

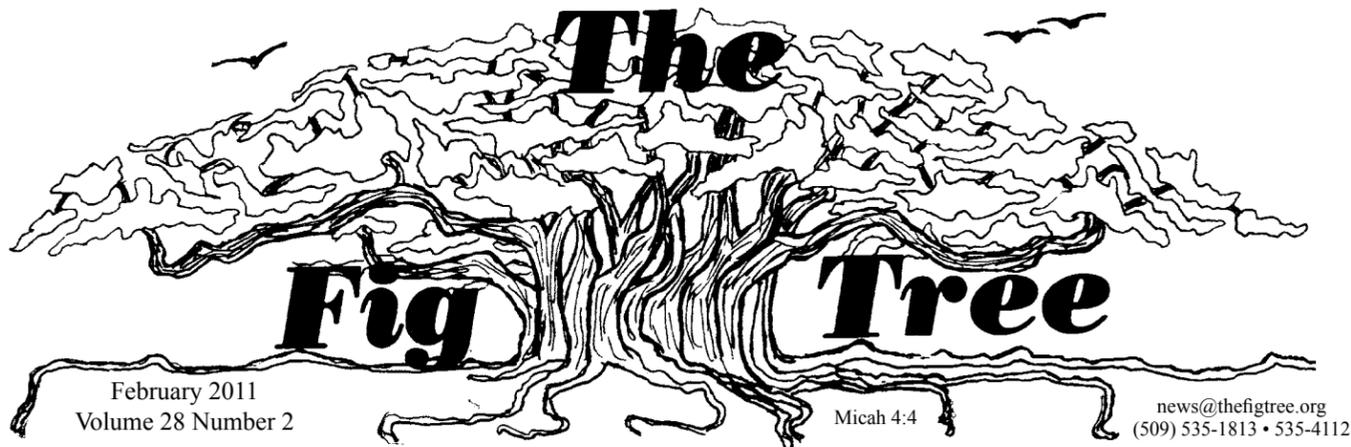
STORIES INSIDE

Student immersed in mission trips - p. 5

Moral leaders give hope to inspire action - p. 7

Groups promote economic justice - p. 9

School teaches nurses to be change agents - p. 12



February 2011
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Micah 4:4

news@thefigtree.org
(509) 535-1813 • 535-4112

Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest

online in color at www.thefigtree.org

Rural pastor rooted in community

By Mary Stamp

Lynn Nelson's fascination with spiritual questions led the Colfax granddaughter, daughter, wife, mother and grandmother of farmers to serve as part-time pastor of her hometown church four years ago.

Her call to ministry grew from her long involvement in the Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Colfax, and its openness to her questions and challenges.

During high school, she and her family shifted from the United Methodist Church to Plymouth, so she could attend church with her friends.

Now she describes the church as "graying and declining, but vibrant, ready for taking their next steps into the future."

Lynn grew up and lived her married life on what has expanded to be a 1,500-acre wheat and barley farm with 200-head of cattle, now run by her son and grandson.

Recently, she moved from the old farmhouse seven miles southwest of town into a smaller house, where her daughter and family lived. Her daughter, who teaches at Colfax High School, moved to the farm.

"I often filled in to preach sermons when the pastors were away,"



Lynn Nelson seeks continuing education opportunities for insights on ministry.

she said. "I was unusually easily accepted as pastor and treated with respect.

Lynn, who has been a volunteer hospice chaplain since the 1980s, became licensed to serve the church.

"I'm good at nurturing and listening, so I nurture, love and bless in the name of all that's holy," she said.

She is in conversation with the Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ Conference's Committee on Ministry, which has accepted her as a "person in discernment" on the path to ordination. She is considering continuing education options.

"I like the United Church of Christ because it lets us ask questions and does not come with a set of rules," she said, commenting on the theology and on its openness to alternative paths to ministry.

Starting at a late age and needing to stay in Colfax to assist her daughter, who has multiple sclerosis, she can't go away to seminary.

"I'm ideal for this church because don't cost a lot. I have a house, food, Medicare and soon Social Security," Lynn said.

Continued on page 4

Messages repeatedly called for moral leadership and nonviolence

Educational messages calling for remembering, celebrating and acting, and calling for moral leadership and non-violence in the model of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., were bypassed by media who focused on a bomb left by the route of the Unity March in Spokane.

The comments of the community and state speakers at the commemoration service, rally and march challenged complacency about violence in the society.

During the rally, organizers Ivan Bush of the Spokane Public Schools and the Rev. Happy Watkins of New Hope Baptist Church said the crowd of thousands inside

and outside the INB Performing Arts Center showed: "We have outgrown this facility!"

Happy was emcee for the commemoration service, and Ivan, for the rally. Both invited a new generation of leaders to take over organizing the events.

The following are excerpts and summaries of some of the comments shared at the events.

Spokane Mayor Mary Verner:

We come together each year to evaluate what we have done to promote Dr. King's dream in the past year. It's easy to say we fought for equal rights and the work is done, but we have more



Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity March draws intergenerational, multiracial, multicultural crowd.

to do. It's the 25th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and we are asked to take 25 actions in 2011 to make a difference.

The City of Spokane will convene a Community Forum on Violence.

Dr. King called us to resolve problems nonviolently.

In these times, we need to real-

ize that representatives of city, county, state and federal governments are community partners.

In the 1960s, we were called to action by the song of John Lennon: "Imagine all the people living life in peace. You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope you will join us and the world will be as one."

NAACP Spokane Chapter President V. Anne Smith:

On Aug. 23, 1963, Mahalia Jackson was singing "I've been 'buked and scorned." Then A. Phillips Randolph introduced Dr. King as a moral leader of the nation. Speaking from the heart, he was the anointed voice, our

Continued on page 6 and 7

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WCC continues dialogue with indigenous leaders

About 40 theologians, mostly indigenous from different regions of the world, met recently in La Paz, Bolivia, to share experiences and theological reflections following world indigenous consultations called by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the Philippines in 2008 and Switzerland in 2009.

This gathering of indigenous spiritual and theological leaders with representatives of two WCC commissions—Faith and Order and the World Mission and Evangelism (CMWE)—asserted that the integrity of life is pivotal to all ecumenical endeavors.

“It is valuable for the indigenous processes of re-constituting indigenous nations and reaffirming their spiritual values,” said Abraham Colque Jimenez, principal of the Andean Ecumenical Higher Institute of Theology.

“The interaction is a response to the mandate of the WCC Assembly in Porto Alegre in 2006, calling the fellowship of churches to be informed by indigenous wisdom and theologies,” said María Chávez Quispe of the WCC Indigenous Peoples Program.

The hope is to open new horizons for theological dialogue within churches to enable creative response to the overlapping crises that the world—particularly indigenous communities—is facing, she said. The consultation facilitated a process of listening and learning about the distinctive indigenous spiritual traditions and resources by focusing on peoples’ visions of and capacities to affirm and safeguard life in all its forms.

The consultation contributed to reflections on the Faith and Order document “Called to be One Church” and CWME’s work on “transformative spirituality” toward a new statement on mission to be presented at the next WCC Assembly in 2013 in South Korea. It also explored indigenous traditions of spiritual expression—narratives, symbolism, songs, rituals and textiles—to strengthen theological languages that provide an alternative to western civilization’s fundamentally Hellenic rationality, which is the usual basis for official and mainstream theological reflections. For information, contact mcq@wcc-coe.org.

NCC and constituents call for assault weapons ban

Michael Kinnamon, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, has called on individual NCC governing board members, communion heads and other representatives to let their political officials know they oppose the easy availability of firearms, especially assault weapons and handguns with oversize magazines. A surge of voices from national, state and local bodies will remind political leaders of the scope of the NCC’s partnerships, he noted.

“When we send letters from the NCC office to Congress and/or the Administration, they are often dismissed as the message of a single organization instead of the collective witness of a community of communions,” Michael said.

The NCC Governing Board adopted a resolution against gun violence last May. “Ending Gun Violence: A Resolution and Call to Action by the National Council of Churches” calls the NCC’s member communions to “prayerfully, financially and otherwise support the NCC staff in coordinating ecumenical efforts for gun violence reduction, including preparing educational materials about the magnitude of gun violence, developing avenues for dialogue among gun owners and gun control advocates within our congregations, and offering a faithful witness in cooperating with inter-faith and nonreligious anti-gun advocacy organizations.”

He believes this is the moment to press for the long-standing concern to reduce gun violence in America.

“It is not exploiting the Tucson tragedy for followers of the Prince of Peace to say, ‘Enough!’ Every serious study on the subject shows that easy access to guns is a menace to our nation’s public health,” he said.

A number of religious scholars and leaders urged politicians to weigh their words carefully and recognize the potential consequences of using violent imagery.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Fig Tree plans breakfast and lunch benefits

The 2011 Fig Tree Deepening Our Roots Benefit will include both a breakfast and a lunch, because, while some like the breakfast time, others said they prefer a lunch, said editor Mary Stamp.

The Benefit Breakfast will be held from 7:15 to 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 16, in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

The Benefit Lunch will be held from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., Friday, March 18, at Highland Park United Methodist Church,

611 S. Garfield.

“We are looking for people to host tables for eight, volunteers to help those days and volunteers to assist with planning,” said Mary.

The theme is “Communicating Credibly: Uplifting Voices of Hope.” The event also will mark the 28th year of publication for The Fig Tree newspaper.

Guests will hear about stories published in the last year, and hear from readers and people interviewed about their experiences.

There is no charge for the meals, but those who attend are asked to donate toward the work of The Fig Tree to connect diverse people, to build understanding and networking, to explore issues of justice and ethics, and to learn about the lives of people in the Inland Northwest who seek to make a difference in the lives of others.

For information, call 535-4112 or email info@thefigtree.org. A flier is at www.thefigtree.org

Catholic Charities to build 50-unit complex

A project of Catholic Charities Spokane is one of two in Washington receiving a \$2.5 million award from the Housing Trust Fund to build a 50-unit housing complex for chronically homeless and low-income individuals on GAU (General Assistance Unemployable).

The permanent housing will be located next door to the House

of Charity, Catholic Charities’ homeless shelter for men, said Rob McCann, executive director of Catholic Charities Spokane.

The Housing Trust Fund award and tax credits will allow the multi-million-dollar project to be built at no cost to the agency.

Catholic Charities has built all of their nearly 900 housing units without any fund raising from

parishes or parishioners.

Our Lady of Lourdes Cathedral and Sacred Heart Parish will assist in the design and implementation. The project will carry the “Haven” name, like other Catholic Charities Housing projects, Tepeyac Haven and Bishop Topel Haven in Pasco and Desert Haven in Othello.

For information, call 358-4257.

Community aids families after ICE arrests

Since Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested and detained about 30 people from several trailer parks in Ellensburg on Thursday, Jan. 20, the community has rallied to provide support for children and families.

Of those arrested, 14 appeared in court Jan. 21 in Yakima and have been released to ICE. The others were still being held at the Tacoma Detention Center, said the Rev. Shalom Agtarap, pastor of First United Methodist Church

in Ellensburg on Jan. 27.

Her church, St. Andrew’s Catholic and the Apoyo (Allied People Offer Year Round Outreach) Food Bank have been receiving donations and helping families be in contact with those who were detained.

Shalom said that they have helped families keep lights on, pay utilities, and have diapers and food.

“The families have much fear about their loved ones and their

own safety,” she said.

The community has formed several committees that are meeting at First United Methodist to respond to the various needs and concerns.

Students, farm workers, community groups and the faith community participated in a rally on Tuesday, Jan. 25, at the William O. Douglas Federal Building in Yakima.

For information, call 509-925-2157.

Unity plans events to mark Season of Peace

The Peace Team at Unity Church of Spokane is planning several events for the 14th year of the Season for Peace from Jan. 30, the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi’s death, to April 4, the anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s death.

Valentines for Mother Earth is an opportunity to express love for the planet by making valentines out of reusable materials on Sunday, Feb. 6 at the church, 2900 S. Bernard.

Random Acts of Kindness Week will be observed Feb. 14 through 20.

The Faith and Environment Network, which engages people of faith in caring for creation, will share resources, ideas and experiences following services on Sunday, Feb. 20.

Unity members will make Peace Rocks on Sunday, Feb. 27, “to make our peace consciousness more visible in our community,” said Joan Broeckling of Unity.

On March 6, members will put messages of peace and love on the rocks, and then leave them all around town for people to find.

The church will offer a performance of “Women of Lockerbie,”

a play based on an American couple’s visit to Lockerbie, Scotland, seven years after they lost a son in the Pan Am Flight 103 terrorist bombing. They seek to resolve their grief. The women of Lockerbie help them understand the power of grief, the uselessness of hatred and the role of love.

Performances will be at 7 p.m., March 4, 5, 11, and 12.

Peace-a-Pie, a potluck pizza dinner at 5:45 p.m., Wednesday, March 9, will be followed by time to create more peace rocks and sing peace music.

For information, call 838-6518.

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Panel on Social Security is for young and old

Washington Alliance for Retired Americans is sponsoring a forum featuring Andy Landis, author of *Social Security: The Inside Story, 2011* and a panel with representatives of local organizations discussing perspectives and stories about Social Security from 1 to 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 19, at the Spokane Community College Auditorium, 1801 E. Mission.

The event is for young adults to seniors, and people in faith organizations, small business networks and community organizations, plus in-home caregivers, disability groups and survivor benefit recipients to reflect on the theme, "Social Security Works: The Many Faces of Social Security."

The goal is to educate people on Social Security, its financing, beneficiaries, economic value to the state, businesses and citizens, said Gail Spaeth, Spokane coordinator.

For information, call 487-2158 or email washingtonalliance@gmail.com.

Interfaith discussion looks at 'Faith and Family'

Panelists from the Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Hindu communities are planning to share in a forum on "Faith and Family" from the perspectives of their traditions. The event will be held from 5 to 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 27, at the Latter-Day Saints Center at 2721 E. 63rd Ave.

This is the second in a series of discussions offered by the Interfaith Council to educate the community on the different faith paths and help people from different faiths to interact with respect.

A soup and salad dinner will be served. For information, call 534-1011.

Gonzaga teaches African-American history class

Gonzaga University is offering African-American history this semester, taught by African-American history instructor Kellie Carter Jackson. The course explores African-American history from slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction into the 20th-century. The course was last offered in 2008

Kellie will also present a campus-wide lecture on "Force: Understanding the Politics and Power of Violence in African-American History," at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 16, in the Jepson Center.

A flier for the history course states, "Black History is American History." Kellie said: "There's a tendency to separate the two. It's everyone's history. Everyone needs to know about Frederick Douglass, Madame C.J. Walker or Booker T. Washington, people who helped shape America."

Students will visit the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, and two of the oldest black churches in Washington: Calvary Baptist Church and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal, both formed in 1890.

They also will hear from Jerrelene Williamson, author of "African Americans in Spokane," about the history of African-Americans in the Pacific Northwest.

Richard "Professor Griff" Griffin of the rap group Public Enemy, will give a lecture on "It Takes a Nation of Millions" at 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 25, at Gonzaga's Jepson Center.

For information, call 313-6834.

Whitworth offers films, concert, reflections

A film festival, a gospel concert and a panel discussion are part of Whitworth University's Heritage Month 2011, opening with Founder's Day Convocation at 11 a.m., Tuesday, Feb. 8, at the Fieldhouse. Michael Le Roy, executive vice president for academic affairs, President Beck Taylor and campus historian Dale Soden will speak.

At 7 p.m. Tuesday, at Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth's Costa Rica Center director Lindy Scott, program director and students from the first fall semester will discuss the program.

Northwest artist Roger Feld-

man's art exhibit, "Bridges," runs from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, through Feb. 11, at the Ernst Lied Center for the Visual Arts.

For Black History Month, Whitworth students and Spokane choirs will give a Gospel concert at 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 11, at Cowles Auditorium.

At 7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 15, in Weyerhaeuser Hall, a panel of faculty will discuss "The End of Men: How Women Are Taking Control of Everything."

From Feb. 17 to 19, the Leonard

Oakland Film Festival pays tribute to an English professor who has taught 45 years at Whitworth.

The films, shown at 7 p.m. in Weyerhaeuser Hall, are "Favela Rising" on Thursday; "I've Loved You So Long" on Friday, and "Norman" on Saturday.

There will be a lecture and slides by wildlife, nature photographer Art Wolfe at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 1, in Weyerhaeuser Hall. He hosts the PBS series "Travels to the Edge."

For information, call 777-4703 or email eproffitt@whitworth.edu.

Project Access names new director

Spokane County Medical Society has hired Lee Taylor as director of Project Access, which serves low-income uninsured people.

Lee spent most of his career in business development and marketing with for-profit businesses. After moving to Spokane in 2000, he transitioned to leadership positions with nonprofit organizations, in youth development and child maltreatment prevention.

He earned a bachelor's degree from San Jose State University and a master's in business administration from Fordham University in New York.

For information, call 532-8877, ext 27.

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TO HOST A TABLE, CALL 535-4112

Lay pastor serves graying rural church that's open to next steps God has in store for them

Continued from page 1

Growing up, she attended church every Sunday, participated in the high school youth group, married after a year of college and directed the junior choir for many of her young married years. She also taught vacation Bible school and "learned from the children."

On her own, she engaged in spiritual study over the years. Since becoming pastor, she has done more Bible study.

"I've always been drawn by all religions and by the big picture of how we are alike and how small the world is if we do not divide ourselves up," Lynn continued. "I let God be as big as God needs to be to embrace the world of arguing children."

Although her life has centered in Colfax and the farm, the scope of her concern circles the earth.

"Colfax is where I'm supposed to be. I was born into Christianity, but I believe all religions offer insights and wisdom," she said.

Lynn had started college thinking she would be a secretary, but she met her farmer husband, Bill, and married him in 1965. He was from Idaho and had a small operation of cattle he brought to her family's farm. When her father died, he took over.

"I can ride a horse, rope a cow, cook dinner for 30 and haul it to

the middle of the wheat field," she said, pausing to say that at 66 she has set those activities aside.

She is the eldest of three. Her brother and sister chose paths other than farming, so she and her husband bought them out.

He farmed until he died three years ago. Her mother died four years ago.

When Lynn began as pastor, she decided to shake the church up and proposed renaming it, adding "Affirmational United Church of Christ" in front of its name, Plymouth Congregational Church.

"I wanted to rattle cages, and use an 'A' word to put the church at the top of the list of churches in the phone book so people would call us first," she said.

"It's a warm-hearted congregation of older people in a building that's falling down around us. The roof needs to be repaired, and we do not have money to repair it without going into debt. We can't go in debt because we are an older congregation," Lynn commented.

While there's just "a small handful" of people—about 50 members with about 25 on a Sunday—she said, the church council is looking ahead.

Most members are retired from local farms or businesses. The church's pianist is 93.

"There's a spark waiting to be lit. We are older but still wonder where we can go from here," Lynn said. "We aren't willing to limit our possibilities. We have a drive to thrive. We pray to be open to how God wants us to be. We're willing."

Lynn said people in the community know she's available to do weddings and funerals, even if they don't attend her church.

For those who wonder where God is, she said she can take the God words out of conversations "to help people know and feel the holy."

Colfax's population of 2,800 has remained constant, but fewer young people stay in town after graduating from high school. Baby boomers no longer fill the grade school and high school, and the economic times are hard.

Farms have consolidated over the years, but are still considered family farms, Lynn said. In most cases, members of the younger generation are taking over the farms. Some of the younger farmers are in local churches.

Unlike other small towns that rural highways bypass, Colfax has route 195 from Spokane to Pullman running through the center of town. It is also the Whitman County seat.

These dynamics keep the community viable, while other small communities struggle, Lynn said.

For information, call 509-397-3011 or email bamba2@q.com.

There's a spark waiting to be lit. We still wonder where we can go from here.

Workshop addresses churches' role in angry, fearful society

Theologian Karen Bloomquist will lead an ecumenical workshop on "Not Just US: Being the Church in a Global Communion" from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 3 p.m., Tuesday, March 1, at Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway.

She will address the challenge of today's economic anxiety, political polarization and faith divisions on clergy, laity and churches.

"How can we bear an alternative public witness in a culture marked by angry polarization and a 'what's in it for me' mindset? How might we more boldly be the boundary-crossing, justice-seeking body of Christ in the world today?" she asks.

Karen will tell how being part of a global communion of churches

can transform perspectives. The event is sponsored by the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology

in Great Falls, Mont. For information, call 406-452-1663 or visit nrit.org.

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Dr. Patrick McCormick is Professor of Religious Studies at Gonzaga University. He has written four books including, *A Banquet's Guide to the All Night Soup Kitchen of the Kingdom of God*. He writes a monthly column for *U.S. Catholic*.

MORE INFO: www.Spirit-Center.org

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William Berry performs *Concerto for Trumpet in D* by Georg Philipp Telemann

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Janet Brown, soprano; Katherine Growdon, mezzo

Rockland Osgood, tenor; Josh Haberman, counter tenor; Donald Wilkinson, baritone

Marc Antoine Charpentier, *The Denial of St. Peter*,

J.S. Bach Cantatas *Gott ist mein König, BWV 71 (God is my King)* and

Du, sollt Gott, deinen Herren, lieben, BWV 77 (Thou shalt love the Lord thy God)

Felix Mendelssohn, *Tu es Petrus*.

Pre-concert talk by Dr. Jane Ellsworth of Eastern Washington University at 7:30pm

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and *Sonata for Keyboard in D Major, BWV 963* • Carlos Seixas, *Sonata for Harpsichord No. 17 in A Major*

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Theology major immerses himself in urban, global and poverty ministries

While deciding that he wants to do ministry with poor and marginalized people, Josiah Brown, 20, has experienced more urban ministry, house building and African poverty than many people experience in a lifetime.

The theology major at Whitworth University says his minor is life experience.

He's inspired by a poem by a Chicago panhandler that asserts: "Dignity outlasts dollars." He heard the poem in San Francisco on a mission trip to learn about inner city missions.

"The more I experience urban poverty, the more I realize charity is about more than giving food and money. It's also about giving dignity, looking people in the eyes as equals. The least we can do is to treat the poor people we meet as human beings.

"To give money without giving dignity is worse than doing nothing," he said. "It creates a cycle of dependency."

Josiah would like to see more disciples emerge from the "plethora of believers" in churches.

"Many say they believe in Jesus and God, but do not take the next step to follow and live as Jesus lived. For many Christians, faith does not intersect with real life, except for giving charity, doing one or two acts of service or rallying behind a hot-button issue," said Josiah, who is still discovering what it means to follow Jesus and live as he did.

"Christianity has become a religion compartmentalized to Sunday, not affecting how we live on Monday," he said, recognizing that's often true for him, too. "Christianity is more than belief.

"Part of it is to pray, read the Bible, worship and study perspectives of faith. Without connecting with God and being in relationship with Christ, it's hard to go out and treat the least of these as Christ would," said the Central Valley High School graduate.

This fall, he earned college credit in the Denver Urban Semester, run by Mile High Ministries.

For a sociology and theology of the city class, he visited neighborhoods of Denver to see gentrification of formerly poor areas, suburbanization of poverty and ways urban sociology connects to theology.

For a spiritual formation class, he arranged housing and furniture for refugees with the African Community Center.



Josiah Brown explores the world of ministry.

Josiah said church youth activities opened his eyes to the world and "gave me a heart for poor and marginalized people."

Growing up in First Presbyterian Church in Spokane, he went on two week-long summer junior high mission trips to San Francisco's Center for Student Mission. Each day, they visited different ministries—sorting food or clothing at food or clothing banks, serving food to homeless people, and working with children's programs. Evenings, the youth discussed the intersection of faith and world issues.

He returned to work at the center, arranging mission projects each week for junior and senior high groups in the summer after his first year at Whitworth. Evenings he helped them discuss their experiences.

"By the third day, stereotypes broke down, and youth began to see with God's eyes and heart," he said.

For three years in high school and one in college, Josiah participated in First Presbyterian's 25-year-old spring break project, building houses related to an orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico.

Each group of 10—of 60 to 100 each year—worked with families to build a 12-by-24-foot wood house in five days, so they built six to 10 houses a year.

Knowing little Spanish, he had limited interaction with people, but learned about poverty in Mexico.

Even though they had little money, the people were generous, buying youth food and soda.

As a student leader, Josiah helped his youth group raise money for materials, travel and living expenses there through letters, auctions and car washes.

"These activities built community and commitment in our group," he said. "The trips were fun, and strengthened our faith, because we talked with each other about what we were doing and why. It gave me a sense that this is what you do as a Christian."

From elementary to high school years, he also went to Camp Spalding, and then was a counselor with younger campers.

For another mission he did four times in high school, he led vacation Bible school for grade school children in Westport, Wash., a low-income fishing community.

Since starting at Whitworth in 2008, Josiah has been the junior high youth group leader at First Presbyterian.

In high school, he was part of the Blood Water Mission, a group started by a Whitworth graduate at his church. He raised funds for the program and mission trips.

His freshman year in college, he and friends started the Clean Blood Clean Water, now H₂OPE for Kenya. In two years, the group raised \$5,000 to build two wells in Sub-Saharan Africa.

With En Cristo Club at Whitworth, he went with other students once a week to a low-income housing apartment complex downtown. Visiting the same floors each time, teams knock on doors and offer food for lunch. Some homebound residents invite students in to talk. They have built relationships over time. Some teams take lunches to and converse with people on the streets.

He volunteered to build and repair bikes at the Cool Water Bike Shop at Cup of Cool Water's drop-in center during his sophomore year.

For Jan term 2010, Josiah took a psychology class on "Poverty, Hope and Altruism" in Tanzania.

In a fall psychology of poverty class, he has learned how poverty affects people and how stereotypes psychologically reinforce it. In Tanzania, nine Whitworth students observed and discussed those concepts.

They worked at the Baobab Home for orphans, clearing land and planting crops five days on a farm they are developing to help the orphanage be self-sustaining.

They learned about the slave trade history and malaria.

Visiting a hospital one day, they were in the children's ward when a child died of malaria. Then they went to the hospital's

research lab where they are working to develop a malaria vaccine.

"The research gave me hope," he said.

They spent a day with a family and time at the orphanage, playing with children and doing repairs and painting.

"I connected with people, because we learned some Swahili before going, and many speak English," he said.

In the rural poverty there, Josiah saw a communal, slower culture. People identify more with their families than their jobs.

Because most Tanzanians are poor, they are in solidarity and joyful in worship, not impeded by psychological poverty, he said.

The poor in America are more aware they are poor, because few around them are poor. They experience psychological poverty, not meeting standards society has set for them to provide for themselves and their families. Many have lost hope in the system and themselves, he said.

Josiah is able to take off his junior year from Whitworth, because he has advanced-placement credits from high school. He will graduate next year on schedule.

Now he is a missionary apprentice, serving in Mission in Kaffrine, Senegal from January through July. He will have three months of cultural and language study, before working with a missionary and living part of the time with a family. He will explore another culture for a longer time, while he does evangelism and humanitarian work.

After Senegal, he will join a summer Christian Peacemaker Team in Palestine and Israel.

For information, call 927-0948 or email josiahbrownviii@gmail.com.

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Community leaders celebrate, educate and rally for human rights

Continued from page 1
public conscience for 13 years, influencing our conversations on race and the nation's multiracial movement.

In Norway to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, he was impressed by the country's universal health care and free education. Today, we need to realize if we cut education, we will not be able to compete in the world. If children from low-income families do not receive free breakfasts and lunches, how can we teach book learning to hungry children?

African-American students have the highest dropout rates locally and nationally. Dropouts are living critics of society and our educational system.

Dr. King may be invisible to generations born after 1968. Some have forgotten because he has been airbrushed, reinterpreted, packaged and repackaged by left and right, liberals and conservatives. He was a moral, philosophical, spiritual man, a father and husband whose dream inspired millions worldwide.

His nonviolence brought change with love, not guns. The movement for equality and justice means political and social structures can exist for the common good. We as a community can reach the day of equality if we care enough. We can reach out to brothers and sisters who do not look, dress or speak like us. If one fails, we must help him or her.

Freda Gandy, director of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center:

Dr. King lived an extraordinary life, following the call to social justice. He reminded us that injustice and silence are not compatible, because an oppressor does not voluntarily give freedom. He challenged us not to judge by skin color but to ask what we are doing for others.

Elder Jimmy Pierce, Spokane Ministers Alliance president:

I thank God for the magnitude of the influence today of Dr. King who graduated from high school at 15 and went on to earn a doctoral degree. His speeches and books still move people to act.

His character stands out. Reputation is who people *think* someone is. Character is who someone *is*. A person of character stays in the kitchen when the heat turns up, even when others say to get out. A person of character would neither quit nor act in vengeance.

Dr. King unified people who wanted to go their separate ways to go forward united.

Catholic Bishop Blase Cupich:

In a speech given at Western Michigan University in advance of the civil rights legislation



Ivan Bush shows the street sign for Martin Luther King Jr Way.



Rabbi Michael Goldstein, Howard Glass and Bishop Blase Cupich at the commemoration service at Holy Temple Church of God in Christ.

debate in 1963, King insightfully noted that "morality cannot be legislated but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless."

These words have much to teach us in our time. They remind us ... that those with ideals must also be real. They remind us of the need for society to craft laws that are just and protect the vulnerable, lest both justice and the weak fall through the cracks of an imperfect human system. They also call us, as did his example, to appreciate the importance of leadership and personal witness.

Dr. King called the adult world to take responsibility for promoting the common good by using legislative tools of government, [and] coming together in families, neighborhoods, volunteer organizations and religious communities to build unity, especially when forces conspire to divide us.

Rabbi Michael Goldstein of Temple Beth Shalom

Praise God's name that our nation has moved so far from racism and gross intolerance. The bravery, tenacity and vision of Dr. King and religious and civic leaders who stood with him brought an end to segregation and greater equality to cities, both North and South.

His message brought the Bible alive as he spoke truth to power as Moses spoke to Pharaoh. We have much to celebrate. Much has changed. We have come far, but we mourn that racism still exists

and too often people judge others by skin color, family name or accent. We cannot assume that all has been addressed when there is not equal access to food, housing or health care.

People can get guns too easily. There is still hate and extreme language in political discourse that make us cry in anguish and pain. Dr. King called us to nonviolence.

Jews are reading now of the Exodus of our ancestors who came out of Egypt and plunged into the churning waters of the Red Sea. We need leaders, but also must be prepared to jump into the churning water. We need to take responsibility and march forward. Let us walk together to repudiate extreme language and address problems with dialogue not demagoguery.

We need to walk Dr. King's way, hand in hand, lifting up our brothers and sisters in need. Let our feet walk to end suffering and sacrifice. Let us do our fair share, pay our fair share and then we will have reason to celebrate. Mourning will be a thing of the past.

At the Unity rally, Ivan held up a street sign: "We have a street, Martin Luther King, Jr., Way, because of you," he said, inviting people to chant: "Ain't no power but the power of the people, cause the power of the people don't stop."

"The street," he said, "is a testi-

mony of what we can do together. Dr. King believed in faith, family and education. In recognition of his value of education, the street will run through the Riverpoint Education District."

Spokane County Commissioner Mark Richard:

Living 46 years in Spokane, I find more awareness, tolerance and respect than there was when I was a child. There is also more culture—music, arts, food and events involving people from different cultures who live here. We have grown. We also have hatred, bigotry and injustice.

It's sad that in 2011 there are acts of violence and people still judge others by the color of their skin rather than the content of their hearts. In 2011, we need to act. We need to take ownership. Dr. King said our lives begin to end when we are silent.

When we hear hate and intolerance—even from friends and family—we need to challenge it. When we see injustice, we need to demand justice. When we see goodness, we need to thank our brothers and sisters, and celebrate the goodness. We have come a long way, and we have a long way to go.

Three new higher education leaders spoke.

Christian Johnson, chancellor and president of the Community College District:

The words of this American hero inspired us 48 years ago to be a better America. He called us to live our dreams and to have the

courage and tough-mindedness we need to speak out. Education is the equalizer. America needs education more now than ever.

Greg Orwig, speaking on behalf of Beck Taylor, president of Whitworth University:

As we honor Dr. King and commit ourselves to his unfinished work, we need education. He refined his God-given gifts with the hard work of education, so when the moment came for him to speak truth to the world, he was ready.

We, too, must educate ourselves, not only about the world but also about one another, so that when our moment comes, we are ready...ready to know the truth and speak it with grace in a world where truth and grace are in desperately short supply.

Thane McCulloh, president of Gonzaga University:

Dec. 5, 1955, the evening of the bus boycott, Dr. King struggled with the morality of a boycott. He thought it might be wrong and dangerous. Then he remembered Thoreau saying: "We can no longer lend our cooperation to an evil system." Dr. King decided if they protested with courage, dignity and Christian love, historians would have to pause.

Dr. King was the Gandhi of our nation and the Moses of our time. There is an urgency that now is the time for justice to be delivered to all God's children. We are all God's children and all have the choice for peace, justice, freedom and equality.


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Moral leaders give hope that fuels efforts for freedom, justice, peace

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. commemoration and rally in Spokane, the Rev. Leslie Braxton of New Beginnings Christian Fellowship in Tacoma, called for moral leadership in the 21st century.

"We are experiencing a shift in world power from the West to the East and from the North to the South," he said. "The economies and populations of Western and Northern nations are stagnant and are declining. Economies are booming for those in the Third World. The two most populous nations are China and India."

Braxton reported that at the start of the 20th century, 80 percent of Christians were white and in the North and West. At the start of the 21st century, 80 percent of Christians are black or brown and in the South and East.

He described the early 20th century as the birth of modernity, with inventions of airplanes and cars, and with antibiotics promising control of diseases.

While some portrayed science and religion as enemies, Dr. King said both have a role: Science investigates to find "how." Religion interprets and talks about "who and why," Braxton said.

"In modernity, we gained mastery over our lives and environment. If it's cold outside, we can be warm inside," he said.

Early in the 20th century, he pointed out, slavery had ended, but was revisited in colonialism. Europeans moved inland from outposts on the coast of Africa because they found diamonds, palm oil and other resources.

Colonial powers carved Africa into colonies, exploiting the land and labor of indigenous people to enrich and hyper-develop the mother country, leaving indigenous people, cultures and economies devastated, Braxton said.

"In the 20th century, the color line was challenged. In the 21st century, economic lines are drawn in a battle between haves and have-nots, but some falsely use battles of race and religion to gain power and access to resources," he said. "Western powers, seeking resources, impose their presence in the Arab and Asian world where they are not wanted.

"With the military and economic shift from the West and North, countries in the East and South are taking control over their own resources and becoming new military and economic powers.

"We need moral leaders to help us navigate through troubled waters," Braxton said. "Dr. King's vision saves us from ourselves. He helps us define the struggle and use ethical tactics, so we do not fight the wrong fights. Racial,



Leslie and Sheila Braxton

religious and gender wars are not about race, religion or gender. Dr. King reminded us that we are one common humanity.

"The speech of immoral leaders is full of 'you people' and 'taking our nation back,'" he said. "It vilifies people to desensitize us to what those in power do to us.

"Dr. King reminded us that we are more similar than dissimilar. He reminded us that in a world of conflict, we must always choose nonviolence over violence. With the catastrophic power of weapons today, the choice is between nonviolence or non-existence."

In the recent tragedy in Tuscon, he sees the wrong debate between the political right and left. He sees blame used to avoid common-sense gun laws to prevent someone with a mental illness from getting a gun and to prevent access to assault weapons.

He said there has been a "trail of tears" from gunfire since the automatic weapons ban, which passed in 1994, expired in 2004.

"Attempts to pass a new assault weapons ban have been stopped, because the National Rifle Association has bought Republicans and Democrats in Congress. Concerned about being re-elected, they lack moral courage, even after Columbine, Virginia Tech and now Tuscon," he said.

Braxton thinks Americans love guns more than they love God: "American culture is steeped with violence, so the right to a gun seems to be a sacred right."

He explained that the Second Amendment was put in the Bill of Rights when colonial settlers needed guns to prevent a reconquest by the British Empire, to protect themselves from attacks from Native Americans whose land they stole, and to protect them against insurrection of enslaved black people.

"We need moral leaders, willing

to risk not being re-elected, so we can put in place common-sense gun laws," he asserted.

Then he pointed out that "our goal in relationships needs to be reconciliation, not conquest. Dr. King said we are to reconcile with our brothers and sisters. There is gridlock in Washington, D.C., because everyone is trying to defeat the other side. Compromise suggests something about the other side is legitimate."

Being reconciled does not mean going back to the old relationship, he said, but going in faith into a new relationship of brotherhood and sisterhood—with people of all races living together with all their needs met.

Praising Dr. King's compelling message of hope—former slaves and slave owners, blacks and whites sitting and working together—Braxton said when people feel helpless, they feel hopeless and may act in self-destructive ways or may hurt others.

"Because there is still hatred, we must continue to teach our children. The world will not improve if we let it be," he said.

While civil rights songs were about hope, mega-millionaire singers today fill children's heads with fatalist messages that: "I'll always be a victim," "it ain't my fault," "I try so hard" or "trouble follows me."

"My father, stepfather and brother went to prison. Their choices did not have to be mine. I was determined to make something out of my life," he said.

People become fearful and think everyone is angry—fearing immigrants will take their jobs; opposing a mosque that had been in New York City for 30 years, concerned about gays serving openly in the military.

While there is now a Jew, a black, an Hispanic and two women on the Supreme Court, he

said it's not enough.

"We need moral leaders to give us hope when we are anxious, so we can live in liberation, prosperity and justice," Braxton said. "This is the land of African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Latin Americans and European Americans—one common humanity, so our means must be consistent with our ends."

At the rally, he shared concern about the suicide and homicide rate among young people—a generation with more material things than previous generations, but with more chaos inside.

"We can decide to hang in. Dr. King came over the way of tears with people trod on by the system, singing not to let anyone turn them around," he said.

"Is the next generation ready to deal with war and peace, the common good and everyone having enough to eat? Dr. King said the young need to be serious about serious things while they are

young. He was 26 when he began to re-landscape the nation.

"Change comes from the bottom up; gridlock and recalcitrance from the top down. Change comes from those who live as they ought, not as it is or was," he said, pointing out that the young sat at lunch counters, rode busses, crossed bridges, gathered on campuses to end the war in Vietnam and elected John F. Kennedy, who started the Peace Corps and put men on the moon.

"I encourage the young to grab the message of hope and believe they can make a difference. To do that, they need education so they have the tools," Braxton said.

"We need to change minds. We need young people to force the nation to move forward and not fall back into bigotry," he said. "Dr. King kept believing, praying, marching and working so the world would be better."

For information, email braxtonministries@gmail.com.

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Bishop says people can live beyond fear into hope that inspires action

Knowing her son might downplay a concern, the 87-year-old mother of Bishop Jim Waggoner, Jr., of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, said in an early morning phone call, "Don't try to tell me there was no bomb in Spokane!"

"There was a bomb, but it didn't go off," he reassured.

A friend standing near where the bomb was found has yet to be reassured, Jim said. He was traumatized by how close he was to death, so he was "too shaky" to join those gathered for the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference the Saturday after the bomb was found at Main and Washington, targeting the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Unity March. While all ended well, the community has been shaken, too.

"There is reason to be fearful. There are daily threats of terrorism. A Congresswoman was shot

at a supermarket. There was a bomb in Spokane," Jim said in remarks at the Jan. 22 conference held at the Cathedral of St. John.

The theme was "Beyond the Climate of Fear: Empowering the Faith Community to Act."

"The climate of fear is real and powerful. We know what fear can do. It can shut us down, shut us up or shut us out. It can make us stop and withdraw. It can cause us not to be the people we are called to be and know we are called to be," Jim said.

"We're here at this event to make another response. We know we can go and see beyond the climate of fear. We believe we can move beyond the climate of fear. We want to live beyond the limits of fear and help others do the same. It's who we are and who we are called to be."

Isaiah calls for the people of



Bishop Jim Waggoner, Jr.

Israel to loose the fetters of injustice and set free those who are crushed, he said, referring to the text that was part of worship resources for the Week of Prayer for

Christian Unity, used as the basis for a time of worship setting the stage for the conference.

"We have work to do, changes to make and we are called to do it," he said. "A difference, to be a difference, must make a real difference. We can wish things will get better, but a wish does not make a difference."

There are people in the community, such as the Rev. Percy Happy Watkins, whom the Washington Association of Churches honored with an award for his leadership in justice, who "have shown us the way," Jim said.

"Not one of us is fearless, nor does any one have all the answers, but we have each other," he said, calling those who met and shared during the day to "do what we have to do."

Jim reminded that Jesus told his followers not to be afraid.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, recognizing the unity

of Christian churches, also requires interfaith ties and respect "as sisters and brothers of the same creator."

That means that people can live beyond fear and be people of hope, part of the "new heaven and earth God created."

"When things look bleak, hope sees more," Jim said. "Hope is a concrete call to act in an adventurous, persuasive way."

He told about a recent Leadership Spokane gathering reminding leaders being trained that the word, "Spokane," means "children of the sun."

"Every day we identify ourselves as those who walk in the light and are called to be bearers of light," he said. "We as a community are called to be children of the sun, living beyond the climate of fear. As Isaiah said, 'Then light will break forth like the sun.' With God's help, may that be so."

For information, call 624-3191.

Jim Mohr says faith can dissipate fears

"Fear has a value. It warns of danger," said Jim Mohr, chair of Gonzaga University's Institute of Hate Studies.

Discussing moving beyond a climate of fear to a climate of empowering action, he told participants in the recent Eastern Washington Legislative Conference in Spokane that "moving beyond fear" is not about eliminating fear but of shifting from making decisions based on fear to making decisions based on faith.

He asked participants to visualize a political pundit, state legislator, philosophy or law that made them fearful. He encouraged them to sense how they felt—a knot in the stomach, stiff shoulders or wanting to shout.

Then Jim asked them to embrace the person or idea in love, feeling God's compassion flow through them, and feeling the stiffness and knot dissipate.

"I have you do this visualization exercise so you know how your body experiences fear, hate, anger and rage," he said. "We need to recognize those feelings so we can go beyond fear in making decisions and know how love feels so we can move away from fear."

"We spend too much time thinking that what we fear is outside of ourselves. We spend too much time thinking that if only someone else or something else changed, our fear could vanish," he said. "I do not believe this. Fear is a part of us and we decide what we fear and do not fear. If we bring the person or policy within us, the fear vanishes and we can give in to hospitality. As we recognize what our fear tastes, smells, feels, sounds and looks like, we learn how to move into our fear."

Lakota Sioux teach people to face into a storm, as a buffalo does with its broad head and protective fur coat, and to charge through it. If the buffalo runs away, the storm



Jim Mohr

(fear) keeps chasing it and will exhaust and overcome it.

"We need to move beyond fear, violence, greed and hate. Faith is our natural inclination that brings us through storms. The faith community makes us ready to stand up for what is right," Jim said.

"Fear tempts us. It takes root and lives in our head and hearts, fed by media rich with entertainment rather than enlightenment. It is fed by religion that seeks wealth and power more than salvation," he said. "Our spirits of love, hope and compassion shrink when that happens. Fear, hate, bigotry and paranoia move in, blinding our ability to work on solutions."

Soon people fall victim to fear and become its slave in making decisions, he said.

"We believe spending trillions on military is better than spending on education, infrastructure or care for the vulnerable in our society," Jim said. "While we protect ourselves from threats that exist in our heads, but not in reality, we ignore other threats

that are more dangerous."

Jim believes faith can free people from enslavement to fears through six strengths faith communities teach:

- Self awareness enables people to move into and beyond their fear—to light a candle in the darkness. The fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, gentleness and self-control—can bring light to dark parts of one's mind and heart where fear lives.

- A deep trust in God means people of faith are not alone, but work through their fear, knowing God is with them.

- Hope means people can move forward into a storm. It is a positive, visionary belief in what will be, transforming people to act in courage and resist despair.

- Forgiveness frees people from the prison of fear, anger and vengeance without ignoring wrongs. It allows people to break the cycle of hate and violence to secure justice, so they are spirit-centered not fear-centered.

- The ability to focus on others' needs overcomes fear. Being other-centered helps people realize that those with different ideas have needs, humanity and dignity.

- Faith gives people power over fear and can transform thinking so actions are spirit-based, making room for love, cooperation and justice.

With these strengths, Jim said, the faith community can protest, teach others and talk to elected officials.

Jim urged participants to speak out, act ethically and "bring God's justice to the world."

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Three groups invite awareness and action for economic justice

Given the state's \$4.6 billion budget shortfall, tax cuts and widening economic disparity, Shar Lichty of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS), Erica Scott of Voices for Opportunity, Income, Child Care, Education and Support (VOICES), and Nadine Van Stone of Catholic Charities shared in a workshop on economic injustice during the recent Eastern Washington Legislative Conference.

In its work for peace, justice and human rights, economic issues are among the priorities as PJALS launches a "Bring Our Billion\$ Home" campaign to inform citizens of the need to shift spending from military to job creation.

Shar is appalled that the governor's all-cuts budget targets the state's most vulnerable people—children, seniors, disabled and low-income people.

She said some cuts are counter-productive to reducing spending. For example, to cut \$1 of food stamps from the budget takes \$1.75 out of the economy from funds that would circulate through stores and into jobs.

As the grandmother of a healthy 13-month-old grandchild, Shar knows what cuts in prenatal care would mean. Her daughter had health insurance and good prenatal health care.

"The solution to the budget shortfall," she said, "is to rebuild the economy, not make cuts that have a ripple effect."

"The last two years, Washington cut \$5 billion from its budget, but there are 500 tax loopholes that benefit big business and mean a loss of \$6.5 billion in tax income to the state," she explained.

Despite funds spent to bail out Wall Street banks, banks did not pass the bailout on to help those behind on mortgages.

"The loopholes exist at the expense of the most vulnerable as education, health care and in-home care for seniors are cut," Shar said. "In addition, hundreds of millions of dollars are lost in tax evasion."

Bring the Billion\$ Home is part of a local, state and national call for people to see the local losses from the U.S. spending \$1.1 trillion on wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Organizers say Eastern Washington's share would be \$2.1 billion that could have been spent on health care, student grants, education, renewable energy, vet-



Nadine Van Stone, Erica Scott and Shar Lichty share concerns about economic justice.

erans' care or job creation.

"The campaign seeks to shift our priorities. We do not have a budget problem but a problem with priorities and values," Shar said. "Closing tax loopholes will require a two-thirds majority in the legislature, so we need to let legislators know our priorities are health care, education and jobs."

PJALS is planning a Peace and Economic Justice Action Conference on Friday and Saturday, March 18 and 19, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr.

Erica said VOICES will participate in CHANGE 2012, a Spokane campaign modeled after the national Equal Voices for America's Families to empower families living in poverty to be civically engaged.

CHANGE stands for Creating Hope to Achieve Needed Growth for Everyone. Spokane has a nearly 18 percent poverty rate, one of the highest in the state, but a low percent of low-income people voted in the last election.

"Often people living in poverty lack time and resources to vote as they struggle to meet basic needs in a society that systematically lacks resources for the poor," she said, "but families in poverty need to be engaged to show legislators there are options besides eliminating social services."

"Research shows that more people are empowered to vote when they have opportunities to facilitate conversations with families living in similar situations about common concerns," Erica said.

Most of the effort informs communities how legislation affects their families, friends and neighborhoods. People need to join others to have a voice in the legislative process, she said, and to understand they can vote to improve their quality of life.

Many who were convicted of felonies mistakenly think they can never vote again, but their voting rights are restored once they complete probation and parole.

She believes the lack of revenue for the state budget is from a lack of jobs, which limits the ability of people to work their way out of generational poverty.

CHANGE 2012 will meet at 6 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 3, at 905 W. Riverside, Suite 304.

Nadine, who is involved with direct services to women at Catholic Charities' St. Margaret's

Shelter in Spokane, is part of a coalition advocating for legislative changes that will affect the lives of those she serves.

The Housing Trust Funds are a priority because they provide funds to build buildings like St. Margaret's 120,000 square-foot shelter in 2000.

"When the government changed from welfare to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the idea was that TANF assistance would last just 60 months or five years, so families would use it as a stepping stone," Nadine said.

The time limit has not been enforced in Washington. Few fami-

lies have gone off, because transitional services were not there to move them to independence, she said. The end of January, some families will lose \$100 of their \$500 monthly assistance.

They were told Jan. 19, but needed to inform the Spokane Housing Authority so it could adjust the amount they would pay for housing—based on a third of their income.

"We need local solutions by faith, business and social service communities, along with people affected," Nadine said. "We need to advocate for legislation."

One example of a local solution is the Spokane Community Warehouse, which St. Margaret's started to pick up donated furniture and deliver it to families needing furniture. Since it opened last year, it has served 250 households and has created job opportunities.

St. Margaret's also opened a boutique, The Pearl, to provide clothing for homeless women.

Other local solutions could come from the city and county cooperating to use funding more effectively, such as funds passed in 2008 to help end homelessness, Nadine said.

Participants in the workshop called for formation of a coalition of groups working to address hunger, homelessness and poverty to lead a coordinated effort.

For information, call 838-7870 (PJALS), 326-4135 (VOICES) or 624-9788 (St. Margaret').

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SPokane Valley

As groups and leaders change, work for human rights continues

A Spokesman-Review article, "Human rights dialogue revs up," pointed out that Eastern Washington has no central anti-hate alliance, such as the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations.

The former Spokane Christian Coalition had started the Interstate Task Force on Human Relations, but when the task force succeeded in forming the Spokane Human Rights Commission, it phased out.

While there is not one organization, there have been several over the years. For a while, an ad hoc group gathered various groups to share what they were doing.

Several organizations have come and gone as their leaders have come and gone: Churches Against Racism, the Task Force on Race Relations led by Gonzaga and the city, its Congress on Race Relations, Camp PEACE training youth on bigotry, and the Spokane Council of Ecumenical Ministries.

There are some enduring voices: the NAACP, Gonzaga's Institute of Hate Stud-

ies, the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, the Martin Luther King Family Outreach Center, Unity in the Community organizers—AHANA and Community-Minded Enterprises—and The Fig Tree, which shares those voices and more.

Another dynamic is that we have just experienced a major shift in community leadership. We have a new Catholic bishop, a new rabbi, a new PJALS director and new higher education leaders. Other agency leadership changes regularly. We keep up with the turnover in congregations, ministries, nonprofits, government agencies and business leaders as we prepare each new annual Resource Directory.

There is a need for new and old leaders to gather and find their voice for these times. There is also need for regular avenues to come together to express that common voice.

- The Martin Luther King, Jr., Day events—reported in this issue and bypassed by other media because the content is

"regular" and the bomb was "unusual"—are powerful voices and draw large crowds that include children and youth. It's a way to educate the next generation about the ongoing struggle for civil and human rights, justice and peace.

- Unity in the Community is a regular summer gathering to build cross-cultural understanding and awareness.

- Gonzaga's Institute for Hate Studies is planning an international conference in April.

- The NAACP chapter in Spokane also keeps alert to injustices.

Are these and other channels for advocating human rights enough? Not until peace, justice and equality are ingrained in our hearts, communities, laws and society.

Do we need an ecumenical organization to draw together clergy and laity to share common concerns, speak on issues and provide education and networking?

Organizers of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day events called for the next generation

to step into leadership so that what is already happening can be built on with fresh approaches. Younger leaders are heading more area nonprofits and institutions.

While new leaders first focus on learning about their organizations/congregations, on strategic plans and on survival in these economic times, they need to connect with each other and with established leaders to find where they can continue collaborative action, develop new approaches and give voice on local-to-global concerns.

It's also up to media to keep up with the changes, to know the community and keep up with the continual need for relationship building with the various voices.

Do we need a new group to form? Do we need new leaders to find their roles in the many organizations in place? A mix of old and young is helpful for the next generation who might be discouraged that the task is not done and vigilance is still needed.

Mary Stamp
Editor

Letters to the editor can inform and enlighten, rather than inflaming

Dr. Seuss's *If I Ran the Zoo* is a favorite with three generations of my family, and it comes to mind occasionally when I'm reading the letters to the editor columns in various publications.

At their best, letters to the editor add to our store of information about issues, events and specific individuals or groups as writers inform us about effects of events or policies that we might not have thought of, point us toward organizations working in areas we are interested in or lead us to further sources of information.

At their worst, some letters to the editor are equivalent to attack ads that are now spilling over from political campaigns into our everyday lives.

How many of us look first at the name at the bottom of the letter, maybe read the first sentence and decide to skip it because we could almost recite verbatim previous tirades by that writer?

For a few days after the shooting attack in Tucson, letters in publications I looked at seemed more measured and quiet. Hopes for restraint, however, are being dashed.

Recognizing that selecting letters for publication is a balancing act at best and opens the selector to outraged threats at worst, I have some modest proposals for editors, writers who want to be taken seriously and readers. If I ran the selection process, here's what I would do.

If a letter is a rebuttal to a previously pub-

lished letter, it should be shorter than the original, and this rule should apply to each successive exchange. A string of rebuttals produces so much smoke you can't even see the mirrors, much less the logic. Many professional journals use this rule.

"I have heard that" should raise the question of whether the writer is reporting rumor or fact.

Words or phrases that put down or bait a entire group of people should disqualify a letter or article from publication. Unless an entire group has been interviewed in depth, the assertion that what "those people" think do or say is a meaningless statement.

A writer who uses vague generalities such as "most Americans" or unfounded

statistics such as "studies have shown" should be asked for specifics.

It is safe to disregard a letter or article that repeats, word for word, the attack mailing that arrived in yesterday's mail.

Here is a suggestion for all of us: Check with web sites or reference sources that provide reliable information.

FactCheck.org provides a source of information which also asks readers to tell them about material that needs to be checked. Snopes.com checks out rumors, urban legends and such. Googling "fact check" will yield a list of web sites on a variety of subjects.

Nancy Minard
Editor

Legislative Conference

Sounding Board

Advocacy Tools

Ecumenical advocates set eight priorities related to faith principles

Even though it's hard for many people in churches today to find their voices out of fear of offending, Alice Woldt, director of the Washington Association of Churches (WAC), challenged participants at the recent Eastern Washington Legislative Conference with a reminder from the United Church of Christ slogan: "God is still speaking."

"We need to find our voices. Silence is not golden," she said. "The challenge is to figure out how to communicate, so we can tap into our shared values and can educate media, policy makers and government workers.

"Messaging," she said, "involves thinking ahead about the intersection of problems, values, visions and solutions.

"We need to organize our ideas to connect them with our values," she explained. "We would think that talking about values would be easiest in the faith community, but sharing ideas may release other ideas and values, moving people to fear talking."

For example, even to say the word, "government," may stir negative reactions because of the barrage of negativism directed toward government as an election ploy.

"Government provides social networking and infrastructure," Alice said.

Another word seen as negative is "taxes." Taxes could be seen as means to share in supporting the common good when people believe there is use for government.

"How can we frame our messages today so they communicate our values from

a faith perspective?" asked Alice, presenting the 2011 legislative priorities and faith principles of the WAC and the Lutheran Public Policy office of Washington.

They priorities are: 1) reduce hunger, homelessness and poverty; 2) increase affordable and accessible housing and health care; 3) reform the criminal justice system and eliminate the death penalty; 4) care for the environment and promote sustainable agriculture; 5) promote civil and human rights; 6) promote accessible and quality public education; 7) maintain a state-funded safety net, and 8) support comprehensive immigration reform.

Details on the messages are at thewac.org/advocacy/public-policy-priorities.

Alice said these priorities are set based on "faith values we hold in common." The best messages to share with policy makers, she suggested, are compelling stories.

"Politics is moral. Most people are in it to be public servants," she said.

Alice suggests emphasizing the collective stakes; contrasting cuts with special tax giveaways, subsidies and loopholes; asking for action.

The way to move beyond fear is action to promote Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, vision of the "beloved community," she said.

The Rev. Paul Benz of the Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington said the Washington State Legislature began the second Monday of January and lasts 105 days, until Easter.

"This year we are in the worst economic recession since the Great Depression in the 1930s," he said, reminding participants that legislators will deal with Governor Christine Gregoire's all-cuts budget, and will propose their own budget.

"The budget cuts program for homeless and low-income people. It cuts health care, children's programs and education," said Paul, who visits Olympia three days a week. As of Jan. 22, the House budget protects and preserves many programs—the disabilities lifeline, basic health care, affordable housing and food assistance.

Because issues change week by week, the WAC and LPPO have an Advocacy Alert Network at thewac.org/advocacy/faith-advocacy-network, which gives updates on bills related to the eight priorities, so citizens can be informed.

He listed bills affecting funding for several programs: school meals, the Disabilities Lifeline (GAU), Emergency Food Assistance, the State Food Assistance, the Washington Family Fund, the Home Security Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, home foreclosure prevention, the Basic Health Plan, the Apple Health Children's Insurance, Maternity Support Services, criminal justice reform, clean water legislation, WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs, the Farm to Cafeteria Program, Food Policy Councils, transition of coal-based power production in Washington, human-trafficking prevention, farm-labor standards, adult-family-home reform, Achievement Gap legislation and the State-Funded Safety Net.

The state is limited because initiative 1053 requires a two-thirds majority to pass any tax, increase fees or eliminate

tax loopholes or subsidies. A proposed state income tax (Initiative 1098) failed. A temporary tax on bottled water, pop and candy was dropped.

"What kind of state do we want to live in?" Alice asked. "We need to keep hoping, speaking, writing letters, sending emails, making phone calls, meeting with legislators and challenging legislators to care. The faith community is respected for its compassion and caring."

Paul urges people of faith to attend town hall meetings with legislators in February.

The WAC and LPPO plan other opportunities for involvement:

- The Yakima Legislative Briefing will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 12, at St. Paul's Cathedral in Yakima.

- Homelessness and Affordable Housing Advocacy Day is Monday, Feb. 14, in Olympia.

- Environmental Lobby Day is Tuesday, Feb. 15, in Olympia.

- Hunger Action Day is 10 a.m., Friday, Feb. 25, in Olympia.

- Interfaith Advocacy Day is Thursday, March 17, in Olympia.

Those who cannot go March 17 can gather at their congregations and participate in a virtual advocacy day, phoning or emailing legislators to advocate for priorities and support bills as citizens. LPPO and WAC will help with that.

The state legislative hotline is 800-562-6000. The legislative website at www.leg.wa.gov gives the daily agenda, the status of bills and background information.

The WAC and LPPO advocacy tools include Advocacy Network Alerts at thewac.org or lppowa.org. For information, call 206-625-9790 or 206-390-4133.



Alice Woldt



Paul Benz

Kalispel Tribe speaks at Spokane City Forum

The Kalispel Tribe members and executive staff Ray Pierre, J.R. Bluff, Deane Osterman and Kent Caputo will speak on "Strengthening and Building Our Community, While Preserving Our Cultural and Natural Heritage" at 11:45 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 16, for the Spokane City Forum at First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar.

They will present perspectives of their philosophy, which combines ancestral influences with modern day enterprise. They will also provide insight on how their leadership's decision-making considers generations of impact, discuss the growth and goals of the Kalispel Language Program, describe how caring for and respecting our natural environment is a priority, and share the tribe's

vision of becoming an economic engine for the region.

The Spokane City Forum informs citizens, generates ideas and promotes activities that help build Spokane. Speakers from a broad spectrum of civic life bring insight and thoughtful reflection to bear on the issues that directly impact Spokane and the world.

For information, call 777-1555 or email info@spokanecityforum.org.

Leadership Spokane forms a foundation

Leadership Spokane has created the Leadership Spokane Foundation with an initial gift of \$10,000, to be managed by the Inland Northwest Community Foundation (INWCF).

It's a way for graduates and supporters to continue their legacy of leadership through planned giving," explained Linda Finney, executive director.

The principal is permanently restricted. The organization will receive annual distributions from interest. A committee of alumni will allocate funds for scholarships for incoming students, equipment or other needs.

The community leadership development program trains 45 to 50 emerging and established leaders in the 10-month adult program. A youth program serves 30 young leaders—ages 15 to 17—each year.

For information, call 321-3627 or 624-2606 or visit www.inwcf.org.

Palestinian to talk about clean water

Ziad Abbas of the Middle East Children's Alliance will speak on "Bringing Clean Water to the Children of Palestine" at 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 11, at All Saints Lutheran Church, 314 S. Spruce.

He will tell about the Maia (Arabic for "water") Project, which began when the Student Parliament at the United Nations school in Gaza's Bureij Refugee Camp was asked to choose one thing them most wanted.

For information, call 838-7870.

Calendar of Events

- Feb 2** • "Cultural Codes of Communication," Gerry Philipsen, Gonzaga's Jenson Building, 313-3567
- Feb 3** • **CHANGE 2012**, 905 W. Riverside, Suite 304, 6 p.m.
- Feb 3-13** • **Spokane International Film Festival**, www.spokanefilmfestival.org for schedule
- Feb 3, 17** • **PeaceWorks**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **Celtic Journey from Epiphany to Easter**, St. David's Episcopal, 7315 N. Wall, 7 p.m., 466-3100
- Feb 7** • **Inland NW Latino Chamber of Commerce**, Best Western Peppertree Inn, 1816 N. Pepper Lane, Liberty Lake, 7:30 a.m., 244-9737
- Feb 8** • **ACLU-WA: Surveillance in Washington**, Gonzaga University School of Law, 10:30 a.m.
- Feb 8, 22** • **Palestine-Israel Human Rights Committee**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Feb 9** • **American Heart Association's Go Red for Women** event, Spokane Convention Center, 334 Spokane Falls Blvd., 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., 536-1500
- **Hispanic Business Professional Association** luncheon, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Agave Latin Bistro, 830 W. Sprague Ave., mikeg@kxly.com
- **Veterans for Peace**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- **Swami Radhananda** events, see page 9
- Feb 9-12** • **"Bringing Clean Water to the Children of Palestine,"** All Saints Lutheran, 314 S. Spruce, 7 p.m., 838-7870
- Feb 11** • **Annual Friendship Dance/Pow Wow**, Northern Quest Casino, 100 N. Hayford Rd., Airway Heights, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 363-5337
- Feb 12** • **Yakima Legislative Briefing**, St. Paul's Cathedral in Yakima, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 206-390-4133
- **"Year of the Rabbit" Chinese New Year Cultural Fair**, Central Valley High School Performing Arts Center, 821 S. Sullivan Rd., Spokane Valley, 1 to 5 p.m., 720-8825
- Feb 16** • **Kalispel Tribe**, Spokane City Forum, First Presbyterian Church, 318 S. Cedar, 11:45 a.m., 777-1555
- **College Financial Aid Workshop**, Spokane Minority Advisory & Resource Team, Havermale High School, 1300 W. Knox, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., 533-3219
- **Equal Rights Amendment lecture**, Nancy Engle, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, 2316 W. First Ave., 6:30 p.m., 456-3931
- Feb 19** • **"Social Security Works"** intergenerational forum, Spokane Community College auditorium, 1810 N. Greene St., 1 to 3 p.m., 487-2158
- Feb 19, 20** • **"Rumi: Poet of the Heart,"** KYRS 92.3 FM Translator Benefit, Magic Lantern, 25 W. Main, Saturday, 1 p.m., Sunday, 11a.m., 747-3012
- Feb 24-26** • **International Globalization**, Diversity & Education Conference, Washington State University Spokane, Riverpoint campus, 665 N. Riverpoint Blvd., www.education.wsu.edu/globalization
- Feb 25-27** • **"Building the Reign of God,"** Patrick McCormick, Gonzaga University professor of Religious Studies, Retreat at Spirit Center, Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho, 208-962-2000
- Feb 27** • **"Family and Faith,"** Interfaith Council, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2721 E. 63rd Ave, 534-1011
- Mar 1** • **"Not Just US: Being the Church in a Global Communion,"** Karen Bloomquist, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., nrit.org
- Mar 2** • **Fig Tree distribution**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave., 9 a.m., 535-813
- Mar 3** • **Fig Tree Board**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1 p.m., 535-1813
- 3rd Thurs** • **VOICES**, All Saints Lutheran, 314 S. Spruce, 5:30 p.m.

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In nursing, healing begins with competence, compassion, connection

By Yvonne Lopez-Morton

What people want most in a medical professional is competence, said Patricia Butterfield, dean of the Washington State School of Nursing in Spokane.

Next, they want someone who resonates with their suffering and connects with them personally.

“That’s where healing comes through the world of nursing,” she said. “I seek to ensure that our students who are hungry to learn are agents of change in health care.”

Patricia considers health care a right, not a commodity, so she believes that public health services that reach under-served people go hand-in-hand with social justice.

“There is a disparity in health care today, in how and to whom it is delivered,” she said.

At the nursing school, she educates students to meet future needs of health care and advocates for equitable access to health care.

The nursing school has nearly 150 faculty and staff at Spokane’s main Riverpoint campus and at branches across the state that serve 1,100 students.

Patricia encourages staff to teach students to be agents of change who challenge health systems when they become nurses.

“This generation also recognizes a need to spend their lives doing something they have a passion to do,” she said.

The faculty want nurses to be committed to their practice for 40 years.

“My heart is with public health services,” she said. “Having access to quality health care and the ability to stay alive should not depend on whether someone has a job or an insurance policy. When systems break down, the needs of society are not met.”

Patricia recognizes the challenges of providing universal health care, particularly preventive programs. It’s hard to show the impact of prevention.

“Public health supports prevention programs, but their services are not necessarily recognized,” said Patricia, who believes she and others at the school of nursing have a responsibility to shape the health of a community, and she recognizes that environments people live in contribute to their health challenges.

“It saddens me to see health portrayed only as personal behavior with no connection to the fact that the challenges of good health are much deeper,” Patricia said.

There may be contaminants, such as radon, in the home, or wells may be contaminated and



Patricia Butterfield teaches future nurses.

Photo courtesy of Washington State University

residents have no idea.

Those risks may lay the groundwork years later for children who were exposed, she said. For example, lead paint exposure was permitted by an industry that was aware of the risks before their products were taken off the market.

“Millions of children, including in North Idaho and Montana, had lead exposure that caused high blood pressure, kidney disease and even behavioral problems,” said Patricia, who also tracks the impact of pesticides among Washington’s farm workers.

“I have several colleagues looking at seasonal workers and their struggles to provide safe housing for their families. We know pesticides end up on clothing and

the bottom of shoes. When farm workers come home after work the residue is transferred to carpets, furniture and beds.”

Another factor Patricia considers is access to healthy foods.

“We have food deserts in our country,” Patricia said. “Fresh fruit and vegetables, and other healthful foods are often not accessible. There are many grocery stores in affluent neighborhoods, but low-income neighborhoods have mostly fast-food restaurants and convenience stores.

Patricia promotes community farmers markets, which offer local access to produce, are good for families and local economies, and help local agriculture.

Reflecting on WSU’s vision for the Spokane Riverpoint campus,

Patricia sees that the future of the downtown campus will provide a teaching environment for doctors, nurses and pharmacists that reinforce the need and the respect for these professions.

“Despite challenging budget cuts, WSU recognizes the value of collaboration in education in non-traditional ways and how a community commitment is the key to ensuring success,” she said.

“From the mayor, legislators and businesses to the medical community, Spokane supports WSU’s vision for future health education,” she said.

“We are trying to be innovative at a time when the state does not have the funds available,” Patricia said. “Every week we face challenging budget choices.”

A lifelong Catholic, she said faith drives her leadership style and centers her.

Working in a public institution she appreciates the sense of value that each student brings to nursing, as well as patient respect and public health services.

After moving to Spokane in 2007, she found community and a commitment to social justice at St. Ann’s Catholic Church.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in nursing in 1976 at the University of Colorado, she was a nurse at St. Peter’s Hospital in Helena, Mont., for two years.

Desiring to be a public health nurse, she earned a master’s in public health nursing in 1980 at the University of Colorado. While studying, she was an evening public health nurse for the City and

County of Denver, making home visits to people discharged from Denver General Hospital.

“Most had wounds from violence—a gunshot, a knife wound or a vehicle accident,” Patricia said. “I learned about people living in downtown Denver hotels or public housing.”

She taught seven years at Montana State University, and then was a hospice patient-care coordinator, home-health nurse and assistant professor and research assistant at Boise State University’s College of Health Sciences.

After earning a doctorate from the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland in 1992, she studied occupational and environmental health and environmental epidemiology. Then she taught another nine years at Montana State University.

She taught four years at the University of Washington in Seattle and headed the occupational and environmental health nursing program, before coming to Spokane.

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