Compassion helps reduce suffering

By Lillian Piet

Setting out with the intention of a career in finance, Gloria Chien had no idea that becoming a professor who researches and teaches about Buddhism and meditation would be the path she would take, but it is the one she has pursued.

Taking this path has allowed her to follow her passion.

Gloria, who began teaching at Gonzaga University in 2017, grew up in Taiwan and earned a bachelor’s degree in finance in 2003 from the National Central University in Taiwan. She received a covered job offer as a financial analyst, but she turned it down so she could pursue a career in her new-found passion in Buddhism.

“I wanted to follow my heart. There was a voice inside me saying a financial career is not right for me,” she said.

In college, Gloria attended a Buddhist meditation group, where she first started learning about Buddhism and Buddhist meditation, specifically Thai Buddhist Mahaviha meditation.

To pursue a career in Buddhism, she went to a monastery for three years where she studied and practiced the Chinese Buddhist monastic life style.

In 2007, Gloria earned a master’s degree in Tibetan Buddhism at the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan.

The idea of being a professor had first piqued Gloria’s interest while she was in Taiwan pursuing her master’s degree at Dharma Drum Mountain, because of her desire to help reduce people’s suffering by facilitating their self-awareness through an academic environment.

She explained that her approach to Buddhism is different from how the general public views it in Taiwan because she emphasizes the psychological approach to Buddhism.

Gloria was especially touched by the Buddhist idea of universal compassion to alleviate sentient beings’ suffering, she said.

Dharma Drum Mountain has a relationship with the University of Virginia’s religious studies department, where Gloria earned a master’s degree in religious studies in 2009 and then a doctoral degree in 2015.

Her dissertation was on “The Life and Collected Works of Tibetan Lojong Master Tokmé Zangpo (1295–1369).”

Continued on page 5

Fair traders with Guatemalan ties seek to address suffering of artisans

By Mary Stamp

Local fair traders with Guatemalan ties have been concerned about the weavers, artisans, artists, craftsmen and coffee growers who have suffered financially because lockdowns and closed borders during COVID reduced tourism, shipping and access to new materials.

COVID also reduced the number of fair trade sales events where they could sell the products. They have inventory and seek to sell items now, so they can buy more from their Guatemalan partners to provide them income.

Fair traders Maria Cuc and Felipe Gonzales of Mundo Maya Enterprises, Debbie DuPey of Comoan Scarves, and Sandi and Brian Thompson-Royer of ReSilent Threads will partner with Kizuri for a Guatemalan Holiday Market from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 20, at the Community Building, 15 W. Main.

They will require masks, will be distancing and using plastic shields to offer an opportunity for people to purchase artisan crafts and support Guatemalan neighbors during the pandemic.

Each told about the struggles of people who create their products. In addition, with the vaccination rate in Guatemala being just 28 percent, many have been sick or died because multiple generations of a family live in one house, said Sandi.

They have produced less and been unable to sell what they have, so they are struggling, but have no government assistance. During COVID, the fair traders raised funds to send, but the producers prefer to sell their products.

Each fair trader offered more details on the situation and shared background on their fair trade enterprises and partners.

Felipe and Maria of Mundo Maya Enterprises, which includes Maya Coffee and Maya Color, say many farmers, artisans and weavers have had COVID and are producing less organic coffee, hand-made folk art, weaving, music instruments, wood carvings and crafts.

Felipe started the business as Mountflower Enterprises in the 1980s in San Antonio Agua.

In 2003, they started the Mundo Maya business, which includes Maya Coffee and Maya Color, he said.

Continued on page 4

Fig Tree holds fund drive for new, renewing sponsors

For the second year, The Fig Tree is doing the “Fall Festival of Sharing,” a time from Oct. 21 to Nov. 30 (Giving Tuesday) to invite support from new and renewing sponsors for The Fig Tree monthly newspaper and its annual Resource Directory.

“It’s basically our fall sponsorship appeal. We sent out a letter to renewing and potential sponsors in early October and we are making appeals online, by email and by phone as a special effort to draw support from regular readers,” said Marijke Fakasieki, development and editorial associate.

“Through quotes of speakers for the 2021 benefit and video clips from those featured in the promotional benefit video, we remind people daily of our mission of sharing stories of people who make a difference, connecting people with resources they need, offering reflection, understanding and dialogue, and building respect and solidarity among diverse people,” she said.

In addition to a The Fig Tree Facebook fundraiser, anyone may set up Facebook fundraisers to raise funds reach the budget goal for sponsorships. The 2021 goal is $15,000, of which $10,125 was in by Oct. 28, including $2,625 given for the fall goal of $7,500—nine new sponsors.

“Our 2021 budget includes the expanded role of our development associate, adding editorial responsibilities. Marijke has helped bring in new advertising, resulting in the last two issues being 16 pages and bringing additional stories of people who make a difference. She continues to help build partnerships for the directory, develop relationships with funders and increase the number of readers,” said Mary Stamp, editor.

“We are also beginning a strategic planning process to look at our vision for the future, expand participation and review policies.”

For information, call 535-1813, mary@thefigtree.org or visit thefigtree.org/donate.html.
PLANS FOR 2022 CONFERENCE

The Community Building, which houses many of this area’s key nonprofits, is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. For that celebration, Latah Bakes has published One Block Revolution: 20 Years of Building Community and honor the diverse and passionate voices of changemakers who have dedicated their time and talents to build community on Main St. in downtown Spokane. This anthology, “provides inspiration and practical guidance for anyone interested in positive changes in Spokane,” said Katy Kime, Community Building Foundation director.

The Community Building is celebrating the book launch at 5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 3, with an open house. The Community Building will be open for people to explore business and spaces where people gather to eat, drink, enjoy art, music, theatre and make positive changes in Spokane, Katy said.

To attend, contact dana@community-building.org.

Fall Folk Festival 2021 will be virtual

The 2021 Virtual Spokane Folk Festival, Spokane’s 26th annual celebration of traditional music, dance, and the arts to Spokane and the surrounding area.

The live Fall Folk Festival was canceled because of COVID concerns. The event will kick off with Spokane Public Radio’s two-hour festival program from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 13, featuring new and established festival performers and hosted by SPR’s music director Verne募集 for river

Our goal is to protect the river, pandemic or not. We promote policy to defend clean water and the arts. We educate youth, collaborate to collect scientific data, pick up litter, and protect our community, all to preserve a healthy place to live.

For information, contact 475-1228 or visit spokanefolkfestival.org.

Noah Kobo’s obsession with growth is “breaking up the relationship between human beings, creation and animals” and has contributed to the exploitation of African women.

The Hartford-Baptist Faith Community is a multiracial, religious research initiative that tracks trends in U.S. religion, has recently released in 2020 survey of 12,775 congregations in 80 denominations and religious groups.

The report, “20 Years of Congregational Change” captures pre- and early pandemic pictures of faith communities, affirms trends in recent decades and highlights some changes:

- Pre-pandemic, many congregations were small and getting smaller, while the largest were gaining attendees.
- Post-pandemic declines in attendance, a third of congregations are growing and spiritually vital.
- The Arsensings offers some advantages, but each size grouping has strengths.
- Congregations continue to witness in racial composition.
- Increased use of technology was seen even pre-pandemic.
- The rate of congrgations with remained steady.

Thanksgiving Meals

COVID restrictions vary at each location.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Feed Medical Lake</td>
<td>St. John’s Lutheran, 233 W. Hidalgo Ave.</td>
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<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Southside Community Center</td>
<td>355-0803, RSVP senior, seated</td>
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<td>Nov 9</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Sinto Activity Center</td>
<td>327-2861, senior, sit down</td>
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<td>Southside Community Center</td>
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<td>Fast - Mid City Concerns</td>
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<td>Nov 7</td>
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<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
<td>11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Women and Children’s Free</td>
<td>984-3838, senior, to go</td>
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<td>Nov 21</td>
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Faith Action Network dinner marks 10 year

At its annual dinner, the Faith Action Network (FAN) celebrates online or at watch parties from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 21.

The dinner marks its 10th anniversary, honors co-director Paul Benz as he retires, and looks to FAN’s future.

Jim Castro-Lang joined the FAN Governing Board five years ago with a dream for FAN to be rooted in Eastern Washington and not just be supported in Western Washington.

“I wanted FAN to be known as having a strong base here,” he said.

FAN’s Annual Dinner raised a third of its budget in Western Washington. In 2018, Jim helped launch a simultaneous Spokane FAN Dinner at the Glover Mansion.

NCC elects officers, updates NRSV Bible

In a virtual meeting Oct. 13, the National Council of Churches (NCC) elected all women officers for the first time in its 71-year history and voted to approve the Updated Edition of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSVue).

Officers who are beginning two-year terms are the chair, Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton, leader of the Fifth Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; vice chair, Elizabeth Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; secretary, Kimberly Gordon Brooks, first vice president of the 3rd District Lay Organization, African Methodist Episcopal Church, and treasurer, Teresa Hord Owens, general minister and president, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

All but Eaton are women of color.

“God’s creation in many ways. This commitment is a call for all of us to show God’s love to all, promote unity in Christ Jesus and resist current cultural trends of divisiveness.”

After four-years of research, the NRSVue brings the NCC’s widely used 1989 NRSV translation in line with biblical scholarship.

Changes in the NRSVue text were made “on the basis of accuracy, clarity, euphony and current English usage,” the NCC said, announcing the project with a Facebook post, its subsidiary.

In a statement, the Rev. Jim Winkler, NCC president and general secretary, called the new “an monumental achieve ment.”

It is expected to be released about May 1, 2022. Friendship Press will make an E-Bible of it available on its Word@Hand app starting Nov. 19.

The 38 member denominations of the NCC comprise some 35 million Christians in Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican, evangelical and historic Black denominations and “peace churches.”

For information, visit nccusa.org.

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- connecting people with the resources they need
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- inspiring respect/solidarity among diverse people

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Seasonal Assistance Program

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Fair traders concerned about plight of artisans, growers in Guatemala

Debbie Dupey believes one person can make lasting changes in lives

Debbie Dupey has sold scarves of indigenous weavers from the northwest since 2011. Five years ago, she formed the nonprofit, Amigas de Corazon, which includes Corazon Scars as a program, but her ties with Guatemala involve more than fabric.

Fifteen years ago, she and Sandi Thompson-Royer went there to do Women Walking Together domestic violence training. For nearly 25 years, Debbie did domestic violence and sexual assault prevention in the Spokane area, including with Spokane Domestic Violence Consortium and Lummi Community Services Northwest. She and Sandi made short trips to Central America to train social workers and women.

Debbie earned a bachelor’s in education and creative writing in 1986 from Eastern Washington University, a teaching certificate in 1990 and a master’s in organizational leadership at Gonzaga. For five years, she alternated living six months in the U.S. and six months in Guatemala, and began bringing scarves to sell to support education for weavers and their children.

For six years with Corazon Journey, she took groups to Guatemala to explore, learn and serve. Serving includes listening to the weavers’ stories to understand the culture and problems indigenous women face. U.S. women hear trauma stories of Guatemalan women, who were silent until they were in their 40s.

It also includes nurses doing blood pressure screenings and eye exams. Others read to children.

In one generation, weavers have earned money to educate their children, some of whom are now lawyers, teachers and environmental engineers.

“In workshops, we build on women’s strengths, teaching them how to support their children’s learning and helping them heal from past trauma through art and other creative processes,” she said.

In June, Debbie went to Guatemala with Amigas de Corazon board member Annie McKinlay, bringing food, children’s games and self-care kits. Early in the pandemic, they sent money to provide food.

“We want to buy products, because the weavers want to support themselves, not have charity,” she said.

“One person or just a few people can make lasting changes when they build relationships and allow people to follow their dreams,” Debbie said. “All some need is support to believe in themselves, so they can thrive. It has been powerful to be part of everyone’s lives. If people in Central America can thrive in their communities, they will cross the border to find work.”

“We are connected,” Debbie said. “Guatemalans are our neighbors. U.S. intervention set the stage for indigenous people’s suffering,” she said, noting that people are rising, protesting, fighting their rights and following their dreams.

For information, call 714-8928 or visit amigasdecorazon.com.

Guatemalan ties: Amigos de Corazon

Debbie Dupey has sold scarves of indigenous weavers for high school and studies at Whitworth University, is going with them. She earned a master’s in public health last year at the University of Washington in Seattle and studied in Native American studies focusing on Maya health systems and identity in Davis with her husband.

Being in public health, she encouraged family to be vaccinated.

“This resilience is beautiful,” she said. “Their resilience is beautiful.”

“Go there opened me to immerse myself in something globally,” she said. “We can read what is happening far off, but to hear women’s stories, look in their eyes and see how politics affect them has had impact on me.”

“People connecting is important for all of us to survive,” she said. “All some need is support to believe in themselves, so they can thrive.” It has been powerful to be part of everyone’s lives. If people in Central America can thrive in their communities, they will cross the border to find work. “We are connected,” Debbie said. “Guatemalans are our neighbors. U.S. intervention set the stage for indigenous people’s suffering,” she said, noting that people are rising, protesting, fighting their rights and following their dreams.

For information, call 714-8928 or visit amigasdecorazon.com.
**Guatemala Ties - Resilient Threads**

**Involvement as mission co-workers leads to Resilient Threads**

For 20 years, Sandi Thompson-Royer has marketed crafts and textiles from Guatemalans she has come to love through years of doing domestic violence training with Debbie Duper, and spending five years in Guatemala with her husband, Brian. They served as mission co-workers with the Presbyterian Church (USA), supported by their congregation, Bethany Presbyterian Church. Sandi, who grew up south of Seattle, earned a bachelor’s degree in women’s studies and fair trade at Evergreen University in 2004. For years, she worked with Spanish-speaking women with the Thurston County Hunger Assistance Program and sexual assault program.

**Sandi and Brian Thompson-Royer at the 2019 Jubilee Market.**

Sandi had a more than 30 year career in domestic violence/sexual assault work, which included county programs, faith communities and the Kalispel Tribe. She and Brian lived in Leavenworth, where she managed Jubilee Global Gifts and gained her passion for fair trade. Brian worked in affordable housing in Spokane and Leavenworth.

Since returning, Sandi and Brian have run Resilient Threads, which sells hand-sewn napkins, hot pads, bibs, placemats, table runners, bags and aprons made by indigenous women in Guatemala. “Guatemalans have hope and faith. They say, ‘Todo bien!’ or ‘All is good.’ In reality, it’s not good. It’s been tough, but they are resilient,” she said.

“Our call as Christians is to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly, to love our neighbors, and support our sisters and brothers who struggle,” Sandi said. “Fair trade is a way to do that in a relationship. For economic dignity and fair wages.”

In October, Sandi received the first shipment from Guatemala since March 2020. Bethany Presbyterian provides a room to store the items. In Guatemala, she said she walked in faith with people who walk every day in faith that God will provide, in contrast with many North Americans who think they don’t need God in their lives because they have “stuff.”

Sandi said Presbyterian mission is about partnership. Co-workers are invited to walk along with the people, working together to create a more just world.

“We seek to be creative in promoting our products and are open to churches, small parties and other possibilities,” Sandi said. For information call 862-9643 or visit resilientthreadsguate-

**Buddhism study can build self-awareness as basis for caring for others**

Continued from page 1

It focused on “Lojong,” a Tibetan Buddhist compassion meditation teaching. That research took her to Nepal, India, China and Tibet.

In Lojong, compassion takes time. The focus is on understanding having a compassionate mindset is key to caring for others.

“Caring for others with a Tibetan peoples’ ethical concern outside of themselves and outside of their own life,” she said.

When working on her research in Lojong on India, she jumped into a summer study abroad group from Emory University.

The head of the program was the pioneer in Cognitively Based Compassion Training (CBCT), which is inspired by Lojong. The program developed at Emory, is based on its founder, Lobang Tenzin Negi, who is from the Geluk tradition of Tibetan Bud-

dhism, which is related to the Dalai Lama, she said.

Lojong takes a step-by-step approach, Gloria said, and Emory’s CBCT borrows some techniques and principles from Lojong to make it accessible to everyone, regardless of religious or spiritual affiliation. Emory’s CBCT class is a 10-week pro-

gram that includes six modules, which cover affective, cognitive and motivational dimensions.

By 2016, Gloria had begun her research and earned CBCT certification.

She explained that each di-

mension of CBCT teaches a different aspect of compassion.

The affective dimension fo-
cuses on having a feeling of warm-heartedness and close-

ness, the cognitive dimension seeks to make a person aware of the suffering of other people, and the motivational dimension is connected to action and the desire to alleviate suffering.

The modules of CBCT also teach about concentration, self-

compassion, recognizing com-

mon humanity, gratitude, deep-

ening one’s understanding and

cultivating a mindset of wanting to help others, she said.

In 2018, she began teaching a CBCT course, “Compassion Meditation and Happiness,” to promote wellbeing amongst Gon-

zaga students. The Office of the Dean at the College of Arts and Sciences funded the course.

Because caring for others is one of Gonzaga’s main goals, she wanted to do a research project on it.

She noticed that although

Gu talked about compassion and caring for others, there was no class to teach step-by-step on how to do so, and so she created the research project that functioned as a non-credit class.

The project was successful, and she created a new class called Buddhist Meditation and Practice, which she has been teaching since 2019.

“Based on the students’ re-

sponses, I feel rewarded,” Gloria said. “They share with me how they have grown and what they discovered about themselves, and how this class benefits their emotional well-being or psycho-

logical well-being because even though it’s called compassion meditation, at the same time it also includes some self-care.”

Currently, Gloria is research-

ing Chinese religions in film, and began teaching a class at Gonzaga on this topic called “Asian Religions in Film.”

In that class, she has students explore how the non-Abrahamic religions of Hinduism, Bud-

dhism, Shinto, Taoism and Con-

fucianism are portrayed in film.

“By focusing on how those Asian religious themes are treat-

ed in each film, we are identify-

ing long-standing Asian reli-

gious teachings in contemporary cinema. We are investigating how the films reflect and critique Asian religious practice and expose Asian cultural values,” Gloria said. “This investigation also shows us how religions continue to play important roles in Asian societies.

Gloria introduces each reli-

gious philosophy and practice so students learn concepts of Asian religions as a way to examine the film. The class cultivates students’ critical viewing, reli-

gious sensitivity and awareness of assumptions on religious traditions.

Beyond the classroom, she has shared about her own faith practice.

“The more I understand Bud-

dhism, the more I can resonate with its ideas about compassion and self-awareness,” Gloria noted.

Her practice is more in line with the Tibetan tradition, the Geluk Buddhist tradition and CBCT, which is not a Bud-

dhist program, but borrows prin-

ciples from Tibetan Buddhism.

We're looking for youth ages 10 to 17 interested in Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) and environmental projects to join a cohort of ‘STEAM in the Garden’

classes in East and West Central neighborhoods For information and registration call or email 509-842-6958 • Iwood@legacylearners.org

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Celebrating our 10th Anniversary, Benz’ years of service & a bright future for FAN!

Sunday, November 21, 2021


Online program begins at 5:30 p.m.
Dancers may embody social justice, express protest, serve others

Suzanne Ostersmith, a tenured professor and director of dance for 21 years at Gonzaga University, is one of the local artists sharing her talents and those of her dance students with national and international artists to bring opera to the region through Inland Northwest Opera (INO) and integrate students into a professional opera.

Twenty-one years ago, Opera Plus! started in Coeur d’Alene. It became Opera Coeur d’Alene in 2009, when it expanded its season to include a production in Spokane in 2016. In 2018, it became Inland Northwest Opera.

Suzanne created a dance major and minor, started a minor in interdisciplinary arts of theatre, dance and visual arts, and helped develop the Myrtle Wood Performing Center that opened in 2019 on the Gonzaga campus.

Recently Northwest Opera hired her to do choreography for four Gonzaga students who joined the Oct. 29 and 31 productions of "She Loves Me" and "Eurydice" at the Fox Theatre.

INO hires artists from around the world, bringing artists from the Seattle Opera, Lincoln Center, The Metropolitan Opera, and Washington National Opera to work with local artists, like Suzanne, to put together the best productions possible. We have a wealth of incredible artists in Spokane and are happy to give people a chance to work with world-renowned artists," said Suzanne, who did choreography for students’ rehearsals. When they rehearsed with the full team, they followed the direction of the opera’s director, Dan Miller.

Before 1998, Suzanne had worked with Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle. She thought when she moved to Spokane that she would focus on raising what she could manage, so she worked with opera, singers, and Gonzaga universities, developing minors and directing two productions each year.

Both programs grew beyond what she could manage, so she left Whitworth to focus at Gonzaga, develop the interdisciplinary arts and dance majors, and the performing arts center.

Everyone has a different reason to dance. For me, it’s a way I connect with myself and others," Suzanne said. "There’s power in a community of dancers together. As a professor and teacher, I seek to communicate what we can do for others, and to teach students about dance in history as social protest and in community building.”

Some in the program dance when they were young, and some have never danced before. Some students have double majors in ENGL or STEMA like physics, biology or psychology.

"Dance is a way to connect with and use one’s body to communicate,” she said. "We balance knowledge of science, politics and dance, she said. "The more we dance, the more we make the world a better place, because dance makes people vulnerable and brings people together rather than dividing them. Dance is a way to serve.”

In 2020, Gonzaga hosted a regional conference of the American College Dance Association on, “Dance and Service.”

“Dance as service involves taking risks,” she said. “The dance is more than performance. It involves light board operators, stage managers, sound board operators, so dancers learn those skills and how they make dance happen.”

"Beyond dance as moving the body, it is both a form of art and form of protest,” she said. Suzanne teaches dance as reflective culture through forms, from ballroom to thumba, which was developed in Cuba as a way to connect lower-class, poor disenfranchised peoples as a means of protest.

“Dance throughout history is a political statement,” she said.

On Saturday, Nov. 20, Spectrum Dance Theatre, a professional company directed by Donald Byrd from Seattle, presents a performance exploring social justice issues, including dance empowering people to work for racial and environmental justice.

It takes complex problems and explores them through dance and a sequence of movements.

“I was raised Presbyterian, a Catholic at university and hold strong humanitarian beliefs, nurtured by feeling spiritually connected to others through the arts in line with Jesuit ideals that involve taking risks,” she said.

In a YouTube video, “What I Have Learned,” Suzanne points out that tools in a dance studio invite risk-taking. Support bars are held lightly and let go when the dancer is ready. Mirrors help dancers reflect on their technique, artistry and journey.

"At Gonzaga, we talk of engaging the whole person, mind, body and spirit,” she said.

Suzanne said when people are dancing they are “curta personae,” taking care of themselves physically and challenging the “physical instrument” they have been given to tell stories and challenge their bodies to go to the next level—“magus,” the Jesuit way of learning more.

Dance students have to trust and commit. As in life, they cannot be afraid to fail. When dancers push themselves, they may fail, but find themselves celebrated by their peers, who recognize that “creating takes risk and learning from the risks” in a supportive setting that teaches them “to be bold—in arts and in life,” she said.

For information, call 509-650-8383 or Lthompson@gssac.org • www.gssac.org

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In its 50th year, Second Harvest opens new warehouse to feed children

During October, as Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest marks its 50th year, it opened new offices and warehouse space at 402 N. Perry St., just across from its headquarters at 1234 E. Front, to accommodate the food storage, volunteers and shipments for its Bite2Go backpack program for school children.

As that program and other programs have grown, Second Harvest also needed more space for staff offices.

Second Harvest feeds hungry people in more than 500 million pounds of fresh product, packaged and canned goods, household staples and other food—one third of that just in the past six years.

Since Bite2Go began in 2014, it has become a victim of its own success, creating the need for new warehouse storage and loading docks used by food banks picking up food. That said, Jason Clark, executive director since 2002.

Before the pandemic, 180,000 school kits—plastic bags with food for a weekend—were given out.

Parts of the warehouse were set aside on Mondays to accommodate people and materials. Then Jason learned the Stoneway Electric Building at 402 N. Perry St. across the street was available, so staff began raising funds.

The warehouse facility, the Wolfy Family Child Hunger Solutions Center, is named for major donors, who supported it along with other community organizations.

Second Harvest purchased the 22,000-square-foot building in 2018 and expected it would be renovated and operational in 12 to 18 months.

A few months into construction, COVID hit, delaying construction. Second Harvest opened the warehouse and storage in mid-August, and then the offices for the fundraising and leadership team in October. It includes a community meeting room and a volunteer reception area.

Bite2Go is now feeding 5,000 children a week. Based on data from the Superintendent of Pub
clic Instruction’s office, there is need to provide weekend food for 19,000 children east of the Cascades across the 21 counties of Eastern Washington and five counties in the Idaho Panhandle. Second Harvest serves.

There are 75 to 125 students in each of the area’s 10 grade schools, in which 20 percent of children are on the free and reduced lunch program, struggling with severe food issues, Jason said. In high schools, there is need for 10 percent of its staff.

“The backpack program has been a lifeline for children dealing with food insecurities,” Jason said.

Currently, Second Harvest is supplying school kits to 70 Spokane County schools in the program. It partners with At the Core, which recruits churches, groups and businesses to adopt a school. They pay $5 per child to provide the food and are involved in the schools.

“We buy semi-truck-loads directly from manufacturers to supply food for thousands of backpacks,” Jason said.

The new Child Hunger Solutions Center stores food, has a volunteer center where volunteers come to pack the food into bags, which are put in plastic boxes for each school.

Volunteers from groups sponsoring a school come Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to pick up plastic bags other volunteers filled with weekend food. The packs are packed in boxes that go to different schools.

The schools determine the best way to give out the food—many through a trusted teacher who puts the food in the kids’ backpacks to avoid stigma.

Students are enrolled based on self-declaration or teacher/counselor observed need.

“At the peak of the pandemic there were clearly huge numbers of newly food insecure people, so we did massive outreach,” Jason said. “The numbers in recent months have been higher than in 2019 and lower than the peak of the pandemic, when we served 20 percent more than in 2019,” said Jason.

Second Harvest donors support the general work of its staff, volunteers, trucks and warehouses, which use varied strategies to get food to people who need it—partner food banks, meal sites, mobile markets, grocery rescue efforts and nutrition education.

In 1971, Kay Porta, a child welfare provider with the Department of Social and Health Services, started the Food Bank downtown in a 1,000-square-foot store front on Front Ave.

On July 23, Kay’s three daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, visited Second Harvest as it took time to reflect on its history as part of its 50th anniversary. The family gathered as part of a celebration of life for Kay, who died last year.

In 1981, it was renamed Spokane Food Bank. In 1984, they moved to a building on W. Maxwell that had refrigeration, and connected with the Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest. In 2006, it began its mobile food program, partnering with Thrivent Financial for Lutherns to provide more fresh food. The Mobile Market program has two trucks and a bus.


Jason started volunteering in his home town of St. Joseph, Mo., and during college helped pick up food that was going to waste.

Now 27 years later, he continues to feed hungry people through Second Harvest, which helps donors, volunteers and partners “do something real for people who do not have food on the table tonight,” he said.

“Providing food is something we can solve,” he said. “Children and seniors are most vulnerable. We could provide 50 percent of our 8,000 clients.”

In 1997, Second Harvest opened a second hunger solution center in the Tri-Cities to serve the Columbia Basin and Yakima Valley.

Second Harvest works to fight hunger by bringing together community resources to feed people nutritious food so they can have healthy lives, Jason said.

Many faith communities and faith-related agencies and food banks. About 50 percent of volunteers are from faith communities, he said.

With many volunteers being older, he said, the pandemic has made it harder for some volunteers to come to Second Harvest because many older people have been avoiding going out. Second Harvest seeks volunteers in both Spokane and Tri-Cities.

The pandemic has brought greater need, and Second Harvest has responded, providing 43 million pounds of food in 2020 and 50 million pounds of food so far in 2021, up from an average of 25 to 30 million pounds of food per year prior to that.

For information, call 534-6678 or visit 2-harvest.org.

Glori Cheevers shows one of the backpack food packages.

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‘One River’ focus is ethics

The eighth annual “One River, Ethics Matter,” a multi-year ethics consultation on the Columbia River Treaty facilitated by the Ethics and Treaty Project, is online beginning at 9 a.m., Wednesday and Thursday, Nov. 17 and 18.

The theme is “kł kp̓ əlk̓ -restoring ntytyix (salmon) to the Okanagan River and the Upper Columbia.”

The conference will focus on treaty renewal, restoring salmon and the river, youth and climate change. It will explore remedial options on topics of the Columbia River Basin, grounded in respectful dialogue with a goal to further public understanding. It alternates between meeting in the U.S. and Canada. The 2021 conference is co-hosted by the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the University of British Columbia Okanagan campus.

It addresses the history of the Columbia River Treaty and the treaty review process related to social and environmental justice, collaboration for the common good, and the need for truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Some themes are treaty-specific while others focus on topics such as the history of Indian residential schools and calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

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Sāmoans and others tell why statue of Monaghan needs to come down

Joseph Seia and Malie Chanel, leaders of the Pacific Islanders Community Association of Washington, said they are descendants of some of the Sāmoan women, children, and elders who were machine-gunned down in their village by John Monaghan and the U.S. Navy during U.S. colonial conquests in 1899. They said standing down the statue is part of the efforts across the nation to tear down statues honoring people who stand for hate.

Kiama McKenna, director of Eastern Washington services for the Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington (PICA-WA), said that when she first saw the statue, her blood boiled because of the text and imagery on the plaque.

Joseph, founder of PICA-WA from Seattle, said his family came from the village where Monaghan and his two ships killed people. He led a Sāmoan funeral chant for and the naval troops killed people. 

“Some who forgot that honor is not something that is a remnant of Sāmoan history, but something very real still, alive here in the City of Spokane as the statue continues to represent white supremacy, unfettered capitalism, greed and no care for the fellow human beings who are suffering.”

“We want our ancestors to know their legacy must continue, and we must continue to humanize people today to honor those who were killed because of greed. Sāmoans know we are all dust and spirit, because we are not here forever,” he said.

Joseph distinguished that “al-lies” are sometimes just spectators. He called for people to be in solidarity to fight for justice for the descendants of those

Monaghan killed and to challenge the colonization throughout the Pacific that the statue represents. “The person who gunned down innocent villagers has a statue and two ships named for him, but he was not a hero and should not be honored,” Joseph said. “We seek to educate people.”

Malie said the massacre killed her great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents. “We are here as their voices,” she said, remembering growing up in Sāmoa and seeing graveyards made of lava rocks in the back of homes.

“Why were there so many when we can bury family in the front of our land?” she had asked. “People were silent in their grief about what happened. Imagine how they would feel to today sit with the massacre and imagine how it triggered pain about how God sees it.

“You tell us what we need to do and we are with you,” Kurtis said. “We can do this. We can, will and must do this together across race and class lines. Those who are not with us, need to get out of the way. We must and will do this.”

Joseph thanked Sāmoans, communities of color and a white co-organizer, Roberta Truscott, for responding when there was need to form a Citizens’ Advisory Council that is spearheading the effort to remove the statue. “I am interested in raising humans who are anti-racist and lifting up communities in solidarity,” Joseph said.

In closing, Kiama invited people to sign petitions available at the event and that are online at tiy-yuu.com/RemoveRacistStatue. They will submit the petition, which had more than 1,400 signatures as of Oct. 25, to the Spokane City Council when it reaches 2,000 signatures.

For information, call 714-6642 or email kiana@picawa.org.
YWCA Spokane and the Spokane Regional Domestic Violence Coalition (SRDVC) received a $550,000 Justice for Families grant in October from the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women to implement a Domestic Violence (DV) Court in Spokane. The grant allows YWCA Spokane, SRDVC and Spokane Superior Court to address domestic violence in a specialized court setting with alternative processes.

Trained legal advocates will give trauma-informed support to victims. Judges and court personnel who understand complexities of domestic violence will be available and treatment options will offer a therapeutic, whole family approach. “This grant is an incredible win for Spokane,” said Annie Murphey, SRDVC director. “The court will respond to the profound impact domestic violence has on families in our community, ensuring victims have access to trauma-informed advocates and offenders have tools they need to reduce recidivism.”

The coalition has been a hub for coordinated community response between victim service agencies, law enforcement and court branches since the early 1990s. To support the DV Court, SRDVC will provide a court coordinator who prepares information for the judge, including input from victims, lethality assessments, firearm purchases and initial assessment results. They will work with partners to identify other resources for family members, including children and offenders.

Through the grant partnership, YWCA Spokane will provide free legal advocacy to offer victims safety planning services, and help with accessing community resources for counseling, therapy, economic empowerment, shelter and housing. YWCA’s legal advocates will voice victim concerns on an offender’s progress, assist in filing protection orders, and provide other advocacy for victims.

Jeanette Hauck, CEO of YWCA Spokane, said the court facilitates a holistic approach. County residents bear a disproportionate burden. Domestic violence calls to law enforcement in the county are nearly twice the state level, she said. This rate has increased.

Spokane has the highest rate of domestic violence in the state with more than 3,300 reported cases annually or 25 percent of all criminal cases. Domestic violence is the number one call to law enforcement annually, she said. The pandemic has exacerbated isolation, stress and issues of violence, increasing domestic violence cases in our court systems, Jeanette said.

For information, call 325-1190, email ericas@ywcaspokane.org or visit endtheviolence-espokane.org or ywcaspokane.org/impact.

May the flower-like colors of fall fill us with smiles, laughs, warmth, humor and hope to last us through winter oppression.
World Relief is rallying the community to welcome Afghan refugees

Sharing how community members are helping welcome newly arriving Afghan refugees into the region, Mark Finney, executive director of World Relief Spokane, said, “It takes an entire community to resettle refugees.”

World Relief Spokane is gearing up to receive 300 Afghan refugees.

“We thank everyone who has donated financially and given items for those arriving with nothing to be welcomed with open arms and provided a furnished apartment,” said Mark.

On the community’s capacity, Mark said there are “tens of jobs, with employers begging for more people to join the workforce, so refugees help businesses who need employees.

In employment, he said Afghans often gravitate to the hospitality industry—hotels, restaurants and food service. They also fill security, IT or medical tech nursing positions.

“Their contract with the federal government, we are receiving Afghan refugees. Having assessed the community capacity, we have resources to provide this welcome,” he said.

“This is a national and international crisis. Spokane can make a difference and welcome Afghan allies because it is the right thing to do.”

As of Oct. 20, 30 arrived, including about 10 in multigenerational families, single adults and unaccompanied minors, who Lutheran Community Services Northwest helps.

World Relief seeks solutions to some “good” problems. Donated household items fill their warehouse. They are clearing their basement for more storage space. They are not taking big items. A new resource coordinator is managing donations.

World Relief is helping house individuals and families, either with federal workers who are already here, or as individual landlords, property managers and congregations offer housing.

They seek housing for 100 people a month through Dec. 31. “Housing is the challenge. I’m confident the community will help us find housing. We are looking to partner with people who want to rent extra apartments or vacant houses and want to bring them onto the market for this cause,” said Mark.

Funds through donations and fund drives are needed, because federal funds only help in the first 90 days after arrival. Long-term funds help with emergencies housing relief and staff support, such as a new housing coordinator.

Youth groups and churches can do individual fund raising activities, such as car washes or raking leaves for neighbors to raise funds, he suggested.

Congregations, businesses, scouts and individuals can put together Welcome Kits, for families with items listed on the World Relief website.

Several faith communities are partnering.

• Congregation Emanuel, Emmanuel Church and Bethany Presbyterian will help with housing.
• Colbert Presbyterian is doing a winter coat and car seat drive.
• Life Center is offering a Refugee Youth Program.
• Emmanuel Church, Summit Church and First Presbyterian are providing volunteers.
• Shadle Park Presbyterian, whose youth did a Tennis Tournament fund raiser, shares its building with an Afghan Jakarta Shia Muslim community.

World Relief is partnering with Global Neighborhood Thrift to handle clothing donations. Refugees will be able to choose clothing there. Global Neighborhood will give shopping vouchers and let refugees shop in there for free, providing the dignity of choosing what they want. Those with clothing for refugees may take it to Global Neighborhood Thrift at 919 E. Trent Ave.

Another opportunity is to participate in World Relief virtual fund-raising gala, “Around the Table,” on Tuesday, Dec. 7.

World Relief’s Friendship Center in their office building, 1222 N. Washington, is currently closed. World Relief hopes to open it when it’s feasible, based on COVID numbers, which are high. Because many volunteers are retirees, who are at higher risk, there is need for volunteers from partners and churches.

“Social services also have the capacity to help people, as do ESL programs,” said Mark.

For ESL support for adults, World Relief works with Community Colleges of Spokane and Barton School. Other ESL supports include District 81’s Portage Family Literacy Program.

English Language Learners department for school children. World Relief makes sure students are enrolled in school and receive that support.

While World Relief is a Christian-based organization, it appreciates that resettling refugees “is an effort across the length and breadth of the community that includes people of Islamic, Jewish, other faiths or no faiths, pulling together for this cause,” he said.

Volunteers help pack Welcome Kits at World Relief office.

“I think it’s a matter of our core humanity that we are compelled to share and be part of this regardless of our faith tradition,” said Mark.

“We have an incredible outpouring of support from city and national elected officials, creating a unified front pulling together as a community,” he said.

For information, call 484-9829, email wrspokane@wr.org or visit https://worldrelief.org/spokane/get-involved/donate-items.
From involvement on the Mission and Social Justice committee of Shalom United Church of Christ in Richland, Marsha Stipe helped form the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition (TCIC) and continues to find avenues for the church to serve the community, including helping Afghan refugees.

Because of financial struggles of people during COVID, TCIC recently decided to form the Tri-Cities Mutual Aid Project to help people who lost jobs or in food service, agriculture and service and did not qualify for any federal assistance.

Marsha said the community has been devastated by the pandemic: “We knew people needed cash to help with rent, utilities, food and medical costs, so we started the fund.”

It prioritizes people who are undocumented, are 60 or older, lost jobs or hours, were quarantined without pay, have disabilities and are HIV positive, are experiencing homelessness, are people of color or LGBTQ and affected by COVID. Recipients live in Franklin or Benton counties and did not receive federal stimulus checks or receive unemployment compensation.

For the Mutual Aid Project, TCIC partners with the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN) and Planned Parenthood. Applications are available through the WAISN state Help Line—844-724-3737—which receives hundreds of calls from the Tri-Cities.

“Our initial goal was to raise $5,000 and give awards of $150 to $300 to those who qualified,” when we first opened the application process, we received 400 applications, so we needed more funds,” she said. “The pandemic has lasted longer than we ever imagined.

“With the urgency, we went on the road” to raise funds and increased our goal to $100,000, then to $200,000 and now we have raised $520,000 on our way to $150,000,” Marsha said.

In August, the Mutual Aid Fund opened a second round of applications and received 110 applications.

“As of mid-September, the Mutual Aid Fund had given out more than $15,000 in awards of $150 to $500 to more than 250 people, mostly women with children. Funds have come from grants, churches, businesses, foundations, local and state organizations, and individuals. Some give monthly. The Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition, a nonprofit with Shalom UCC, is the fiscal agent. Donations are mailed to Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition, Shalom UCC, 505 McMurray St., Richland WA 99354.

“Fund recipients have been more than grateful. Some have said they didn’t know that anyone cared,” Marsha said. “This project demonstrates that our community does care. All donations go directly to families and individuals in need.”

Marsha said the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition, which she chairs, was formed in 2017 in response to negative press about immigrants.

Shalom’s Mission and Social Action Committee sent a letter to churches and organizations inviting people to come together to counteract those messages.

Seventy came to an initial meeting in June 2017 for training with a group from Walla Walla. The Tri-Cities group formed. More than 90 people are now on the TCIC group mailing list. The core is about 25, many from Shalom, but also from other churches, social service organizations, private businesses, attorneys, farm workers, labor organizations and other community members.

“We began by educating ourselves and the community, by engaging with community organizations and churches to network, by doing advocacy through writing elected officials, and by supporting immigrants,” said Marsha, who worked before retirement as a speech and language clinician, in special education, as a school administrator and assistant superintendent of schools in several communities.

“With COVID, we shifted TCIC from doing education talks, tabling to inform people of their rights and holding community forums on economic and legal issues for immigrants, because those activities were face-to-face,” she said.

They added the Mutual Aid Project, wrote letters to the editor, offered petitions and continued one-on-one access to community services.

“We are flexible, meeting monthly, to network and share information and resources. Often we have a speaker,” she said.

On Sept. 14, Aneelah Afzali, executive director of the Muslim Association of Puget Sound-American Muslim Empowerment Network, spoke and invited the TCIC to add another dimension to their mission: resettling Afghan refugees through World Relief in the Tri Cities.

“Several members had expressed interest in resettling Afghan refugees. We are working with the Tri-Cities Afghan Resettlement Support Project sponsored by the Mid-Columbia Islamic Center, as well as World Relief,” Marsha said.

“While first formed to educate ourselves about undocumented Hispanic people so we could be a welcoming community, we are now meeting to learn about welcoming Afghan refugees,” said Marsha, who joined a state meeting to learn more.

There are many members active in TCIC, so she is confident some can focus on supporting and advocating for citizenship for undocumented immigrants, while others can focus on welcoming refugees.

Marsha said she and her husband Mike are relative newcomers at Shalom UCC. For 40 years, they attended Episcopal churches as they moved with Mike’s work with Express Employment Professionals in Walla Walla, Pendleton, Salt Lake City and Hermiston. They moved to Richland 16 years ago.

They came one Sunday to Shalom UCC and were impressed by the church’s community involvement and social justice commitment.

For information, call 509-946-6166, email marshallstipe@gmail.com or visit tricitiesimmigrantcoalition.com.
Debbie Martin serves as parish nurse at Advent Lutheran.

Debbie Martin is a practical nurse (LPN) who came to Anglican University from 1988 to 1991. She did surveys of parishioners' median age in the 60s then and now is in the 70s. "It's a common concern," she said. For three years she offered programs on grief that included Hospice and a Sacred Heart chaplain leading programs.

Since COVID, Advent Lutheran has returned to in-person worship, but Debbie has not been back. She got COVID even though she was fully vaccinated. "I've done newsletters and made phone calls, but have gone to no meetings besides Zoom. "Contracting it made me realize the vaccine is not 100 percent. I work in an outpatient setting and know it is possible to be a carrier and have no symptoms. Even masking and doing hand hygiene, I contracted it from someone who did not get vaccinated. COVID is serious," said Debbie, who had no fever, chills or body aches, just congestion. "I'm thankful I didn’t get sicker. "People should be vaccinated. I would have been hospitalized if I hadn't been vaccinated," she said. The congregation is following six-foot distancing, wearing masks and not coming in if they have symptoms.

Debbie has worked with COVID patients at a Spokane hospital, where she found it heartbreaking as people saw loved ones dying and were unable to say goodbye in person. While there before her work started again, she asked the manager to have families work with hospital chaplains so they could visit when patients were on their death beds. With the delta variant, they let no one in. She believes many people have become "more spiritual since this pandemic has hit.

Debbie urges through the church newsletter for members to help those experiencing COVID isolation by bringing them groceries. She said the visiting ministry team can serve communion outside a home or pray with someone by phone or on Zoom. The church prepares take-out meals alternate Fridays. One member cooks and others deliver to those confined to their homes.

Debbie also offers information to help parishioners navigate medical issues. If she doesn't know something, she finds resources and people who know. Some have a son or daughter in medical school, and others deliver to those confined to their homes.

"I've done newsletters and made phone calls, but have gone to no meetings besides Zoom. "Contracting it made me realize the vaccine is not 100 percent. I work in an outpatient setting and know it is possible to be a carrier and have no symptoms. Even masking and doing hand hygiene, I contracted it from someone who didn't get vaccinated. COVID is serious," said Debbie, who had no fever, chills or body aches, just congestion. "I'm thankful I didn’t get sicker. "People should be vaccinated. I would have been hospitalized if I hadn’t been vaccinated," she said. The congregation is following six-foot distancing, wearing masks and not coming in if they have symptoms.

Debbie has worked with COVID patients at a Spokane hospital, where she found it heartbreaking as people saw loved ones dying and were unable to say goodbye in person. While there before her work started again, she asked the manager to have families work with hospital chaplains so they could visit when patients were on their death beds. With the delta variant, they let no one in. She believes many people have become “more spiritual since this pandemic has hit.”

Debbie urges through the church newsletter for members to help those experiencing COVID isolation by bringing them groceries. She said the visiting ministry team can serve communion outside a home or pray with someone by phone or on Zoom. The church prepares take-out meals alternate Fridays. One member cooks and others deliver to those confined to their homes.

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Whose smiles, laughs, warmth, humor and hope inspire us?—November 2021

Anglican Bishop Emeritus and 1987 Nobel Peace Prize winner Des-
mond Tutu, who led the South African Council of Churches to wake up the church and end apartheid in South Africa, turned 90 on Oct. 7.

I walked beside him in a peace march at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2006 when he was about the age I am now.

The Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at Bossey, the lab for ecumenical, interfaith, multicultural, intercultural, intergenerational human interaction, just celebrated its 75th year. In 1949-50, I studied about “The Future of the Church,” and have been living into that future ever since. In 1996 for its 50th anniversary with Fig Tree Resource Directory editor Malcolm Haworth. During that visit in Europe, I took his senior picture near a castle.

In recent weeks, I have been taking the senior picture for my oldest grandchild, Tevita Fakasiieiki, son of The Fig Tree’s editorial writer Marijke Fakasiieiki and editorial writer Ikani Fakasiieiki.

Along with taking pictures, I’ve been looking at photos of Tevita as a baby and through his growing years, enjoying how he is emerging into adulthood with a desire to make a difference in the world, to make people more loving, caring, truthful, peaceful and justice minded.

Not only what he said, but words he has been sharing with our family.

I carry a bit of the spirit of Desmond Tutu in my soul, as a dear, laugh, warmth, hope and love and hope inspires you, you keep going, you meanings, challenges you to be here in truth. We believe to be—and to seek justice. How we will join with others to make our unique difference, our unique mark, our unique contributions for ourselves and for our world?

Let us walk in solidarity.

Mary Stamp

Editor

Letters to the Editor

It is time to offer another perspective, from inside the world of Christianity for Christians.

Many Christians across this region of North Idaho take this coronavirus pandemic as a chance to take care of others. We urge all to do the same for those infected by this disease. Many have been vaccinated and are willing to accept a temporary burden of precautions that have faith. Family and friends is one part of Tongan indigenous knowledge that has helped us survive for generations. It also allows us to take care of others and to share with two of the traditions from my little island of Tonga.

Growing up in one of the outer islands, in high school, parents would send their kids to school on the main island, where they stayed for the whole year. During the school season, kids would be sent gifts to their kids, especially fruit during each school’s season. When the school season begins, parents would usually mark the tree by wrapping its trunk with coconut leaves or to a coconut branch near the base of the tree. When a tree is marked, that family continues to look after that tree until it is harvested. When someone sees a tree with the coconut leaves wrapped around it, she knows that tree is not to be touched or picked. In other words, they know that someone is taking care of it. The Tongan way is to share with two of the traditions from my little island of Tonga.

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By Kaye Hult

When David Gortner began serving St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Coeur d’Alene in 2018, many aspects of his life and faith experiences coalesced in his ministry. Now he helps members of the congregation and community find their voices, see crises for “freedom” in light of love for others and gather to share wisdom. “I want Christians to share our journeys of faith, listen for signs of God at work in everyone’s life, name where we see God at work and invite people to discover more,” David said. “My early work on farms and building houses, in pastoral and mental health settings, plus serving seminaries, churches, campus ministry, church plants and interfaith organizations, shapes me as a pastor,” he said.

His upbringing with parents of mainline and evangelical-fundamentalist faith, mentors in school years and seminary studies gave him a foundation to renew his sense of living on a faithful Christian life. After 17 years as a seminary professor, Gortner became the rector at St. Luke’s in 2018. His efforts at caring for and embracing the community at St. Luke’s have increased with COVID.

“We are beginning to walk briskly again. When the pandemic hit, we put many things on hold, but groups are picking up again,” David said. “We took pandemic precautions seriously. People at St. Luke’s want renewed connection, but with caution.”

People who volunteered pre-pandemic found fulfilling community engagement, Christian outreach and social ministries, such as partnering with North Idaho College to tutor adults, with St. Vincent de Paul to help clients work on a GED or apply for a driver’s license.

St. Luke’s has recently partnered with the Human Rights Education Institute (HREI) on a documentary discussion series, “Finding Our Place in the Inland Northwest,” offered simultaneously in person and online. Sessions use documentaries as some from PBS. The first three sessions were on city growth and land loss, frontierism and owner-tenant relations, and land management over 100 years. The last fall session, “Displaced in One’s Homeland,” speaks to the experience of Native American Tribes in the region. It is 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 11, at St. Luke’s and online. The first sessions drew 20 to 30 people from St. Luke’s, HREI, the Museum of North Idaho and other networks. The series seeks to “create opportunities for thoughtful small group discussions on some realities, challenges and opportunities of life in the Inland Northwest.” The goal is to help participants think together, share experiences and insights, and seek wisdom together.

“People converse on questions facilitators pose in an open, honest space. Although they did not know each other before, they came to know each other,” David said.

Four sessions set in January, February and March focus on matters of race and poverty.

“Trying to find one’s voice is challenging,” he said. “It includes finding people with whom to have a voice. We need voices that say, Jesus showed us a self-emptying way.”

“Jesus incarnation and giving himself up to death were about choices—him choosing to set himself aside and yield himself up in a different way. Jesus took on flesh and blood to make us into children of God,” he said.

David invites St. Luke’s to wrestle with divisive issues, like white supremacy and racism, through conversations that lead to understanding various perspectives to create a more peaceful, accepting community.

With “freedom” at center stage in the region, he says following Jesus is not about personal freedom for freedom’s sake, but about working for the common good, the greater good, something greater than us as individuals, something that requires sacrifice, such as vaccinations and masks.

“Being a faithful Christian combines an individual’s love relationship with God and love that pours out to others. God invites people into a lifelong love relationship: The First Commandment is ‘Love God with all your heart, mind and soul.’ The second is ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ That leads to the question: ‘Who is my neighbor?’”

“Often people don’t recognize we’re humanity together, none of us can live on our own,” David said. “I can’t make my car, drill for oil, mine granite, create tiles or process lumber. For everything I touch, I rely on other people.”

“Jesus doesn’t call us to freedom,” he said. “Jesus calls us to a deep allegiance that means giving to something beyond ourselves. Jesus says, ‘Take my yoke upon you, my light burden. Take up your cross. To save your life, you must lay it down.’ He believes there needs to be more of the message, ‘I’ve been embraced and loved by God. I’m giving myself over in love to what I find along the road.’”

“Power is unleashed when we give ourselves up for others,” he said. “We need to talk about that, and demonstrate that God’s power is the power of life-transforming Love, combined with passion and purpose.”

In August, David spoke to a Gathering of Episcopal Clergy Leaders in Seattle on “It All Depends.” He told peers that in a world constantly changing and in turmoil, clergy need to encourage their communities to reach out in love in the public square. By inviting peers to learn, create and look to the future together, the gathering created a collection of voices sharing the gospel of God’s self-emptying Love, he said.

David collaborated in October with some North Idaho clergy to write a letter to the community in the Coeur d’Alene Press—reprinted on page 14. They invited giving up self-freedom for living in the pandemic, in order to protect and care for others. Through this group, he finds a voice.

In ministry for 38 years, ordained ministry 18 years, he began in music ministry as a teen and led a youth group.

“I inherited my grandfather’s interest in Christian community, said David. His grandfather was a pastor in the Lutheran Church in America, now in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. His father was a mainline Christian. His mother was Missouri Synod Lutheran, and became fundamentalist. David, who was baptized Lutheran, attended Methodist, Presbyterian, Christian, and Missionary Alliance, and Evangelical Mennonite churches. He went to a Christian college, Taylor University in Indiana. He discovered the Episcopal church when playing the organ and directing the choir of a tiny church in West Chicago, while attending Wheaton College.

David earned a bachelor’s degree there in psychology in 1968, a master’s in psychology from Wake Forest University in 1994, a master of divinity from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in 1997, and a doctorate in psychology and human development from the University of Chicago in 2004. Since then, he has taught and led national initiatives from three seminars, and was associate dean for church and community engagement at Virginia Theological Seminary just before coming to Spokane.

“In the Episcopal Church, I find an unfinishing, passion-ate belief in God’s love for all humanity, and the power of that love to give us and heal the world,” he said.

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