jewish Cultural Film Festival**, Featuring Breaking Bread, Crescendo, The Crossing, Incitement, My Name Is Sara, Reawakening, Space Torah, They Ain't Ready for Me and Those Who Remained, Virtual, 7 p.m., register at <https://watch.eventive.org/zjcf> or visit <http://sajfs.org/our-programs/sjcff/>
- Mar 4** • **Spokane Homeless Coalition**, Zoom meeting 9:30 a.m., <http://www.spokanehcc.com/>
- **Peace and Justice Action Committee**, working on national legislative priorities on war and peace, 5:30 p.m., Zoom information at amurillo@pjals.org
- Mar 5** • **The Fig Tree Lunch-Time Benefit**, gathering in groups on Zoom for conversation at virtual "tables" beginning at 11:30 a.m., giving time for Zoom coordinators to welcome people before the program starts at noon. Guests will also visit in groups while making commitments and organizers tally the gifts. To join, call 535-1813, email event@thefigtree.org or sign up online at <https://secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/2021-fig-tree-march-benefits/lunch-time-benefit>
- Mar 6** • **Junior League of Spokane's 2021 Treasure Hunt Book Fair**, drive-through event at West Central Community Center with free books and snacks, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., www.jlspokane.org/book-fair
- Mar 8** • **Women Lead Virtual Conference 2021**, International Women's Day, Gonzaga's School of Leadership Studies, Zoom, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., womenlead@gonzaga.edu
- **Simpson Duvall Lecture**, "From Calvin to Catholic: The Aims and Values of Ecumenism in the 21st Century," Peter Kreeft, Zoom, 5 p.m., 777-4739, ncasady@whitworth.edu
- Mar 10** • **The Fig Tree Breakfast-Time Benefit** gathering in groups on Zoom

- to converse at their virtual "tables" beginning at 7:30 a.m., giving time for Zoom coordinators to gather people before the program starts at 8 a.m. Guests will also visit in groups while making commitments and organizers tally the gifts. To join, call 535-1813, email event@thefigtree.org or sign up online at <https://secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/2021-fig-tree-march-benefits/lunch-time-benefit>
- Mar 11** • **"She Traveled Solo – Strong Women in the Early 20th Century,"** on Tessa Hull's bicycle trip from Southern California to Maine, Women's History Month event with Humanities Washington, 6:30 p.m., spokanelibrary.org, also March 2, 9 and 19 at <https://www.humanities.org/event/online-she-traveled-solo-strong-women-in-the-early-20th-century-5/>
 - Mar 11, 25** • **Showing Up for Racial Justice**, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, 5:30 p.m., zoom information at slicity@pjals.org.
 - Mar 17** • **Housing Affordability: Understanding This Important Issue**, Gonzaga University School of Business Administration, Adriane Leithauser GU business ethics lecturer, moderating panel with Ben Stuckart, Spokane Low-Income Housing Consortium; Jonathan Mallahan, vice president of housing with Catholic Charities; Terri Anderson, Tenants Union of Washington Spokane office director, on Zoom 6 to 7:30 p.m., <https://gonzaga.zoom.us/j/95846376693>
 - Mar 19** • **"Creating Meaning from this Moment,"** Gonzaga Environmental Studies, Grace Hope, Pacific Northwest regional organizer with 350.org, noon, environmentalstudies@gonzaga.edu
 - Mar 21** • **"Considering Matthew Shepard,"** Gonzaga Chamber Chorus, live-streamed from the Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 3 to 4:30 p.m., music@gonzaga.edu
 - Mar 22** • **NAACP Spokane Monthly Meeting**, 7 p.m., email spokanenaacp@gmail.com
 - Mar 23** • **"Women Activists and the Legacy of Progressivism,"** Gonzaga History Department lecture by Veta Schlimgen, Wolff Auditorium, Jepson Center, 7 p.m.
 - Mar 23-24** • **2021 Environmental Justice Symposium**, "Environmental Justice: Race, Poverty and the Environment," Gonzaga University School of Law and Environmental Studies, 1 p.m. Tuesday to 4 p.m. Wednesday, lawzagsonline.gonzaga.edu
 - Mar 24** • **Organizing Basics Workshop**, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane Webinar Wednesday event covers basics of grassroots organizing tactics, mobilization and successful campaigns, 7 to 8:30 p.m., <http://pjals.org/webinar-wednesdays/>
 - Mar 25** • **"Pageantry of Protest: Making the Look Count,"** Lenora Lopez Schindler, lecturer-artist on suffragists' use of banners, textiles and fashion, Jundt Auditorium, Gonzaga University, 7 p.m.
 - Mar 25-26** • **2021 Leadership Symposium**, "Leading Change: Climate, Culture and Community," Zoom, 4 p.m., leadershipevents@gonzaga.edu
 - Mar 26** • **Whitworth Diversity Monologues 2021**, Multicultural Student Affairs, students think critically how their experiences inform their meaning, virtual, 7 to 10:30 p.m., 777-4572, adohi@whitworth.edu
 - Mar 28** • **"Gardening for Wildlife,"** on creating habitat for bees, birds, and other critters, Zoom, 1 p.m., events. spokanelibrary.org
 - Mar 31** • **Fig Tree distribution** and mailing
 - Apr 1** • **Fig Tree Benefit/Development and Board** meetings, Zoom, noon for Benefit, 1 to 3 p.m. for Board, 535-1813, mary@thefigtree.org

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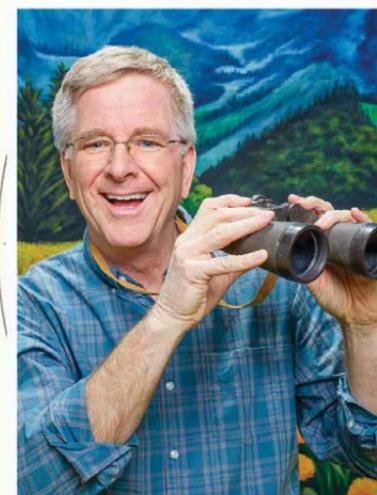
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Area churches join the Little Library movement to encourage reading

By Fred Jessett

A project to create a small rolling library to use any time, anywhere inside St. Stephen's Episcopal Church was squashed by the pandemic.

Kris Jessett, who was on the Baptized for Life Committee that was planning the rolling library, suggested the church put up a Little Free Library® outside the building, especially with the church and libraries closed because of COVID.

"The first time I saw a Little Free Library was in 2010, when I was walking down East 46th Ave.," she said.

A woman was working in the yard near it, so Kris asked her about it. The woman said it was dedicated to her friend who had been a school librarian.

Kris said she worked as a teenager for 25 cents per hour in a public library in Duluth, Minn., where she grew up. She has always loved books, so the idea of making books available to anyone who passes by, especially children, appealed to her.

Soon after that she learned that someone in Spokane, Jan Hansen, builds little libraries. Kris contacted her and soon had a little library in her yard.

"That was the first one I had built," Kris said. "A few years later, when my husband, Fred, and I moved, we took the library to our new location, and Jan made some repairs and improvements."

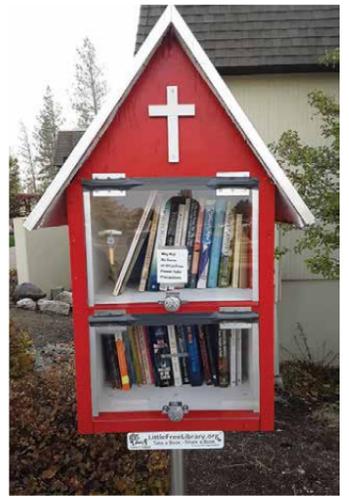
Her suggestion to St. Stephen's caught on and what some call "the little red book box" was built by a member. It now stands in front of the church at 5720 S. Perry with books on spiritual and religious themes. It is available to anyone who stops by.

It's Little Free Library #109,884.

St. Stephen's is not the only congregation in the region with a little library.

Central Lutheran has had a little library outside their building at 512 S. Bernard for many years. Its old wooden number plate says it is #14,061. Newer number plates are metal.

The little library at Central Lutheran was built and is stocked by church members and friends as a resource for the neighbor-



Kris Jessett at her home Little Free Library. Lower left, library and food pantry at Pilgrim Lutheran; above, Central Lutheran and top right St. Stephen's Episcopal in Spokane, and right, St. Luke's Episcopal in Coeur d'Alene.

hood. It's a take-one-leave-one lending library used daily by local residents and nearby business employees.

It's part of the church's services to the neighborhood, along with their summer parking lot barbecues and the "doggie station" on their lawn, because they have the only grassy area in that part of town.

Earlier this year, they began putting food in it instead of books. Now it contains both.

Northwood Presbyterian has one by the steps in its front courtyard at 6721 N. Monroe.

St. Luke's Episcopal at 501 E. Wallace in Coeur d'Alene has had one for more than five years. Members have considered converting it to use for food if necessary. Inside, the church also has a library of spiritual books. The American Association of University Women maintains it.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church at 2733 W. Northwest Blvd. has Little Library #65,191 in front of its building. They have two boxes, and one now has food items in it.

A search of the Little Free Library website found a few other libraries in the region:

First Presbyterian Church at 417 N. Fourth Ave. in Sandpoint, Idaho, located its Little Free Library in its Community Peace Garden, built in the style of Noah's Ark. It includes a wide

selection of books for all ages.

Greenhouse Community Center and Food Bank at 22 Fir Ave. in Deer Park has one of six the Deer Park Rotary Club has installed in the community.

All Saints Episcopal Church at 1322 Kimball Ave. in Richland hosts a little library for readers of all ages on its grounds, maintained for community use as are its playground, open yard and walking labyrinth, as an expression of its desire to "love our neighbors."

There are at least 126 little libraries in the Spokane area registered with the Little Free Library® website, and many more in outlying communities.

Many are "chartered" by private individuals beside their homes.

There are also a number of little book boxes in this area that are not connected to the organization, including one outside the Odyssey Youth Center at 1121 S. Perry.

Little Free Library is a non-

profit organization that promotes neighborhood book exchanges, usually through public bookcases. It is based in Hudson, Wis.

By now, there are likely more than 110,000 public book exchanges in 91 countries registered with the organization and branded as Little Free Libraries. Millions of books are exchanged each year via these libraries.

The purpose is to increase access to books for readers of all ages, interests and backgrounds.

The littlefreelibrary.org website offers a map for people to search by city and state to find little libraries nearby. It also offers plans for building different models of libraries, which can be purchased or built, and offers discounted books.

For information, visit littlefreelibrary.org, email Jan Hansen at littlelibrarybuilder.com.

For information on churches, email office@ststephens-spokane.com, clspokane@comcast.net, office@northwoodpres.org or admin@stlukesca.org.

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