Center offers multiple resources

By Mary Stamp

Instead of needing multiple bus passes to go to several agencies for employment, health care, food, housing and other services, people can now go to one place to meet with representatives of those agencies.

The Spokane Resource Center, a one-stop location for people to access multiple services in a single visit, opened April 15 in the 20,000-square-foot second floor of WorkSource at 130 S. Arthur.

The center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is one of 17 HUD EnVision Center Demonstration sites in the nation. The four emphases of EnVision Centers are economic empowerment, character and leadership, educational advancement and health/wellness.

Tim Sigler, senior manager of the city’s Community Housing and Human Services (CHHS) Department, said the idea has been around for many years with several systems that include criminal justice, homeless services and other social services that work with underserved populations.

The center brings together local social services in a shared office to enable collaboration to assist people in stepping out of crises and to prevent them from falling into struggles with unemployment, hunger, mental health, addiction, homelessness or crime.

“The Spokane Resource Center provides diversion before people enter the criminal justice system or are homeless,” Tim said. “They need intervention before they are in a crisis, need to go to the emergency room for issues that are not best resolved in an ER, or are arrested. Many people face a vast number of barriers to reaching their personal and professional potential.

“Looking at dynamics in the criminal justice system, the Spokane Regional Criminal Justice Commission created a ‘Blueprint for Reform’ to look at deficiencies and identify people involved with the criminal justice system,” he said. “The report recommends offering better access to social services by co-locating agencies. The Spokane Resource Center does just that.”

A pilot project was proposed two years ago, but there was no money or space, said Tim, who has been with the city for five years. Previously he was a county probation officer for four years, a city probation officer for four years, Continued on page 4

NAACP Spokane celebrates 100 years of challenging injustice, inequity, bias

Through its 100 years of fighting for racial equity and justice in economic opportunity, fair housing, criminal justice, educational challenges and environmental justice, the Spokane NAACP has a legacy of leaders whose persistence inspires members today to carry on despite challenges that remain on the systems of power.

The centennial launched in January with a program on the Bail Project, presented with a town hall with community partners, including Gonzaga’s Black Student Union and its Institute for Hate Studies.

The Spokane’s Mayor and City Council proclaimed April as the NAACP Spokane Centennial Month. A centennial celebration at their monthly membership meeting on Monday, April 15, filled Calvary Baptist Church, where the chapter first met.

The centennial celebration will culminate with hosting the NAACP State Area Conference from Sept. 13 to 15 at Northern Quest Resort and Casino in Airway Heights. There will be speakers, a lunch, the Michael P. Anderson scholarship awards and workshops on criminal justice, education, political action, health care and climate change.

The national NAACP approved Spokane’s charter on April 14, 1919. The chapter says the goal is “to uplift colored men and women of this country by securing to them the full enjoyment of their rights as citizens, justice in all courts and equality of opportunity everywhere.”

Its founders and early leaders included the Rev. Emmett Reed, who was pastor of Calvary Baptist Church from 1919 until his death in 1961; the Rev. T.F. Jones, pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church who was the first (temporary) president, and Frank Stokes, a businessman and member of Bethel AME, who for 30 years was president or other executive officer.

At the April 15 meeting, Gloria Ochoa-Brook presented the city’s proclamation. Then Kianna Doncan, the newest board member and former chair of the Seattle Tacoma Branch, recognized elders, men, women, millennials, faith leaders, educators and children present for continued on page 6

Poor People’s Campaign recruits

Leaders of the state Poor People’s Campaign (PPC) visited Spokane recently for a Truth and Poverty Tour to learn about local social justice issues and help develop a local chapter.

Jonathan Hemphill of Tacoma and Bianca Davis-Lovelace of Seattle are two tri-chairs on the Washington State Coordinating Committee for the PPC. In January, Liz Moore, director of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, had stepped down as the third tri-chair.

Jonathan is legislative and administrative advocate for Mockingbird Society to transform foster care related to homeless teens. Bianca is executive director of the Renton Ecumenical Association of Churches REACH and a member of Bethany UCC. Devon Wilson of the NAACP Spokane helped schedule their tour in Spokane. They seek to build a chapter of the Poor People’s Campaign in Spokane to do direct action.

“Through chapters in 40 states, we seek to highlight poverty across the nation to change the narrative that limits the face of poverty to the homeless man on the street,” said Jonathan. “We want people to see children and families, too.”

On April 6 at the WSU campus in Spokane they introduced the Poor People’s Campaign through a panel on student-led movements in sync with values of the PPC. Social justice, racial justice, religious leaders and environmental activists are involved.

They are also recruiting people to go to a national Poor People’s Moral Action Congress June 17 to 19 in Washington, D.C. The goal is to have 20 representatives from each state, including people impacted by poverty, clergy and advocates to decide where to go as a campaign, said Jonathan.

“Racism, poverty, ecological devastation and militarism are interconnected,” Bianca said. “The main issue is that many who are poor are working two to three jobs.”

For information, call 708-937-5711 or email bdavislovelace@gmail.com.
May and June are the final months for gathering updated information for listings, recruiting updating agencies and businesses to be community partners for the 2019-20 Resource Directory.

The directory is published in July, mailed in July and distributed in the same month for gathering updated information for listings, recruiting agencies and businesses to be community partners for the 2019-20 Resource Directory.

Caritas hosts Health and Resource Fair

At the fair, “A Key to Solutions,” they will help people address domestic matters, nutrition, health care, veterans’ services and elder services.

“Caritas has a long history of helping families on their roofs,” said volunteer Chuck Hooker.

“We’re convinced many of our clients need services beyond food and necessities, ones readily available through various agencies with Spokane offices, but many of these people just know too little about how their other needs could be addressed,” he said.

Caritas serves the community north of Montgomery, west of Division, south of Hawthorne and in the Old Northeast neighborhood.

It is a collaborative effort of 14 Northwest Spokane churches, sharing information and reaching the community.

For information, call 326-2249 or visit caritasoutreachministries.org.

Salem Lutheran raises funds for its roof

This year, Salem has been challenged to do some expensive repairs to its roof. Salem shared the opportunity to hear stories about what’s happening globally on racism and gender-based violence and other forms of oppression, and realize “we are all connected to something bigger,” she said.

Demaine Solomon, who teaches theology and ethics at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa, valued the time to something bigger,” she said.

The campus of the welcoming,

diverse congregation is busy every week, used by the community for nonprofit offices, the Salvation Army, New Horizons Orchestra, Zumba, music workshops and craftspeople selling products.

It is a collaborative effort of 14 Northwest Spokane churches, sharing information and reaching the community.

For information, call 328-6280 or email salemcongregation@gmail.com.
Young organs give recital, play in MusicFest  

The Spokane Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) recital by its 2019 Organ Academy students will be held at 3 p.m., Sunday, May 5, at Central Lutheran Church, 512 S. Bernard St. The AGO said the 2019 Musicfest Northwest Auditorium Andrew Lloyd will perform a concert at 4 p.m., Sunday, May 12, at the Coeur d’Alene Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave. The organ adjudication will be at 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 14, at the cathedral.

Last year, the Organ Academy began to introduce young pianists to the organ with a short course of organ lessons at a reduced cost. The goal is to interest students in the organ and to give them a piece to enter in Musicfest Northwest, said AGO member Janet Ahrend, who helped organize the Organ Academy.

Of eight students, three continued with private lessons and two took the course again this year. The third is a university student. This year the academy has 11 students, with six from Post Falls and two from Coeur d’Alene.

The students practiced Saturdays at different churches, so they experienced different organs. With half from North Idaho, there were simultaneous practice sessions in Spokane and Coeur d’Alene. Stephanie Novak, who coordinates travel time and distance, said.

Highlights of their 2019 recital include three of Bach’s “Eight Little Preludes and Fugues,” three contemporary pieces and León Boquín’s “Prayer to Our Lady” and his “Focetam,” from his Suite Gothique.

Andrew, a Spokane native, chairs the organ program and teaches composition as an assistant professor at the University of Texas in San Antonio. He earned a doctor of musical arts degree in organ performance in 2014 from the University of North Texas, and completed his master of music degree in 2013 at the University of Kansas.

He has performed on the organs at the Salt Lake Tabernacle, the Cathédrale de Notre Dame in Paris, the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and in Russia and South America.

He has composed for organ, piano, voice, choir, orchestra and chamber ensembles, including a recent composition, “Christus,” a nine-movement art mass for choir, organ, violin and cellos that premiered in April 2017 in Fort Worth and Dallas. His works have been featured at the 2016 and 2018 National AGO conventions.

Andrew’s program here will include two pieces by Bach, de Grigny, Tournemire, Widner and several of his own compositions, including the world premiere of “and on the third day,” as well as the 10-year anniversary performance of “The Three Gardens.”

He first performed at St. John’s in 1997 and 1998.

For information, call 624-2980, email frostbeige2@gmail.com, or visit spokanago.org.

Symphony Chorale performs on May 14  

The Cantabile Chapter of the Spokane Symphony Associates presents a concert with the 80+ voice Spokane Symphony Chorale at 4 p.m., Sunday, May 14, at Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ. Directed by Kristina Ploeger, the program, “Love and Understanding,” will demonstrate the range and ver- satility of this all-volunteer chorus, performing music by Michael John Trotta, Stephen Foster, Vasily Hamov-W, Gustav Holst, Jut, Jar, Syler, Maurice Durufle and more.

Kristina is a professor and director of choral activities at Eastern Washington University. The pianist is Carolyn Jess. Proceeds support the Spokane Symphony.

For information, call 991-0921 or email brentwilcox@yahoo.com, or visit cantiabilessa.corlinc.com/store.

Artiste-in-residence program at monastery lends young woman opportunity to compose music  

By Theresa Henson

Soprano composer Xanthe Kraft spent most of March in the Monastery of St. Gertrude’s artist-in-residence program. Inspired by the monastic day arranged around morning and evening prayer, and midday Mass or prayer, Xanthe created a schedule that included time to write in the morning and time to compose in the afternoon.

“An artistic journey is also a spiritual journey and moral jour- ney,” she said. “The Holy Spirit that inspires goodness and truth also inspires beauty.”

As part of her time at St. Ger- trude’s, Xanthe composed a Mass for the liturgy of the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25. Her goal was to use music to complement the congregation’s voice.

“What’s going on in Mass is incred- ible. Music should not detract from that,” said Xanthe, who cites influences in Celtic melody and Gregory of Nazianzus.

“I tried to make a simple song,” she explained, also referring to Hildegard of Bingen’s composi- tions and aesthetic philosophy.

“God, who at once is the simplest and most all-revealing, de- lights in a simple song.”

Xanthe, who is 24 years old, recently graduated with a mas- ter’s in music composition from Dartmouth College.

She describes her spiritual journey as questioning herself as a creative being, finding God’s imprint—and through grace hav- ing revelations about God through contemplation that inspires works of beauty—or, as Xanthe says, “to react to beauty with meaning.”

“I have wanted to write this Mass for a while, and I wouldn’t have without this artist’s resi- dency,” she said.

Initially the residency was chal- lenging as she was confronted with a lack of her usual distri- butions.

“I tried to go through this residency as a spiritual journey,” she said.

Xanthe has composed music since she was five years old. She was raised Catholic and describes coming into her faith while at college in Dartmouth.

She found the party culture bleak and she found a crisis of purpose among her peers.

Through participation in campu- s ministry and a music ensem- ble, she developed a prayer life that also inspired her music. Her compositions became a response of gratitude and celebration to God rather than an endeavor of isolated artistic achievement.

“The result is always better when you do it for God rather than people,” she said. “As with many of our journeys of finding Jesus, we don’t discover him there, we discover that he has always been there.”

For information, call 208-962- 5965, email creative@stgertrudes. org or visit stgertrudegrades.org.

Xanthe Kraft, a composer, recently completed an artist’s residency at the Monastery of St. Gertrude.

Photo courtesy of Theresa Henson

2019 Summer STEM & Arts Camps  

BUILD • INVESTIGATE • CREATE  

Register online @ www.spookaneschools.org/summerstecamps  

If you have any questions call 509-354-4648

Spokane Public Schools  

Chase Middle School – 4747 E 37th Ave.  
Salk Middle School – 6411 N Alberta St.  
K-8th grade = $100 per camp  

Make your summer count!
People need in need can avoid accessing services at new center

Spokane Resource Center offers different areas to meet needs.

- Training, job readiness and social skill-building.
  - Under Health and wellness, CHAS and other health care agencies will schedule appointments, help people apply for insurance, offer health care assistance, counsel, crisis intervention, behavioral and mental health screenings and refer people for treatment.
  - Peer support includes certified peer counselors, mentoring, other coaching, advocacy and networking.
  - Education includes parenting classes, financial and credit counseling, computer skills and tenant education.

- Benefits/basic needs addresses reimbursement or increasing veterans benefits, support access for and recovery of SSI/SSDI support.
  - Housing includes housing assessments, energy assistance, rental help, dispute resolution and tenant education.
  - Pre-employment includes training, job readiness and social skill-building.

Since 1994, a key word search indicates the newspaper published 1,683 articles on racism, 1,190 on bias, 540 on bigotry, 207 on sexism, 49 on xenophobia and 24 on homophobia. Based on their subject index article count, they have published 587 articles on LGBTQ issues, 519 on gay or lesbian experiences, and 132 on transgender experiences.

Eva Lassman awards presented at conference

Gonzaga University’s Institute for Hate Studies recently continued its Holocaust survivor and educator Eva Lassman’s legacy through presenting awards in her honor. The annual event known as Spokane-Reviewer for their efforts to promote peace and ensure that acts of hatred are never forgotten.

In presenting the awards at its recent conference banquet, Kris Curley, editor, and Stacey Cowles, publisher, said, “Her inspirational story continues in many ways in our community, including art work of Holocaust Remembrance. Including art work of

The Take Action Against Hate Spokane-Reviewer Center plans to add a clothing closet, a food closet and hygiene cabinet. There is also a plan to have a room for supervised play, which the center hopes will be run by volunteers so children are occupied when parents discuss needs and barriers to supporting their success that they might not share if their child is sitting next to them. The Spokane Arts Commission has filled the walls with local artists’ works to add color and introduce the artists. There is also a Multicultural Center to focus on race, gender, ethnicity and interfaith issues.

One of two classrooms is for the center’s use and one for community use to host events, discussions and workshops. WorkSource will teach classes on job readiness. Agencies may teach classes or have events there.

In the Financial Stability Center, people can learn about budgeting, credit, home ownership or even how just to open a bank account.

In an employee break room, agency staff can converse and have monthly training sessions. For example, Kurtis Robinson, NAACP Spokane president, and Carmen Pacheco-Jones, chair of the SR-LKC’s Racial Equity Committee, will offer implicit bias training.

“Our goal is to serve the community by supporting innovative projects like this,” Tim said. “CHHS invests nearly $15 million for support services and capital investments each year.”

A community collaboration, along with the Spokane Workforce Council and the city are Spokane Housing Authority, Career Path Services, SNAP, The Arc of Spokane, Goodwill, Catholic Charities, Compass Career Solutions, Center for Justice, Frontier Behavioral Health, CHAS, Pioneer Human Services, Revive Recovery Services, Partners with Families and Children, World Relief and the Tenants Union.

For information, call 867-8189.
John Caputo’s belief in the power of stories of everyday people is fostering intercultural and international awareness, and in the need for media responsibility has permeated his teaching undergraduate and graduate students for careers in media and communication.

As a professor in Gonzaga University’s master’s program in Communication and Leadership Studies and summer programs for communications students in Florence and Cagli, Italy, and in Derry, Northern Ireland, he has introduced students to the skills of journalism, photography and digital, interpersonal and intercultural communication.

John has helped students understand peace is possible despite ways media may exacerbate divisions, covering political leaders rather than citizens. Although retiring as professor at Gonzaga in May, he will continue his 50-year passion for teaching by fostering Cagli-St. Mary’s links.

In high school summer exchanges, students gained practical language skills, learned about culture and communities.

Four years ago, Spokane’s sister city grew out of those relationships. This year, 10 high school students from Spokane go to Cagli June 30 to July 15 and 10 from Cagli come to Spokane July 20 to Aug. 5 and stay in homes. He is currently seeking volunteers as homestay families in Spokane.

“People are never big enough to hold students’ dreams.”

For four years John also led graduate student Peacebuilding Trips to Derry, Northern Ireland. Students learned about dialogue, communication and sharing stories of the people they met.

Like many, John had thought from media reports that the fight in Northern Ireland was between Catholics and Protestants. Students met with former combatants who said the fight was about civil rights and having a piece of the pie, not about religion.

The Peace Initiative, which was developed by leaders, is fragile because it did not involve dialogue among grassroots people.

“We start with a dialogue of storytelling, so we can see ourselves more clearly,” John said.

“If we can bring everyday people into discussions, they can break down false assumptions. Then we find similarities. It takes foresight to develop skills of empathy.”

John said conflict arose as communication broke down. In 2011, a Peace Bridge was built in Derry across the River Foyle, connecting symbolic nature for the Peace Bridge is connecting through dialogue and building empathy for others, John said.

Peace has been a theme through John’s life. His family moved from Ohio to California, where he graduated from high school. He graduated from college in 1964 from California State at Long Beach at the height of the Vietnam period. Although the youngest of seven in a working-class family, he was able to afford college because tuition for a semester at Long Beach State was $49. He was deferred from the draft while teaching high school in a low-income, racially diverse neighborhood. When he began graduate studies in communication and culture, he applied as a conscientious objector. Turned down because he was Catholic, he became involved in the peace movement.

“I wanted to teach to influence society,” he said. “People need to be informed about diversity, culture, poverty and racism. Northern Ireland had similar questions and had turned to Martin Luther King, Jr., and other U.S. civil rights activists.

In 1971, he started teaching communication at California State in San Bernardino, while in graduate studies. In 1976, he earned a master’s and in 1977, a doctoral degree from Claremont Graduate School. He helped develop the field of intercultural communication while teaching 15 years at Claremont. Media studies is a meeting place for teaching peace, intercultural communication and diversity, he said.

John came to Gonzaga looking for a faith-based liberal arts school and a place less expensive to live than the Bay Area, where he taught as a visiting professor at St. Mary’s College.

As the field of media literacy began to grow, he began to teach it. Some wondered how it would affect students entering media. “I said it created thoughtful people in mass media,” John said. With Don Higgins, director of the West Central Communication Center (WCCC), he helped with a series on the influence of TV on children families. He was part of “looking at causes of poverty and social problems in that neighborhood.”

“We realized people were getting messages from media more than from churches or schools,” he said.

From that, they developed the Spokane Academy of Family TV, which grew into the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media in partnership with the University of Washington and the Spokane Regional Health Department. It found a home at Gonzaga University.

Its role is to monitor the influence of media on society, to educate the community on that influence and to influence media to act responsibly to create a healthy society.

One member, Bill Niggemeyer, a retired junior high teacher active in peace education, called for “taking back the culture.” He and Fig Tree editor Mary Stump helped guide the alliance to invite media to create a culture of peace.

Through forums, films and a Media Fest for high school students at KSPS, NW-ARM invited people to understand the impact of media messages and images.

John’s commitment to make a difference in students’ lives through media literacy and experiential learning overseas has been influenced by his faith as a Catholic.

Owning property in Cagli, he expects to spend several weeks a year there. He started Mercurio, LLC, named after the Greek God of communication, and will do a summer school for media for 12 to 20 American students in Rome and Cagli with Sapienza University in Rome.

For information, call 220-5582 or email jcaputo1@mac.com.
NAACP Spokane may be small, but it’s a ‘mighty community of color’

Continued from page 1 …

what they have done and will do. “The NAACP is more than the NAACP and the ‘new Spokane,’ which she called Wakahana—a fictional African country—where ‘we understand we need each other and are each unique,’” she said. “We need to build the community to be what we want it to be, an oasis where neighbors love and care about each other.”

“Amazing things have happened because of the NAACP,” she said. “We are a small but mighty community of color.”

James Wilburn, NAACP Spokane president from 2013 to 2016, formed the Spokane chapter 1137. “Our people still are fighting. In Spokane, the scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians who are now ‘Black Spokane:’

The Fig Tree online has many stories on the NAACP Spokane. While a Google search of Spokane NAACP presidents draws nearly 10 pages about media coverage of former NAACP president Rachel Dolezel, a white woman who represented herself as black, we can intentionally replace those understandings with healthier, restorative perspectives of self and our human family,” he said.

Kurtis and Carmen, as part of Just Lead Washington team, have done several Implicit Bias trainings. “Elias and Gabriel Fuller, who represented themselves as black, learned the names of many of the NAACP Spokane leaders, profiles on past presidents and reports on actions over 35 years. Jim Sims and Happy Watkins were among those on the Spokane Christian Coalition Board when it voted to establish The Fig Tree.

Dwayne Mack book includes stories on leaders

More history is in Dwayne Mack’s new book Spokane: The Civil Rights Struggle in the Inland Northwest, and other sources:

• In 1950, 1,300 of 26,500 black people in a population of 65,000; in the 1950s, 1,300 in a community of 160,000 with black soldiers at Geiger Field; in 1965, 2,600 out of about 180,000. The 2010 census shows about 2 percent or 7,800 African-Americans in Spokane’s population of 390,000.

• In the 1950s, the NAACP’s president several times, brought civil rights leader Rosa Parks to Spokane in 1956. He served on the Spokane City Council and in 1981 was elected mayor, winning 60 percent of the vote in the city that was just 1.5 percent African American.

• After serving in the military, James Sims, who had a bachelor’s degree from Lincoln University and a master’s in history from Gonzaga University, applied for a position with the Washington State Office of Civil Rights. Although he excelled in the civil service exam, the state denied him the job. With the help of civil rights attorney Carl Maxey, he sued the state, won and was employed as a state social worker.

• Lydia Sims’ political activism began in the 1960s in the Spokane Black Student NAACP. As a student at EWU, she participated in a successful movement to desegregate Cheney public schools. In 1975, she became Spokane’s affirmative action specialist and was later appointed the city’s bureau of Civil Rights. She was the first African-American department manager in the city’s history. She helped other African Americans, women and marginalized people find jobs.

She was elected in 1977 the first African-American woman president of the 113-member NAACP Spokane and established its annual job fair in 1978.

The Fig Tree online has many stories on the NAACP Spokane. While a Google search of Spokane NAACP presidents draws nearly 10 pages about media coverage of former NAACP president Rachel Dolezel, a white woman who represented herself as black, a search through The Fig Tree of history, business, arts is a source of many NAACP Spokane leaders, profiles on past presidents and reports on actions over 35 years.

Jim Sims and Happy Watkins were among those on the Spokane Christian Coalition Board when it voted to establish The Fig Tree.

Spokane NAACP and Fig Tree collaborate on The Eastern Washington Legislative Conference.

For information, visit www.thefigtree.org.

If you would like to contact the NAACP, call 209-730-9850 or devonwilsonuky@gmail.com.

NAACP Spokane may be small, but it’s a ‘mighty community of color’

James Wilburn, NAACP Spokane president from 2013 to 2016, and consultant/trainer with Wilburn Consulting, have a brief history: In 1619 a cargo ship brought to Virginia 20 “scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians” who were off loaded. They and their descend-
Celebration of 140th is time for Spokane’s oldest church to look to future

As Spokane’s oldest church, Westminster Congregational UCC, celebrates its 140th anniversary, at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 26. Its celebration is lifting up not only its history but also its present and future.

Westminster has invited Spokane’s Mayor and City Council members, other congregations, colleagues in town, as well as members of the Pacific NW UCC Conference to join in the celebration. Former and current choir members will sing music commissioned for the event. There will also be an exhibition of local artists with work on “How our Spiritual Journeys Inform Our Art.”

When it was chartered as First Congregational Church on May 22, 1879, in the home of Henry and Lucy Cowley, it was the first church in Spokane. It changed its name both in 1893 when it merged with an early Westminster Presbyterian Church and in 1961 when it voted to become part of the United Church of Christ.

The Cowleys were missionary families from New York State, serving among the Nez Percé Indians in Lapwai. They moved to Spokane in 1874 to work with the Spokane Indians and set up a school for Indian and settler children. Two members of the Spokane Tribe were among the first members.

The church first met in the school and then built a church at the corner of Sprague and Bernard in 1899. From 1890 to 1893, they built the gray stone structure on the present site at the corner of 4th and Washington.

One of seven plaques set in the pavement at Inspiration Point in Riverfront Park in 1974 to commemorate local Christian pioneers records that this was the first church organized in Spokane.

Other early congregations in Spokane include Central United Methodist, November 1879; Our Lady of Loreto, 1881; First Presbyterian, 1883; Salem, Emmanuel and Our Savior Lutheran churches, 1888; Holy Trinity and St. David’s Episcopal, 1890, Grace (formerly North Side) Baptist, 1890.

From 1920 to 1946, the church grew to 2,000 members. They built the Cowley Memorial Youth Building on Fourth and Bernard in 1958 to accommodate programs for the “baby boom” generation.

As the number of children and youth declined, the building housed the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, Pacific Northwest UCC Conference offices, the Spokane Guilds’ School, Emmanuel Metropolitan Community Church, a food bank, a clothing bank and Discovery School. It was sold in 2005 and has been torn down.

In 1963, Westminster voted to join the United Church of Christ denomination, a merger of the Congregational Christian, and Evangelical and Reformed denominations nationally. About 500 members voted “no.” Some of them formed Plymouth Congregational Church in Spokane.

The church’s past, present and future show its commitment to be involved with the community and world.

“As a downtown church, we are committed to the city,” said Andrea (Andy) CastroLang, who has been pastor since 2002. “In recent years we researched leaving that corner, including looking at a site on the east end of Spokane Valley, but the congregation voted to stay downtown.

“A downtown church is who we are in our outreach, mission and ministry,” she said. “It’s our identity. While some traditional, mainline Protestant churches have left downtown, we are letting the city know we are here. We’re a progressive church that ministers ecumenically at the city’s core. We are activist both in terms of doing charity and advocating systemic change.”

It is not only LGBTQ inclusive, but also involves people of all ages who seek an inclusive church. It recently welcomed eight new members.

“With UCC churches scattered on the West Coast, we work ecumenically and interfaith with other congregations, organizations and people,” said Andy. It helped found the Mid-City Concerns Meals on Wheels and recruited volunteers for many years.

With the Spokane Alliance, it engages in community organizing with education institutions, unions and other faith groups.

Each month, members cook meals when the Spokane Friends Church hosts homeless families in its building through the Family Promise Bridges program.

Members support homeless women at Hope House and homeless youth through Crosswalk, two programs of Volunteers of America of the Inland Northwest. Its annual Jam for Bread concert has raised funds for Crosswalk.

Recently the church opened as a neighbor to people living in an apartment building next door after a fire. The Red Cross worked in the church to find housing for people.

It also opened this winter as a warming shelter for about 20 homeless young adult men and women each night through April in conjunction with the City of Spokane.

It helps organize the annual community Tree of Sharing at three malls to provide gifts to about 8,000 needy people.

For years, women met regularly with sewing machines and knitting needles to make layettes for babies.

Many members have been among those in the community involved with editing, mailing, delivering and producing the 35-year-old The Fig Tree ecumenical/interfaith newspaper.

Westminster members carry a banner every year in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day March, the Women’s March, the Pride Parade and other marches for social justice and human rights.

The church also partners with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane in a sister church relationship in Felsotakos, Romania, and is hosting the new pastor and his wife soon.

Recently five members joined 20 others from the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Northwest Region Disciples for a Peace Mission and Pilgrimage to Puerto Rico to help people there with rebuilding after Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.

While the church has the budget challenges with upkeep on a large building, Andy said that the dedicated, passionate, but small congregation is using legacy funding for ministry.

Westminster, which has a pipe organ and a strong music program, rents space to the Spokane Children’s Choir, Spokane Youth Symphony and others.

For information, call 624-3366 or visit westminsterucc.org.

Andy CastroLang circulates in congregation before worship.

Church members carry its banner in marches for social justice.

Church’s Mardi Gras gathers items for Transitions and Hope House.
Joan Neary finds fulfillment in caring for mothers and children. (Photo by Kaye Hult)

Joan Neary finds fulfillment in caring for mothers and children. (Photo by Kaye Hult)
Jean Kindem works with Lynn Kimball on program evaluation.

Six years ago, she began volunteering as one of 35 serving on the council. Since January the council has had 17 focus groups listening in the five counties ALTCEW serves—Spokane, Whitman, Stevens, Ferry and Pend Oreille—to discover issues for different populations, from individuals with memory loss to older LGBT adults.

“We need more volunteers to be the eyes and ears to evaluate ALTCEW services and contractors,” said Jean, who recently gave a recruiting presentation at her church, Central Lutheran in Spokane. She said it was a natural place for her to reach out, because it had offered her support during the caregiving she has done.

The Planning and Management Council meets 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., last Fridays, 10 months a year to help ALTCEW plan and evaluate its programs. Completing two three-year terms, she is starting a term as the Spokane Valley representative.

From volunteering and caregiving, Jean is aware of issues:

• Service providers need to have someone answer the phone, not an answering machine, because someone may be making a first call for help.
• Everyone is experiencing or will experience issues with elderly parents, spouses or children with disabilities.
• With the tight housing market, more elderly people are struggling with the lack of affordable housing.
• We need to identify for ALTCEW what services are working and what are not working,” said Jean. “If a service is not being used, we can advertise its availability or move funds to other areas where the Planning and Management Council sees needs.”

The Planning and Management Council was set up in 1978 to assist the agency in making sure its services met needs of older adults. Jean discussed the work of several committees.

The Advocacy Committee advocates for older adults in the state legislature as it develops its budget and bills. It also tracks federal bills and informs constituents, who then can make phone calls and write letters.

Currently, there is need for advocacy related to the lack of housing access, safety and affordability for people on a fixed income, she said.

“If a landlord raises the rent, older people on social security and retirement incomes often cannot find another place to pay for the increase,” said Lynn.

“As Spokane has blossomed,” Jean said, “there is not enough housing.”

Both told of limited opportuni- ties for housing for elderly people.

“There is a limited amount of housing available at a rate people on social security and retirement incomes can afford,” Jean said. Lynn finds much emphasis on and advocacy for people who are homeless, but not for housing for older adults.

“As people develop affordable housing, we will be partners,” Lynn said, noting participation in Spokane’s Consolidated Plan for Housing.

Jean said ALTCEW needs to be proactive on housing so funds go to help older adults find affordable living, as well as homelessness.

“Seniors should not need to be homeless to find housing,” said Lynn.

“Housing insecurity is a threat,” she said. “For older adults, homelessness may be disguised as living with a son, daughter or other family member.”

A second committee works on planning, which includes planning for the increase in dementia, with the need for a system of care from diagnosis, to early and medium-state treatment, to support for families, and to address behaviors, violence and mental health.

Jean said a person on Medicaid has mental health treatment, but when they transition to Medicare, they may lose mental health services.

“There are always gaps,” she said, “so the council helps identify issues and alert us to resources. As there are new programs and services, we may partner with new agencies.”

Jean said partnerships may include working with insurance companies.

“Many people can be cared for in their homes,” Lynn said. “If they are stabilized in the community, we don’t need to talk of facilities and beds counts.”

Jean wants to help keep people in their own homes rather than building facilities that institutionalize people.

Lynn spoke of the need to support families who give home care, but having facilities when people need more care.

A third committee addresses quality assurance, especially for 51 percent of services ALTCEW contracts to other agencies. It monitors how they spend the money and builds relationships with different organizations.

“Our volunteer council can dive deeply into issues,” Jean said. “We have time to meet with people and evaluate services.”

“Volunteers don’t need to be experts, just be interested in the services that are being provided,” she said.

For information, call 458-2509, email kindemj2@gmail.com or visit altcew.org.
The Earth Day Vigil is a wake-up call to care for and heal Planet Earth

Gary Stokes - general manager KSPS

We know the purpose and power of The Fig Tree. 35 years of stories of faith in action. As one who knows a few homeless people, the power of storytelling, other than KSPS, few do it better than The Fig Tree. For 35 years, Mary and her team have been telling the stories of people who let their faith guide them in ways that are needed. It is faith that strengthens our community.

Scott Cooper - director of Parish Social Ministries at Catholic Charities

Tell me your story and I will tell you mine. My family story has its roots in slavery and oppression. The decision to tell the story of how I came to church is also about our faith journeys. How did we arrive at the point we are at today? What if the 35 years never happened? What if Mary had never started the paper. We forget the power of stories. What if the 35 years never happened? Think of all the stories that would not have had attention. What if Mary had never started the paper. The Fig Tree has for years brought the international story home. We have a responsibility to tell stories of people living out their faith values, to look at how we are treated, the experiences people enjoy, explore and protect the planet—young and old, poor and rich, all for everyone to work together to heal the earth. Environment is a part of the national church’s Creation Care Ministry in responsible ways that protect the environment in the U.S.’s largest smelter area. The Silver Valley Resource Center reminds us we are at the epicenter of the nation’s largest Superfund site and are called to be stewards of the earth. We have three decades, fighting for quality of life for the children.

Phyllis Kardos said that at 77 she stepped out of retirement for her children, grandchildren and 36 great grandchildren. The paper has been proposed to be the largest silicon smelter in North America in her back yard at Newport. For 22 years in Alaska, she saw areas that were clean and pristine, but now the areas are being over-fished and over-hunted. We need to fight corporations, governments and that do not protect the environment, she said.

Hana Reinhardt, a leader with the Spokane Youth Strike for Climate, proposed to be the largest silicon smelter in North America in her back yard at Newport. For 22 years in Alaska, she saw areas that were clean and pristine, but to take care of for future generations. My family story has its roots in slavery and oppression. The decision to tell the story of how I came to church is also about our faith journeys. How did we arrive at the point we are at today? What if the 35 years never happened? Think of all the stories that would not have had attention. What if Mary had never started the paper. The Fig Tree has for years brought the international story home. We have a responsibility to tell stories of people living out their faith values, to look at how we are treated, the experiences people enjoy, explore and protect the planet—young and old, poor and rich, all for everyone to work together to heal the earth. Environment is a part of the national church’s Creation Care Ministry in responsible ways that protect the environment in the U.S.’s largest smelter area. The Silver Valley Resource Center reminds us we are at the epicenter of the nation’s largest Superfund site and are called to be stewards of the earth. We have three decades, fighting for quality of life for the children.

Mary Stamp - Editor

I hope we can bridge the gap with young people, so we can have young readers the age of my kids who have come with my father to the benefit breakfast for years. I hope this paper will move forward with that generation.

Denise Atwood, co-owner of Conscious Connections Foundation

I have a fair trade business called Ganesha Himal and a nonprofit organization, Conscious Connections Foundation, which promotes youth education. The Fig Tree has for years brought the international story home. We have a responsibility to tell stories of people living out their faith values, to look at how we are treated, the experiences people enjoy, explore and protect the planet—young and old, poor and rich, all for everyone to work together to heal the earth. Environment is a part of the national church’s Creation Care Ministry in responsible ways that protect the environment in the U.S.’s largest smelter area. The Silver Valley Resource Center reminds us we are at the epicenter of the nation’s largest Superfund site and are called to be stewards of the earth. We have three decades, fighting for quality of life for the children.
May 1 • May Day March, Spokane Immigrant Rights Coalition, Riverfront Park, 4 to 6:30 p.m.

May 2 • Wild & Scenic Film Festival, screening of films on environmental issues to benefit Spokane Riverkeeper, Garfield Theatre, 924 W Garfield, 6 p.m. doors open, 7 p.m. films, 537-1005, spokaneriverkeeper.org/calendar

May 2, 16, 23, 30 • Various Voices Writing Group, South Central, 1214 W. Summit, 7:30-9:29

May 3-5 • Alternatives to Violence Workshop, Spokane Friends Church, 1017 W. Daile, Friday to 6 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday 12:30 to 6:30 p.m., spafefriends@gmail.com, 327-7852

May 4 • Children’s Day Celebration, Shadle Library, 10:30 a.m.

May 4 • Cort Esch’s Farewell Concert, “Classics 10,” with Nekobin Zikrocin, percussionist, Martin Waldson Theater at The Fox, 1007 W. Sprague, 624-1000 or TicketsWest.com

May 5 • Lilla’s Bloomberg Run, downtown Spokane, 9 a.m., hamlondograce.com

May 5 • “Run For Her Life,” Conscious Connection Foundation teams raise funds to give the Power of 5 to educate Nepal girls, 499-3320, consciousconnectionfoundation.org

May 7 • Advocacy in Asian American Pacific Islander Communities, Hargreaves 201, EWU, online, tickets processing required

May 7 • High Tea for Human Rights, Human Rights Education Institute Benefit, Hagadone Event Center, Courer of Alene, 1 p.m., hri.org

May 7 • Organ Academy Student Recital, Central Lutheran Church, 512 S. Bernard St., 3 p.m.

May 8 • A Chinese American’s Perspective on Running Home, South Hill Library, 6:30 p.m.

May 7-8 • Unity in the Community Committee, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Alien Pl., 6:30 to 9 p.m., muunity.org

May 7 • Census 2020 Workshop, Marcusar & Restaurant, 11420 E. Sprague, 6 p.m.

May 7-14 • SFFC International Film Festival, Garfield Theatre, 924 W. Garavel, 7 to 7 p.m., spokanefilmcenter.org

May 8 • Day of Reflection, “Nirvik of Nazareth: Homemaker, Disciple, Apostle,” First United Methodist Church, 4995 N. Ben Burr Rd., 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., ihrc.net

May 8 • :-) Rising Up Strong: A Culture of Love and Belonging, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, Spokane Riverkeeper, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 6 to 8 p.m., ihrc.net

May 8 • Men’s Cancer Survivor Retreat, Central United Methodist Church, 10200 E. Sprague, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., ihrc.net

May 8 • Salute to Service Resource Fair, Riverpark Square, 1 to 3 p.m., SaluteToServiceFair.civicaction.org

May 9 • Chinese Inclusion in Telling Western Stories, South Hill Library, 3:30 p.m.

May 9 • Junior Lilac Parade, Downtown Spokane, 10:30 a.m., spokane lilacfestival.org

May 9 • Family Fun Fair Spokane, Riverfront Park, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and River Park Square Mall, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., themodalystique.com

May 9 • “Aretta Franklin: Amazing Grace,” The Lens Movie Screening/Benefit, Magic Lantern Theatre, 25 W. Main, 6 to 8:30 p.m., 735-9164

May 9 • Soul Food, Spokanefaregrounds.org

May 10 • Women’s Day Champagne Brunch and Fundraiser, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net

May 12 • “Mother’s Day Champaign Brunch and Fundraiser, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 448-1224, ihrc.net

May 13 • Caritas Health and Resource Fair, 1612 W. Daile, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 306-2249, caromoments@japaneseconsulate.com

May 14 • Japanese Cultural Activities, Shadle Library, 10:30 a.m.

May 15 • Spokane Symphony Choral Concert, Westminster UCC, 411 S. Washington, 4 p.m.

May 15 • Spokane Area Youth and Family Services Benefit Luncheon: “A Welcoming Table,” Hemmingson Center, 725 E. Deam, noon to 1:30 p.m.

May 16 • “The Struggle Is Real: Challenges Faced by African American Athletes,” EWU’s Evana Women’s Sports Conference, South Hill Library, 6:30 p.m.

May 16-17 • MOWTOWN Downtown 2019, Barrister Winery, 1213 W. Railrad Ave., 6:30 to 10 p.m., www. mowtownspokane.org

May 17-19 • Women’s Cancer Survivor Retreat, Patricia Novak, CSP, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, IHRC, 6910 S. Ben Burr Rd., 7 p.m. Friday to 1 p.m. Sunday, 241-3180, provak.info@gmail.com

May 18 • Salute to Service Resource Fair, Riverpark Square, 1 to 3 p.m., salutetoservicefair.civicaction.org

May 19 • A Chinese American’s Perspective on Running Home, South Hill Library, 6:30 p.m.

May 20 • NAACP Spokane General Membership Meeting, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m., spokanenaac@gmail.com

May 21 • Women Helping Women Benefit Luncheon, Spokane Convention Center, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., shiftspokane.org

May 22 • “Office for Justice,” Center for Justice Fundraiser Breakfast, Gonzaga’s Hemmingson Center, 7:30 to 8:55 a.m., 521-5521, tatashia@hemmingsoncenter.org

May 23 • Annual KIDQ4WorkSource Job Fair, Spokane Convention Center, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

May 31-June 1 • Mega Sale & Barbecue, Southside Community Center, 3151 E. 27th, 530-0833

June 1-3 • 30th Annual Festival of the Arts, Downtown Spokane in Brown’s Addition, times at northeastmuseum.org, 530-0833


June 4 • Silent Day of Prayer on Following Jesus, “Discipleship in the Bible and in Life,” Fr. C. Hightower, SJ, IHRC, 448-1224, ihrc.net

June 5 • The Fig Tree Tailing and Delivery, St. Mark’s S. Lutheran, 24th & Grand St. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 530-1813

June 6 • The Fig Tree Annual Meeting, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 1015 S. Richard Alien Pl., noon to 3 p.m., 530-1813

For more information and to schedule an appointment, call: 624-5228 or visit us at 1008 W. 6th Ave. 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Confidential, discreet services. Public funding available through Spokane County Regional Behavioral Health Organization.
Hadda Estrada understands experiences of international students

By Catherine Ferguson, SNJM

In February, Hadda Estrada left for Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Lebanon to recruit international students for the Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS).

As dean for global education and strategic partnerships at the CCS since 2016, she previously has traveled in China, Mexico, Colombia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain and Lebanon to interest students in studying in Spokane.

"Speaking French, Berber, Arabic, Italian, English, Latin and Spanish fluently eases her communication to recruit international students."

So does her own experience coming to the United States as an international student.

"Education is the most powerful weapon. You can use it to change the world," she said.

Motivated by that belief, she enjoys not only recruiting international students and supporting their cultural and academic transitions, but also helping the community colleges integrate the global into their programs.

She is also on the Mayor’s Advisory Committee for Multicultural Affairs.

"The campus and the Spokane community have worked together to make Spokane ‘the city of choice’ for international students," Hadda said.

Much of what she does in her current position arose from a previous position at Spokane Falls Community College, where she helped to launch its Gateway to College program.

"At first, we had no structure. We struggled to build on diversity and enhance equity among students. In the program, students earned their high school diplomas and financial aid at the same time," she said. "We worked with students between the ages of 16 and 20 who had left high school or were struggling to finish school."

Hadda affirms that helping students on the margins learn to succeed depends more than anything on a human connection.

"We need to understand the students’ living situations to know how to support them and encourage them to pursue their college education."

In the process, she learned she has a gift in communicating with students who felt they didn’t have a chance. She taught them to develop persistence and resilience to figure things out and to believe they could get better.

"I lived similar experiences and could draw parallels on what it meant not to belong in certain spaces," she said. "Students connected with me and believed if I made it so could they."

At both Spokane Falls Community College with students on the margin and with international students, Hadda delivers a similar message to students:

"I see you. I hear you. I understand you. Here is a welcoming space. You don’t have to change," she said.

How did Hadda gain these skills and this wisdom?

Each step in her journey seemed to develop a set of skills leading her to Spokane and her present position.

Hadda comes from a family of immigrants. Her father lived in the Middle Atlas Region of Morocco, speaking Berber, a language that didn’t gain official status until 2011. From him, she learned a Muslim worldview and to speak Berber and Arabic.

Her mother’s family emigrated from Italy to North Africa after World War II. From her, she learned a Christian worldview and Italian.

Her parents met in the Middle East region, but because of conflict left Morocco in the 1970s for France and started over from scratch.

Hadda was born and grew up in Paris. Even as a child, she spoke several languages, one of them Berber.

"If you talk to people in a language they understand, that goes to the head. If you talk in their language, that goes to the heart," she quotes a proverb from Nelson Mandela to explain how her language competency gave her the compassion that makes her effective.

"In our household, we spoke easily in multiple languages, moving from one to the other. So when I went to school, I sometimes didn’t even know what language I was speaking. I just spoke the way we did at home. When someone said they didn’t understand what I had just said, I wasn’t aware that I hadn’t been speaking French."

Growing up in such diversity—multiple cultures, multiple languages—Hadda sometimes experienced the trauma of not knowing where she fit in society, where she belonged.

When she was young, Hadda shared her feelings about this with her mother who told her, “With languages and a pet, you will conquer the world.”

She said South African comedian Trevor Noah expressed the same idea.

“Language brings with it an identity and a culture, or at least the perception of it. A shared language says, ‘We’re the same.’ A language barrier says, ‘We’re different.’ My color didn’t change, but I could change your perception of my color. If you spoke Zulu, I replied in Zulu. If you spoke to me in Tswana, I replied in Tswana. Maybe I didn’t look like you, but if I spoke like you, I was like you.”

She has quoted Brené Brown, a professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, on the power of vulnerability: “Courage gives us a voice and compassion gives us an ear. Without both, there is no empathy, no connection.”

Hadda came to the U.S. to pursue a master’s degree in business at a historic time, arriving in 2001 from the University of Paris-Est just after 9/11.

She came to the University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM) because her school had an exchange program with it. She did not know English, so she spent many hours at the Bibliothèque Georges Pompidou in Paris, learning English well enough to pass the TOEF (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and GMAT exams, ensuring her acceptance at ULM.

Until she arrived, Hadda didn’t realize how many variations English had. In her first days in Louisiana, she discovered people in Louisiana spoke a completely different English.

After consulting with her advisor, she took six months off to learn Louisiana English and connect with the people.

After completing her degree, a master’s in mass communication, she sold her car, turned in her keys and prepared to return home.

However, because of her success in her studies and as a graduate assistant, the university called to offer her a job and to sponsor her to stay in the U.S.

Just after 9/11, she saw fights in the cafeteria between international students and U.S. students over their world views. She felt ULM was not prepared to support diverse students.

"I was grateful for the experience, but I soon realized that no matter where I was, I was competing for an education and against stereotypes. It was a revealing moment for me,” Hadda said.

Nonetheless, her mother persuaded her to stay and take advantage of the opportunity. Eventually, she married Jaime Estrada, also a graduate student. After they had their first child, Noah, their first priority was raising him.

They decided they needed to move and decided they wanted to go to a mid-sized city with good educational opportunities, and access to nature and outdoor activities like hiking, biking and skiing, a place where they could both pursue their careers. Spokane fit the profile.

Soon after they moved here in 2010, they had their second child, Kamil. Before moving, they decided that the person who didn’t have a job would stay home at least a year and learn about the new environment. Jaime secured a job in blood banking, so Hadda set about learning about Spokane and its people.

After several years, Hadda began working as a completion coach and teaching communication studies at Spokane Falls Community College.

In her class on intercultural communications, U.S. students came to realize they too, had a culture. At first, they had difficulty responding to questions about elements of the U.S. culture: What are typical foods? When someone is invited to a party at 8 p.m., when should they arrive to be “on time”? To what does the U.S. culture give more value: the family or the individual?

"Does the fish know of water in which it swims all its life?” Hadda quoted to explain the lack of awareness.

For information, call 724-1645 or email hadda.estrada@ccs.spokane.edu.

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