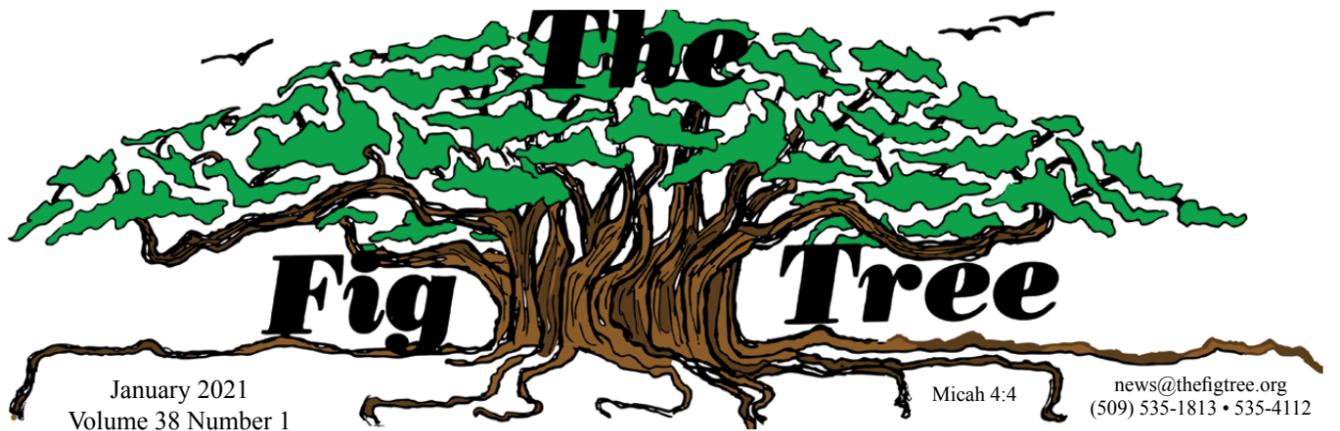


37TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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FEATURES 30 EVENTS



Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest online at www.thefigtree.org • check The Fig Tree Facebook page daily for news and links

Traumas turn into compassion

By Mary Stamp

By combining faith and psychology, Unyong Statwick, an ordained interfaith chaplain and certified Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) educator at Providence Sacred Heart in Spokane, turned trauma in her childhood and adult life into tools to be present with patients and families in their times of trauma in hospital stays.

As a certified CPE educator—formerly called “CPE supervisor”—Unyong trains students to engage the whole of their life stories into tools to help them accompany people in health crises.

CPE is interfaith professional education for theological students, ordained clergy and laypersons. Through supervised encounters with people in crisis, they deepen relationships and self-understanding. Patient and family encounters along with feedback from peers and the certified educator heighten awareness. Students also engage in theological reflection about the real-life situations.

Providence Sacred Heart has intensive and extended programs. The extended program is four hours of class and 15 hours of clinical work each week for 30



Unyong Statwick seeks to accompany patients and families in their pain.

weeks from September to April. The intensive program runs 12 weeks each quarter with one week break between units.

Unyong, after earning a master of divinity degree in 2003 from the Assembly of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Mo., decided to study CPE. While waiting to do that in the summer of 2004, she earned a master’s degree in professional counseling at the seminary.

She was then hired as staff chaplain at Mercy Hospital in Springfield and worked there until 2018. During that time, she earned a doctoral degree in psychology at the Institute for Professional Psychology, completing it in 2010.

Deciding to focus on ministry, Unyong finished training as a CPE supervisor in 2015, started as a supervisor in 2016, and became a manager until 2018. When the program closed, she came to Providence Sacred Heart in January 2019 as certified educator to supervise and train students in the Accredited Clinical Pastoral Education program.

There are currently three local students and one from Walla Walla
Continued on page 4

Kiantha Duncan brings new style of leadership to NAACP Spokane

At a recent march by the Red Wagon in Riverfront Park protesting George Floyd’s murder, the crowd chanted “Black Lives Matter.” After each chant, Kiantha Duncan heard a small voice saying, “White Lives Matter.”

It was a white woman standing on the sidewalk.

Rather than being upset with her, Kiantha went to talk with her. She introduced herself and asked, “Why she was saying white lives matter when the crowd says black lives matter?”

“I know white lives matter. We are not saying they don’t

matter when we say black lives matter. We are just saying black lives matter, too,” said Kiantha, inviting the woman to join her for the rally and march.

The woman listened to the messages. By the end of the march, she was chanting, “Black Lives Matter.”

That shows the leadership style Kiantha brings as president of NAACP Spokane.

It’s an example of her understanding that many people, including herself, have common ground in traumas from childhood—adverse childhood

experiences, known as ACES.

Those experiences include physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect, and family based domestic violence, incarceration, substance abuse, mental illness and divorce/separation, she said.

Kiantha loves and listens to people to help them move beyond their differences in rank, race, religion or roots. She gathers people in hospitality around her dining room table, people of different cultures, perspectives, backgrounds, sexual orientations, and “situations of being housed or unhoused.”

People who come don’t know who they may encounter to share stories, ideas, lives and love, and to build empathy and community.

Kiantha invites people to release and recycle those traumas by letting go, letting love guide them and leading others to healing.

While the NAACP Spokane works for justice, equality and equitable life, she said she is
Continued on page 5

Legislative Conference is Jan. 30

The 2021 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference from 8:50 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 30, on Zoom will look at issues before the 2021 Washington State Legislature.

The keynote speaker is Walter Kendricks, pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church, who will speak on “Beyond Words: Doing Justice” based on his involvement with the Governor’s Task Force on Independent Investigations and the Governor’s Commission on African American Affairs, as well as with the Spokane Ministers Fellowship, Spokane Coalition Against Racism, NAACP Spokane, Carl Maxey Center, Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center and The Fig Tree.

Four panelists will respond to his presentation and offer reflections. They will be moderated by Gen Heywood, pastor of Veradale United Church of Christ. Panelists are Kiantha Duncan, president of NAACP Spokane; Phil Misner, assistant to bishop the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Northwest Intermountain Synod; Chalo Martinez, a Catholic deacon, and Margo Hill, an attorney and leader in the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women movement.

Workshops are on environmental issues led by Jessica Zimmerle of Earth Ministry; budget and revenue issues led by Paul Benz of the Faith Action Network; police reform led by Kurtis Robinson of NAACP Spokane; public health and racism led by Bob Lutz of the State Health Department; housing issues led by Ben Stuckart of Spokane Low-Income Housing Consortium and Terri Anderson of Washington Tenants Union, and immigration issues led by the St. Ann’s and St. Aloysius Immigration Committee.

Between workshop sessions is a “Legislative Briefing” on bills, led by Paul of FAN, Jessica of Earth Ministry and Donna Christensen of the Washington State Catholic Conference.

With the event online, participants must register in advance for the link. To register, call 535-1813, email event@thefigtree.org

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Panel challenge impact of religious extremism

A panel of human rights experts from across Asia gathered in a live streamed, online conference, held Dec. 15 by the Christian Conference of Asia on emerging challenges around gender equality and growing religious extremism.

Participants in "The Impact of Growing Religious Extremism on Women in Asia" shared how women from minority groups in different Asian countries have been victims of physical violence, sexual violence, psychological abuse, abductions, forced conversions and marriages and honor killings. Panelists representing the United Nations and Asian Human Rights Commission called for empowering women to stand up against extremism and challenge patriarchies where oppressive ideologies are allowed to flourish.

Christian Conference of Asia general secretary, Mathews George Chunakara, who moderated the event, said relationships between men and women within communities are governed not by laws but by systematic subordination, pervasive patriarchy and economic disparities, and the rise of extremist movements creates dangerous divisions within communities.

Emphasizing the need to develop a human rights culture to address growing religious extremism and violence against women, he pledged to continue the Christian Conference's efforts to challenge growing religious hatred and intolerance.

Workshops in Iraq look at role of education

In a series of workshops in Iraq, education experts, government representatives, ethnic groups and Iraqi religious and community leaders discussed the role of education in promoting social cohesion and sustainable peace. Organized in December by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in collaboration with a Norwegian non-governmental organization, four workshops were held in northern Iraq and its capital Baghdad.

"Existing educational curricula in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region do not fully reflect the different components of the Iraqi social fabric, their contributions to society historically and currently, nor encourage recognition and appreciation of the value of ethnic and religious diversity," said Carla Khijoyan, WCC program executive for the Middle East.

This contributes to tensions and divisions, and creates a foundation for exclusion, marginalization and discrimination.

"Peace does not mean only the absence of war and conflict, but also the establishment of just and inclusive communities where individuals feel fully recognized, and have access to equal citizenship, rights and responsibilities, safety, security, and life in dignity, promoted by education and guaranteed by the constitution," she added.

WCC moderator reflects on COVID, hope

Agnes Abuom, moderator of the World Council of Churches Central Committee, recently reflected on the impact of COVID-19 and what gives her hope.

As more people test positive and die, she calls for following protocols and expresses concern that poverty and hunger are rising as companies close or cut workers. Three other effects are: 1) more family, domestic and gender-based violence with families at home, 2) parents unprepared for school closures, and 3) worship spaces closed for months.

"As a woman of faith, my candle of hope must burn whether the context is good or bad. Faith in the Lord Jesus affirms that nothing is permanent, for what has a beginning, has an end. COVID-19 reminds me that we as a global human community belong to the one household of God in spite of race, gender, region, weather or wealth because the pandemic has not spared the rich, mighty, the poor, children nor the elderly.

"Despite the lockdown, people have found ways to navigate and normalize the abnormal. Churches are using online technology to share the message of the good news with their congregations," Agnes observed.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Virtual Benefits will be March 5 and 10

The Fig Tree is recruiting team leaders this year instead of table hosts for its Lunch-Time Benefit at noon, Friday, March 5, and its Breakfast-Time Benefit at 8 a.m., Wednesday, March 10.

Both events will be virtual, but organizers are still determining which technical formats to use for a combined live and pre-recorded event.

"Team leaders are important as the main folks responsible for helping us recruit people to attend, hear our story and donate to support our work," said edi-

tor Mary Stamp. "The benefits bring in about \$34,000 to supplement income from ads, sponsors, partners and grants."

The theme for the benefits is "Beyond Words: Doing Justice." Speakers are chosen from those whose stories have run in The Fig Tree in 2020 and 2021. Organizers are also planning a video.

"Each year the benefits are times of celebration of our mission and inspiration. We share stories of people who make a difference because of their faith and values. In doing that we

bring hope that inspires others to act or to join in common action," said Mary.

Comments of speakers are shared through the year to inspire other giving that supports both The Fig Tree monthly newspaper and the annual Resource Directory: Guide to Congregations and Community Resources.

"We invite people interested in being team leaders to let us know they will help," Mary said.

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

Video depicts winter impact on homeless

Seeking to interject reality into discussions of homelessness and the need for low-barrier warming centers, Maurice Smith of Rising River Media, created a four-minute-30-second piece, "Winter for the Unsheltered Homeless."

Filmed in early December, he followed outreach workers from Jewels Helping Hands and Spokane Street Medicine.

"My goal was to illustrate the practical result in the homeless

community when the city's plan for addressing theoretical homelessness lags woefully behind the reality of homelessness," he said. "The pandemic didn't create this problem, but it has served to dramatically expose the pre-existing condition of neglect.

When Maurice took the video, all shelter beds in the city were full and there were enough people on the streets or camping to fill another warming center.

The situation continues.

"These people have no access to a shelter bed to stay safe and warm," Maurice said. "It's not the way things ought to be."

There is no narrative in the piece, just graphics and some music to help the pictures tell the story.

For information, email risingrivermedia@gmail.com or see it at <https://youtu.be/i8UOmOI0V7w>.

Hate Studies Institute plans conference

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, political divisiveness, racial inequity and climate injustice, understanding how dehumanization and *othering* harm communities and the world is as critical as ever, said Kristine Hoover, director of the Institute for Hate Studies.

The multidisciplinary field of hate studies gathers people to share new understandings to address hate in any one of its

manifestations—such as racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, religious intolerance, ethno-violence, anti-immigration animus and ableism.

The sixth International Conference on Hate Studies, "Justice and Equity: Challenging Hate and Inspiring Hope," is scheduled to be held on Thursday to Saturday, Nov. 4 to 6, 2021, at Gonzaga University.

It is an interdisciplinary aca-

demic forum on hate, related social problems and ways to create socially just and inclusive communities.

Kristine said lessons learned and plans that emerge will help educators, researchers, advocates and others better analyze and combat hatred to lead to communities being committed to peace, human rights, and justice.

For information, visit www.gonzaga.edu/ICOHS.

River City Youth Ops plant seeds for youth

The River City Youth Ops (RCYO) garden beds in West Central Spokane are tucked in for the winter and plans are underway for next year, said Adam Gebauer board president.

RCYO has nurtured partnerships, such as with YouthBuild Spokane to offer older youth an AmeriCorps education award in addition to RCYO's stipend for learning experiences.

It is broadening involvement

with West Central Episcopal Mission, now called the West Central Abbey, and building a council of partners to improve the lives of those in West Central," he said.

RCYO will provide produce for the Abbey's Wednesday Night Dinner Table and Catholic Charities' Food For All. They will work with the Herbalist Guild and Hutton Settlement to expand knowledge of medicinal

and practical uses of plants.

Adam said the pandemic offered lessons and meaningful connections, but youth lost time interacting with peers and sharing in experiences to educate and empower them. Despite that, many model resilience, finding new ways to move forward. Planting seeds and ideas, youth grow to give to the community.

For information, call 703-7433 or visit youthops.org.

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Doing Justice**

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Program 12-12:45 p.m.

Breakfast-time Virtual Benefit
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
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Spiritual care coordinator for Hospice brings interfaith sensitivity

By Kaye Hult

As spiritual care coordinator at Hospice of North Idaho (HONI), Jennifer Hackenbruch meets patients and families where they are spiritually.

She describes hospice as a partner in one's journey through end of life.

"We are here to support people in reaching their goals during this time. We are here to assist them in living until they die," Jennifer said. "It's about the patients and families, and their beliefs, the way they hold their pain and their thoughts about death and dying."

Jennifer never considered working as a hospice chaplain before she came to HONI three and a half years ago. At that time, she had not completed the necessary Clinical Pastoral Education units for the job, which agreed to pursue once she began working.

She brought with her years of exploration of and experience with different faiths as she sought to make sense of her own beliefs, which led to her being ordained as an interfaith minister.

Her spiritual seeking has given her the ability to walk with others from many different faith backgrounds or nonfaith perspectives.

Her time at HONI has made her a better minister, she believes.

"It has made me a better listener and more present with people. I am able to sit with people's pain and grief in ways I never imagined possible. It's a ministry of presence," she said.

Jennifer ministers to people of all faiths, including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Atheists, those holding traditional Native American beliefs and more. She has worked with people with Alzheimer's and dementia, and with people who have forgotten faith and how to pray.

Jennifer grew up in Perkins, a town of about 500 in upper Michigan.

Her father was an evangelical Christian, born again and charismatic. Her mother was a poet and agnostic.

"Because of my father's conservatism, I experienced God as dictatorial," she said. "I became interested in nontraditional spirituality. When I spoke of God, it was as universe and spirit. It took some time to heal my relationship with God and Jesus."

She studied preventative health over many years, graduating from the University of Northern Michigan with a bachelor's degree in health and fitness



Jennifer Hackenbruch helps people journey to the end of life.

management in 1999. She went on to receive a master's degree in health education and health promotion from the University of Montana at Missoula in 2001.

Jennifer worked 10 years with the Women's Club in Missoula. She also worked for the Missoula AIDS Council, coordinating a statewide HIV prevention program that included HIV testing and counseling.

Searching for her vocation, she listened to the voice within that she came to identify as coming from God.

Once, the voice called her to travel. In the fall of 2002, she began to tour around the United States, picking up odd jobs here and there. Her travels allowed her to participate in a Shoshone dance, which she found to be "an awesome way to pray." In Florida, she visited a variety of churches, including Unity. Each experience "went into my interfaith bucket," she said.

"I heard the voice again," she said, "telling me to return to school to become an ordained minister. It took me three years, and my mother dying for me to follow that calling."

Jennifer attended and graduated from New Seminary in New York City and was ordained in 2008. During seminary, she traveled again. She learned about a Science of Mind Church similar to Christian Science and about Unity, teaching that God is within and about affirmative prayer.

In 2012, a friend helped send her to India where she spent five months visited ashrams, including a Buddhist ashram overseen by a Zen master who was a Catholic priest. That added to her

interfaith practice and beliefs.

"My life has been a journey of exploring different faiths from around the world, including Christianity," she said.

When Jennifer returned from India, she planned to enter the Peace Corps. While filling out the application, she was invited to Sandpoint, where she met her future husband Chris. The Peace Corps was put on hold, while they dated, then married. Then Jennifer learned about the position at HONI and moved to Coeur d'Alene.

"My work is my calling," she said.

"There's been much death in my life: my mother, my older brother and, just recently, my father.

"My experience of death and grief allows me to wrap my mind around the fact that my patients are going to die," she said, "and it's okay. I am only meant to have them for a short time before giving them back. Because of my experiences, I am able to be present and hold space for those who are experiencing death, dying and grief for themselves."

Jennifer and Lisa Selander, HONI's most recently-hired chaplain, cannot meet the needs of all patients with whom they work, she said. "So we access resources from the community, such as priests and other pastors. It is about meeting patients' needs. Most of our patients refuse spiritual care or need someone else to provide it. We are here to make sure they get care they need from us or someone else."

Both have met prejudice against women in spiritual leadership roles.

"One woman called and asked me to come talk with her mother," Jennifer said. "When I knocked on the door, she exclaimed, 'You're a woman!' She refused to let me come in to see her mother.

"We do our best to reach out to the community to help provide our patients and families the spiritual support they need. If that is a priest, pastor or elder from the community, then I work closely with a number of local faith-based organizations to provide it," she continued.

While much of Jennifer's ministry revolves around accompanying patients and family members through the experience of death and dying and making their end-of-life journey a little less hard, she has additional responsibilities.

HONI relies on volunteers in all aspects of caring for its clients, so Jennifer works with spiritual care volunteers.

"I work with our volunteer coordinator and interview spiritual care volunteers to guide them as they care for patients," she said.

Some of her duties are educational. Typically, she helps with training new volunteers. She has met monthly with spiritual care volunteers for training and connection. She has provided an "Exploring Death and Dying series in which she asks folks from different faith traditions to talk about their tradition and their death and dying rituals. These series are offered to staff, volunteers and community members.

In addition, she has worked with HONI's community outreach coordinator, meeting with different pastors in the community to offer education and to work with their members to let them know what hospice is, what HONI offers and when people should come on services.

"Much misinformation is out there about hospice," she said. "Many folks believe one has to be actively dying to receive hospice services. They may

think we just offer medications to hurry the death process. None of this is true.

"The sooner people access services, the more help and support they will receive during their process, through their end-of-life journey," she said.

Hospice of North Idaho is community-owned. It offers full services to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

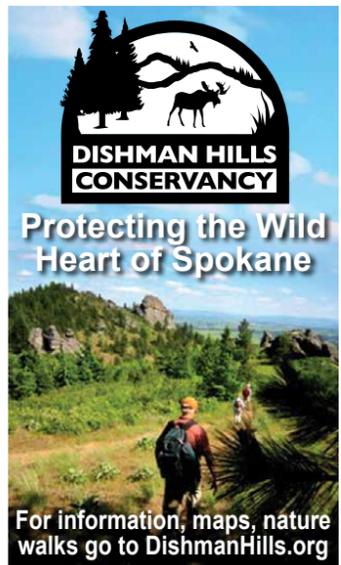
"We are here to help people live comfortably after all treatments have been explored, until they die," Jennifer said. "It is common to have people on services for many months. We even love some folks back to health, graduating them from services."

The pandemic curtailed Jennifer's ability to use volunteers and to offer training both in-house and in the community.

Jennifer connects most with God in nature. She knows God is within and she connects to God through prayer and meditation.

"Before each visit, I center myself and ask God to move through me to meet the needs of my patients and family members for their greatest good," she said.

For information, call 208-772-7994, email hackenbruchj@honi.org or visit hospiceofnorthidaho.org.



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2021 Eastern Washington Legislative Conference
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8:50 a.m.-1 p.m.

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CPE educator invites students to help families on healing journey

Continued from page 1
doing the 12-week residency units, and five students joining on Zoom from Wisconsin, Washington, D.C., Illinois, Montana and California for the extended unit program.

Unyong grew up in Gwangju in southern South Korea, graduating from college in 1985 and teaching middle school English and Korean history a year and a half. Then she married an American and moved to Tennessee.

Her husband wanted to go to Bible college and be a missionary. She expected to be a minister's wife, but her now ex-husband became depressed and dropped out of seminary and ministry. They separated in 1998 and divorced in 2002.

Unyong chose to study psychology because of the mental illness of family members. Her ability to understand the trauma she experienced gives her sensitivity as a chaplain.

Her father, a soldier in the Korean War, defected to South Korea. He suffered PTSD, drank heavily and was abusive, dying of complications from drinking when Unyong was 11.

Two older brothers were mentally ill and had violent tempers, abusing her as a teen. Her sister, who was four years older, married early to escape the violence.

After her father died, her mother taught school, but became mentally unstable from grief and began drinking.

Marriage was a way out for Unyong.

All her family but her sister have since died. She has two grown daughters who live in Missouri, one has bipolar disorder and the other struggles with social anxiety.

Faith played a role in her journey to healing. There were five churches—Catholic, Baptist and Presbyterian—in Hwasoon, her small village.

"I went to church to meet God," she said. "Because I played piano, I was pianist at a Presbyterian church.

She felt called to understand suffering and the meaning of life from a spiritual and psychologi-

cal perspective.

"How could I engage people living in suffering and pain out of my suffering and pain?" Unyong asked.

In seminary, she went to a therapist and by sharing her personal, painful family stories, her healing journey began. She realized she had PTSD from her traumatic upbringing.

"I wanted to contribute to the world so my suffering and pain would not be wasted," said Unyong, who found seminary and CPE in line with her call.

"One day, I realized I was content, at peace from the emotional suffering," she said.

As chaplain six years at Mercy Hospital—five on night shift—she met many people experiencing trauma and acute suffering.

"From my training, I could provide a calming presence to minister to them," she said.

There were an average of three to four deaths a night and trauma from vehicle accidents, gun violence victims and suicide attempts.

"I accompanied patients and their families, addressing their fears," she said.

"God is tangible for me. Mysteriously, as a teen, I felt God's presence through my own abuse. I wondered, 'Does God care for me? Does God see me?' I felt God's presence and 'Yes, I am with you.' After that experience, any lingering fear left me," Unyong said.

Once when talking long distance to the evangelical daughter of a woman who was dying, Unyong said she engaged with the woman about her fear about where her mother's soul would be going.

Seeing her love for her mother, she assured the daughter, "God also loves your mother."

A pastor's mother had surgery after an accident. More than 50 church members came to the hospital and prayed. When the surgeon came out to say she might not make it, her teen daughter asked: "What would God gain to take her?"

"I did not have an answer. I just accompanied the teen with a calm presence," Unyong said.

"She would have to figure it out for herself."

Another patient's cheek was hollowed out from attempted suicide, but he was alive. The loving family knew they would have to walk with the person now with a facial deformity.

"I held space for them to talk, to share their emotions and gratitude he survived," she said. "I have learned, I do not have to have answers, but give space to remind them of the Divine space in human suffering and dilemmas."

Unyong trains students to use their suffering and stories, to be aware how they were shaped by their families of origin and how faith/social teachings have shaped their assumptions and unconscious biases. Cultural diversity is also part of the implicit bias training.

"Sometimes people come out of skewed lives making judgments or feeling they have to fix other people," she said. "I help them learn that everyone is their own expert spiritually, socially and culturally. A chaplain only meets people in a passing moment.

"We are not expected to give expert advice or correct people.

We give people a safe space, sacred space to do their own reflection and come up with their own answers to their questions: What did I do? Why is this happening to me?" Unyong continued.

"Their shaping comes out of their experience and upbringing as they face death of a family member or their own death," she said.

Unyong said a chaplain is God's loving presence as they ask if the crash or cancer is God's judgment.

"We let them reflect and find the answer on their own, respecting their dignity," she said.

Because of COVID, she said

CPE students are trained to use various social media to meet a family's needs when they are not able to be at the person's bedside.

Students call a family and ask how they are doing or arrange for a meeting in the patient's room on social media so the family can see the patient.

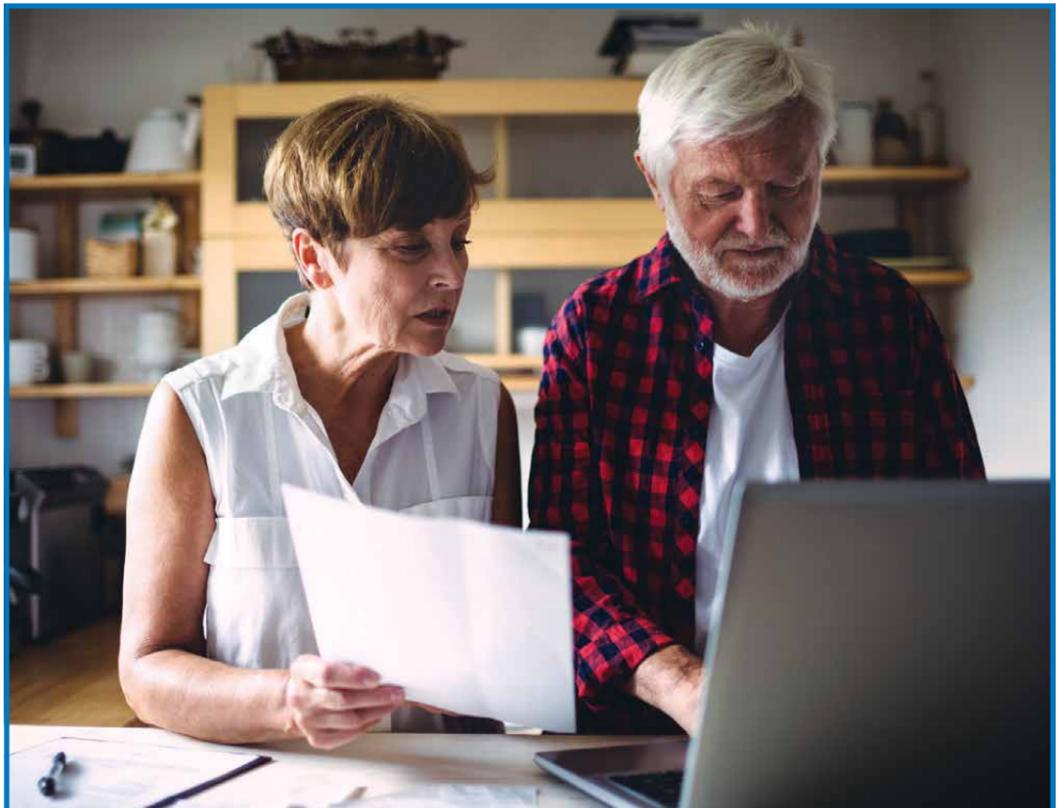
"Use of technology, Zoom and Facetime are important to provide a ministry of presence now, connecting family members and easing their pain," said Unyong, who has switched all classes to Zoom and works mostly from home.

For information, email unyong.statwick@providence.org.

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Learn more at SpokaneTransit.com/CAP

Kiantha Duncan's skill is to walk hand-in-hand with people

Continued from page 1
less a fighter-advocate, and more someone who loves people into the understanding, healing and change that overcomes hate, fear, misunderstanding and difference.

"My skill set and gifts are different from speaking at protests," she said. "It is to bring people together to build stronger collective action. It is to walk hand-in-hand with people, to use kindness to move people into the equity journey to live in a world that is more equitable for—has space for—people of color," she said. "I don't want to fight. I want to love you to pieces and talk you into justice, equality and equity."

"Children do not learn through harsh punishment. That just scares them. We don't want to scare people into an equitable world. We want people to understand why it's the healthiest way to be," she said.

"Kiantha is about love," she said. "I love humanity because God created people."

Kiantha came from personal trauma, raised partly by her grandmother. Sexual abuse began at age three. At seven after her mother was beaten, she went to live with her father, who was incarcerated half her first 10 years. At nine, she was in and out of foster care. At 16, she was a teen mom. Her son turned her life around from the trauma and poverty in which she grew up in the segregated North Side of Milwaukee, Wis.

There everyone around her was black—family, friends and neighbors—but teachers, police and people in power were white.

Kiantha's approach also relates to her growing up in a large black church, Ephesian Missionary Baptist Church, founded by her uncle. There she attended Sunday School, vacation Bible school, youth choir and choir, learned beliefs about God and developed her character.

Later attending a Church of God in Christ, she learned "how God is and moves and expects us to be."

"I learned there is not one religion, but are many answers and paths to the same thing. I do not talk about God much. I want people to see God in how I behave, act, care and build bridges," she said.

With Fellowship of Affirming Ministries in Seattle, she helped found Liberation, an affirming church that is now part of the United Church of Christ.

"Love of God is deeper than anything we can quantify or qualify, larger than a denomina-



Kiantha Duncan loves people into understanding.

Photo courtesy of Kiantha Duncan

tion, church building or Sunday service. We need to learn about faith by hearing each other's faith narratives," she said.

From this background, she is sensitive to trauma others experience, leading her to work with, manage programs for and advocate on behalf of youth, men, women, prisoners, homeless and foster care children.

"I have deep empathy. I know trauma," she said.

Kiantha began to study international business at Alverno College in Milwaukee, but left in the 1990s to start a business, Transformations Unlimited, consulting with government entities in Wisconsin to help people to move from welfare into the work force.

She continued to do that when she moved near Phoenix to help her aunt and uncle. There Kiantha was looking to relocate, chose Seattle, moved in 2003 and began freelance consulting with nonprofits.

"If I have a computer and a place, I have work," she said.

In Seattle, Kiantha also worked with the Tacoma YWCA's juve-

nile justice program, Seattle Black Pride for LGBTQ blacks, a Salvation Army community program, Seattle YWCA's dress for success program, Compassion Alliance and a New Horizon project to build a youth shelter.

From 2004 to 2008, she did studies in transformational leadership at Antioch University.

"My lifelong learning led to my

nonprofit leadership," she said.

Knowing Sylvia Brown most of her years in Seattle, Kiantha moved with her to Spokane in 2015 when Sylvia's employer wanted a Spokane office. They married after moving.

Kiantha continues consulting with people on personal and professional development. She also worked a year with Empire Health.

"Philanthropy is my first love. My two grandsons are my second love. My third love is talking with people," said Kiantha, who gives lectures and leads workshops.

"My goal is to help as many people as possible and support community with my philanthropy," said Kiantha.

Consulting with Black Futures, a cooperative fund supporting black communities in Washington's 39 counties, she helps them increase black mental and physical health, improve black wealth, preserve black culture and address equity in health care. She also consults with Better Health Together on equity.

She finds there is much work to be done on race in Spokane, but finds it is a place open to possibilities.

About three years ago, she heard Kurtis Robinson, then NAACP Spokane president, speak at the Black Student Union

at Gonzaga University. He invited her to help the chapter. Kiantha became a member at large and then a vice president.

The 101-year-old chapter has many historic supporters and allies, Kiantha said. Under Kurtis, it grew from 100 to 500 members, developed new energy and leadership.

As president, Kiantha said, NAACP Spokane follows tenets of the national organization, building collaboration to create political, educational, social and economic equality/rights, to eliminate race-based discrimination and to ensure the health and wellbeing of all persons," she said.

"The NAACP fights for justice, equality and what is right," Kiantha said. "With people committed to that, we walk with people who seem to have nothing in common with the NAACP, to help them understand that the organization is about equality, because without equality for all none of us will have a good life."

"Seeing issues as puzzles, I lead others to look at how to put the pieces together and where there are gaps," she explained. "We will do creative things to build the organization's capacity."

For information, call 206-225-4736, email kiantha.l.duncan@gmail.com or visit naacpspokane.org.

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Conference affirms that ethics, tribal values are needed in new treaty

The Ethics and Treaty Project with the Cowlitz Tribe and Washington State University's Native American Affairs recently virtually held the seventh annual conference on "One River, Ethics Matter" about issues in renegotiating the Columbia River Treaty based on justice and stewardship, not just power, irrigation, transportation and flood control.

The ethics conference for the river promotes the idea that all are stewards of the land and water.

Physician and conservationist John Osborn along with retired Lutheran pastor Tom Soeldner founded the Ethics and Treaty Project to facilitate conferences based on 1) hospital ethics about who decides for and speaks for critically ill patients; 2) the Columbia River Pastoral Letter for the spiritual, social and ecological transformation of the river, and 3) the Truth and Reconciliation lessons on institutional racism in South Africa to provide a platform to highlight a historical wrong and speak truth related to the impact of dams on the river, the tribes and first foods like salmon.

The first conference in 2014 in Spokane was followed by gatherings in Portland, Boise, Revelstoke, Missoula, Castlegar/Spokane, Ridgefield (online) this year, and in 2021 it will be in Okanogan in B.C.

The themes of "water is life," "rivers as healing," and "water and land of the region feed the people as the people care for the water and land" were repeated throughout the conference.

The first panel on "Rivers of Our Moment," looked at ethical relationships and responsibilities of humans and water from an indigenous worldview and a Judeo-Christian perspective. Tanna Engdahl, an elder and spiritual leader of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and John Rosenberg, a retired Lutheran pastor and environmental activist working on fisheries restoration in Tumwater, spoke. Steven Fountain, director of the Native American Affairs Program at Washington State University-Vancouver, moderated this panel discussion.

Tanna told of Coyote creating the earth and sun, rivers, valleys and mountains, wingeds, four leggeds and two leggeds—supporting each other and every aspect of life as created—the first rule of life for the Cowlitz and most native people.

Indigenous people understand the purpose of life is to make good decisions and live in gratitude for the minutia of each day,



Steven Fountain, director of the Native American Affairs Program at Washington State University-Vancouver

Photos courtesy of WSU conference website

raising young to respect elders. Youth do a vision quest, like baptism in nature, and are recharged by meditation, songs, prayers and water, she said.

Tanna said settlers thought "our relationship with the Creator was inferior." Fur traders with Indian wives invited Catholic priests to validate their marriages and children. Conversion began by force or attraction to rituals and beliefs. Competing denominations accepted "cruelty to lesser people," and took the land, believing the "lesser people" did not deserve it, she said.

"A horrifying aspect of the new religion was 'dominion over land and water,' justifying misusing land and water—and creating imbalances and legal frameworks to set them," said Tanna, who now sees attraction to "old ways of harmony."

"As we develop finesse in legal battles with the federal system, we have had the Native American Religious Freedom Act and the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act," she said.

"We are now returning to rivers and practicing age-old ceremonies. Even Christianized Cowlitz know the same God hears us," Tanna said.

John Rosenberg shared scriptures on water and land ethics, and reviewed faith communities' recent efforts to heal relationships with Native Americans.

In 1987, Northwest bishops and executives apologized, recognized freedom of religion and affirmed the right to access sacred sites. In 1997, they committed to join tribes in the struggles for political and economic justice. In 2014, Earth Ministries and others joined tribes to oppose coal export terminals.

In 2001, state religious leaders



Tanna Engdahl - Cowlitz



John Rosenberg - retired pastor

affirmed the Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on the Columbia River Watershed for "all people of goodwill." They spoke pastorally of caring for creation as stewards of the "Columbia as sacred commons to provide for the common good," John said.

They said water is a sign of God's presence, and called the region's citizens to stand with tribes to conserve and protect the watershed. The watershed includes rainfall, streams flowing to oceans that evaporate and start the cycle again.

Tribes know the watershed, he said: "We need to learn from them so we love and save even places we don't know."

In discussion, Tanna said native people speak for the river, "a life force with a voice sensitive people hear."

John said many are deaf to the river, but "tribal people and scientists help us hear it. The river speaks clearly. Tribes can speak on behalf of the river and need to be included in Columbia River Treaty negotiations."

Tanna said the conferences



Mike Iyall - Cowlitz historian



Christine Dupres - Cowlitz tribal historical preservation



Nathan Reynolds - Cowlitz cultural resources



John Osborn - facilitator

build understanding among those who care so they can challenge people in the federal government, living far away and seeing just trade, commerce, hydro, flood protection and irrigation.

"The U.S. negotiating team on the Columbia River did not include Native Americans, but who decides what goes into the treaty, who speaks for the river and salmon, who keeps the river clean, who supports all who swim in the river?" asked Tanna.

In the second session on "Rivers through Our Memory," three leaders of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe—Mike Iyall, historian, Christine Dupres, historic preservation officer, and Nathan Reynolds, Cultural Resources Department director—described the historic abundance on land and in the water that fed a thriving population living along the river. Numbers of salmon and native people dwindled with European immigrants bringing disease and coming to exploit.

Mike said ancestors understood the river's seasons, gathering roots and berries, and hunting in highlands in the spring and summer, and returning to the

flood plains to fish into the fall.

Christine said people lived in abundance because their culture respected the land, water and wildlife. Europeans moved brown people onto reservations, yet assumed the land was untouched wilderness.

"The Cowlitz did not negotiate a treaty or cede land," she said. "We remained in Southwest Washington close to the river and land.

"Colonialism impacted tribes. Past and present policies are connected," she said. "Settlers took natural resources and converted them into wealth."

With the termination of tribes—61 in this area—from 1946 to 1961, native Americans were told to move to cities for jobs, but there were no jobs. They lived in poverty.

Nathan said levees turned floodplains with meandering streams and estuaries in Portland and Vancouver into dry land for real estate.

Mike said dams turned the river into a long chain of lakes, so spring runoff no longer carried baby fish out to sea.

Continued on page 7

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Many share the voice of Columbia River needed in treaty renegotiation

Continued from page 6

Nathan said the Cowlitz had harvested, smoked and dried eulacon (smelt), lampreys (eels) and salmon, which are endangered species and need to be protected by the treaty.

He helps the Cowlitz acquire land in traditional areas to preserve prairie habitats, oak woodlands, lupine, white tail deer and mountain goats. He is working on a nearly \$50 million Salmon Restoration Project to create habitat for smelt, lamprey and salmon.

The third panel, "Rivers through our Vision," speakers were John Marsh, policy analyst with the Cowlitz, Jim Heffernan, policy analyst with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission; Sandra Luke chair for the Lands and Resources Sector of the Ktunaxa Nation in British Columbia, and three youth, Emma Johnson, Shay Way and Rosalie Fish. They envisioned the watershed's future with attention to spiritual, community, ecological and ecosystem realities.

Their visions include: free flowing water to restore the estuary health; restoring fish passage, and collaboration of Columbia Basin tribes to restore ecosystem functions.

Jim qualified his presentation noting that the Yakama Nation speaks for itself on issues related to the Columbia River Treaty.

Jim and John Marsh said the decision for the U.S. Department of State was to continue, terminate or modernize the treaty. They outlined how the Columbia Basin tribes collaborated to create a regional forum that provided a consensus recommendation to them in 2013 that included the need to integrate ecosystem function into a modernized treaty. By 2016, they decided to modernize the treaty through negotiations with Canada.

The U.S. and Canada initiated formal talks in 2018. Though initially denied a seat at the negotiating table, Indigenous Nations in Canada gained observer status in April 2019, but Columbia Basin tribes in the U.S. were allowed to send only technical representatives with limited participation. When negotiations resume in 2021, Columbia Basin tribes want to sit at the table, as the Indigenous Nations are now.

Sandra envisions healthy citizens and communities speaking their languages and celebrating who they are and were, managing their ancestral lands and resources as self-sufficient, self-governing nations.

"We uphold our covenant with the Creator not to overuse the land—a foundation of our spiri-



Jim Heffernan - policy analyst



Emma Johnson - youth voice



Sandra Luke - Ktunaxa



Shay Way - youth voice

tuity," she said. "What we do to the earth, we do to ourselves. Our people have cared for the land, and the land has cared for our people."

Youth shared their visions. Shay told of restoring lamprey to help clean the river. Emma restores cultural ceremonies related to smelt, salmon and lamprey. Rosalie runs and wins races to bring attention to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), relating that violence to violence against the environment.

In the fourth panel, "Rivers as Our Responsibility," Martin Wells, retired Lutheran bishop, said he became involved with conferences as bishop of the former Eastern Washington Idaho Synod, which encompassed the Columbia River Watershed.

He was also inspired by the Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter's call for taking responsibility to seek the river's health. He calls for nurturing and conserving the watershed for the common good of communities, water, land, air, wildlife, indigenous traditions/spirituality/culture, economic and environmental justice.

Other speakers were Taylor Aalvik, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe's director of natural resources; Celia Delaney, a member of the Klamath Tribe and licensed mental health worker who helps the Cowlitz deal with trauma, and Pauline Terbasket, executive director of the Okanagan Nation Alliance, which is restoring salmon to the Okanagan.

Taylor told of recovery efforts on the Lewis River—a major tributary of the Columbia—partnering with government entities, conservation nonprofits and tribes to restore an estuary drained for

real estate near Longview, by creating meandering channels where salmon can spawn.

Celia said the fight for land and water rights, and the loss of cultural and religious rights created intergenerational trauma that impacts mental health of Native Americans. Many are affected by loss of sovereignty, boarding schools, poverty, alcohol, drugs, MMIW, depression, anxiety, PTSD and now COVID.

"We can heal by going to the water. Water carries memory. Water shapes us. Water is life," said Celia who takes youth outdoors in the summer to do native sports, drum, hike, swim and paddle. "Just sitting by water treats anger, anxiety and depression. Fish ceremonies also heal."

"Water connects us," said Pauline of the link between salmon recovery for the Okanagan Syilx Nation and all tribes along the Columbia River, including the Cowlitz. "The lower river is connected to the upper river."

It is important to know the history, culture, language and resilience of our people along the river, because "every voice has impact. Indigenous voices are not inferior to colonizers," she said. "What watershed and waterway is your home? How do you connect with indigenous neighbors who share the land and waters?"

Pauline hopes to build relationships regarding shared responsibility for the river and what "water ethics guide our actions for seven generations ahead."

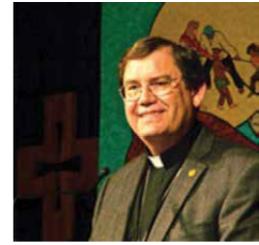
In Kelowna, B.C., she has been working with the community for many years on a 12-year Salmon Re-Introduction Project to restore the Okanagan River,



Rosalie Fish - youth voice



Celia Delaney - Klamath Tribe - counselor with Cowlitz



Martin Wells - retired bishop



Pauline Terbasket - Okanagan Syilx Tribe



Taylor Aalvik - Cowlitz natural resources

The 8th 'One River: Ethics Matter' conference will be in 2021 in Okanagan in British Columbia. Follow updates at <https://celp.org/ethics-treaty-project/>

for returning salmon, which included River Restoration, changing its channelized canals into meandering oxbows with natural gravel beds.

"We have the right to be involved in what happens to our land, water and people," she said. "Because of years of commitment to be partners with numerous governments and agencies, good science, our people's cultural knowledge, there has been some habitat improvement, and we have seen thousands of adult salmon return this year. When we work together and care

about land and water, and the land and water will care for us. Water is life, my life, your life and the life of our children and the people to be."

Closing the conference, Tanna said "all of us are ancestors in the making, so we need to think and plan for seven generations. I look to move forward so my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren have a better future."

For information, call 509-939-1290 or email sfountain@wsu.edu or john@waterplanet.wsu.edu or visit <https://celp.org/ethics-treaty-project/>.

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CME forges partnership to provide reliable internet access to students

After months of planning, Community-Minded Enterprises (CME) announced a partnership with Spokane Public Schools (SPS), the Washington Childcare Centers Association (WCCA) and Comcast to furnish reliable internet to thousands of school age children by bringing Lift Zones to Spokane County child care providers, so they better connect to online learning at no cost.

“We knew there was need,” said Lee Williams, CEO of CME. “Child care sites weren’t prepared for internet usage needed for online learning when COVID-19 hit. We had to do something so children wouldn’t be left behind.”

Installation of Lift Zones began in late November.

Kris Workman, senior director, Comcast in Spokane, said: “These safe spaces can offer families support when at-home connectivity is either not available or a student is unable to participate at home.”

Working with nonprofit partners and city leaders, Comcast is providing WiFi in facilities to help students go online, participate in distance learning and do their schoolwork.

For information, visit www.community-minded.org.

GU-Catholic Charities’ immigration law program expands

Since launching in October 2019, the Catholic Charities Immigration Clinic at Gonzaga University School of Law has served more than 70 low-income individuals and their families in need of immigration legal assistance in the Spokane area.

With a gift from Ed and Beatriz Schweitzer, it is expanding efforts by adding a faculty chair and the Border Justice Initiative.

Megan Ballard, a Gonzaga Law School faculty member since 2004, is the first Catholic Charities professor of immigration law and policy. Her expertise is on immigration, forced migration and refugee resettlement.

She also facilitates efforts to increase access to immigration-

legal services for communities in need. In spring 2020, she led a trip to the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona with law students, staff and alumni to assist asylum seekers with their applications.

“The position allows me to merge my commitment to student professional growth with exploring the impact of law and policy on immigrants’ rights at our borders, as well as boundaries that limit belonging,” she said.

Megan will also be the first Border Justice Initiative director and formalize the law school’s efforts to assist immigrants at borders through student advocacy training, strategic partnerships and educational programming.

The initiative creates a process for law students to gain hands-on legal experience by providing direct assistance to immigrants at the border and in this region.

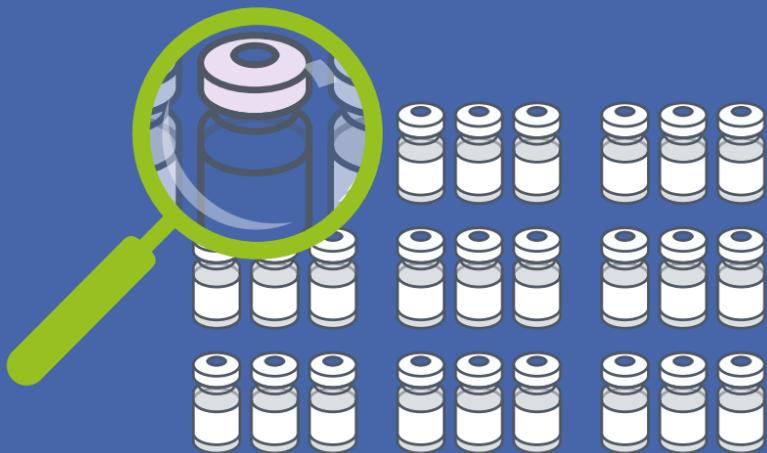
She said the program will help “break down barriers that exclude immigrants from full civic engagement—from being welcomed contributors to schools, communities, workplaces and other realms of society.”

Students will study historical and legal facets of U.S. immigration, attend immigration court, conduct workshops and directly assist immigrants in navigating the legal process.

For information, call 313-3752 or email ballard@gonzaga.edu.

How are COVID Vaccines Being Made?

Here are some answers to questions you may have about the COVID-19 vaccines currently being produced, tested and approved.



How are COVID vaccines being produced faster?

Usually vaccine testing and production are done as separate steps, but because of the pandemic, vaccines are being developed on parallel tracks - meaning we’re still doing both steps, just at the same time.

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Several different COVID vaccines are in testing right now. Each of them goes through more than one clinical trial; first with a small group of volunteers, then a couple hundred, then thousands.



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Not all COVID vaccine versions that go through clinical trials will make it to the final stages of testing and approval. Produced vaccines that do not pass will be destroyed. But for those that do make it past clinical trials, a team of medical experts will examine test results and possible side effects. If the vaccine works and it’s safe, it gets approved. Then it gets to you.



Find more COVID-19 vaccine information at covid.srhd.org

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Long-time effort to change street name results in Whist-alks Way

By Catherine Ferguson SNJM

On Dec. 14, 2020, the seven Spokane City Council members voted unanimously to change the name of Fort George Wright Drive to Whist-alks Way.

The name change initiated by a grass roots group and Council members Karen Stratton and Betsy Wilkerson, was strongly supported by the Spokane Tribal Council, who were asked to propose the new name for the mile-and-a-half road.

The Tribal Council reached out to Tribal Elders to recommend a name, followed with support of the name from tribal leaders from Colville, Coeur d'Alene and Yakama Tribes.

"We reached out to these tribes because their ancestors fought alongside ancestors of the Spokane Tribe. This is the proper tribal protocol according to tribal customs," said Carol Evans, chairwoman of the Spokane Tribal Business Council.

After more than 120 years of honoring a man whose cruelty brought the killing and starvation of many Indians of the various tribes who made their livelihoods along the rivers of Eastern Washington, this new name will correct the historical record.

The new name will honor the peoples who first inhabited the Spokane region by honoring the woman warrior, Whist-alks, who was the wife of Qualchan, one of the warriors who was hanged by Colonel George Wright in May 1858 along Hangman Creek.

In achieving the name change, the grass roots group and City Council members accomplished what others before them had been unable to do.

Why now? Attempts were made in the 1980s and again in 1993.

According to Rusty Nelson, former director of the Peace and Justice League of Spokane (PJALS) and one of those involved in previous efforts, a part of the process required agreement of those who lived along the street: Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC), the Unitarian Universalist Church, the Dominican Sisters and the Holy Names Sisters.

In 1993, SFCC did not support the change and so the process ended before it really began, he said. One of the reasons given for the lack of support was that it would cost too much to change SFCC's letterhead.

This time, SFCC backed the change. It will cost them, but they are willing to do it because it's right to do, said Tami Palmquist of the Spokane Planning Commission.

The Unitarian Universalist



Carol Evans said name came through consulting.

Photo courtesy of Carol Evans

Church (UUC) of Spokane, at 4340 W. Fort George Wright Dr., had also previously called for changing the name of the street.

In August, 200 people rallied in the UUC parking lot to challenge honoring someone who organizers said had committed genocide and terrorized the first peoples of this land, slaughtered 800 horses on the shores of the Spokane River in September 1858, burned down the tribes' barns with wheat and food, and lured tribal leaders for peace talks beside Hangman Creek where 17 were hanged.

Indigenous speakers shared stories, thoughts and insights on renaming the street, walking, driving or riding to an intersection with prominent signs and shared more stories of the atrocities that had happened.

Todd Eklof, pastor, said the church had tried several times to change the name to remove the constant reminder of the pain Col. Wright had caused, and as a step to right historical wrongs and recognize how racism has been part of the community.

The time was right because of the events that have propelled a national movement to address racial injustice and rethink the kinds of historical figures who are honored in monuments, street names and public spaces.

Betsy acknowledged, "It's just the whole tone of the country right now so people know enough about it" to seek the change.

In the process, because the City of Spokane is named for the Spokane Tribe, who were some of the original inhabitants of this land, the Spokane Tribal Council led the effort to determine the

new name.

Carol, who grew up in Wellpinit, said they followed Indian protocol in determining the name and proposing that the street be renamed Whist-alks Way.

"The Spokane Tribal Council reached out to the elders for input, to other tribes who were affected by the actions of Wright," she said. "The council itself liked the idea of supporting women warriors."

Carol, who will be completing eight years as council's chairwoman this June, counts this name change as one of the major achievements supporting indigenous peoples since she began her service.

She also credits the hard work of Spokane Tribal member Margo Hill as key in bringing it about. Margo is an attorney and associate professor in urban planning at Eastern Washington University.

Carol points to other actions to carry out the council's vision "to achieve true sovereignty by attaining self-sufficiency."

"We will preserve and en-

hance our traditional values by living and teaching the inherent principles of respect, honor and integrity as embodied in our language and life-ways," she said.

"Our efforts on the Coulee Dam legislation were finally successful," she said.

This legislation assured the Spokane Tribe will receive compensation for the harm they experienced when their land was inundated by Coulee Dam. Other tribes had received such compensation in earlier legislation.

"In addition, our 2019 application for Indian gaming was approved by the Department of the Interior," she said.

As a result, the Spokane Tribe operates casinos on the West Plains near Spokane and in Chewelah.

Carol is particularly proud of the work they have done on language preservation.

"We worked hard on language preservation. Our fluent speakers were down to just a handful, and it is important to bring our language back," said Carol, highlighting the healing power of learning one's own language.

According to the Spokane Tribe Language and Culture website, "reclaiming of the language and culture has caused a new sense of pride and dignity in the people. Many of the social problems of the past have been erased and our people are healthy in all aspects of their lives."

Besides these achievements, the Spokane Tribal Council continues to work on improving health care, expanding workforce and housing opportunities,

addressing drug addiction and other social issues.

The unanimous acceptance of the name change by the Spokane City Council not only affirms the desire to honor the ancestors who lived on this land but also acknowledges the work of their descendants to honor their Indian tradition and culture.

As they voted on the name change, Spokane City Council members expressed their satisfaction at being able to support the name change.

Betsy affirmed "I am so happy to be here to make this happen."

Council President Breean Beggs also expressed his affirmation: "I am thrilled we are where we are today."

At the same time, many present acknowledged that this is only one step, and there is much work to do.

In particular, representatives of the Native American Alliance of Policy and Action, who represent the about 16,000 Native Americans from various tribes who live in Spokane and who gave their support to the name change, encouraged the council to form a working group that includes them to give more voice to the urban Indians in policy decisions.

Tami said that first the Spokane Planning Commission studied the name-change proposal before referring it to Spokane City Council. With the vote, the next step is to make new street signs and put them up at post-COVID time when they can have a ceremony.

For information, call 458-6500 or visit spokanetribe.com.

Difference makers are leaders who bring justice and compassion

“Difference makers” is what The Spokesman-Review is calling people whose stories they have been covering recently.

“We share stories of people who make a difference because of their faith and values.” That is how The Fig Tree defines our mission.

We rejoice that The Spokesman Review in joining us in this heartening, hope-filled venture about what people are doing because they care, seek justice, build peace and serve the community. We add the piece of “because of their faith and values” as our style for covering “religion news.”

We welcome them because there are simply too many stories to cover and we

do not have the space in 12 pages tabloid size to fit all the details they can add as stories carry over one or two pages sometimes, like a Dec. 22 story on Twale Abrahamson-Swan. We have covered stories of her efforts over the years, and those of her mother, Deb. The S-R story gave extensive background into her community involvement with her mother, her working for uranium-mine cleanup, studying environmental science, working to improve the air quality on the Spokane reservation, carving canoes and starting the River Warrior Society aiding community elders and helping after wildfires on the reservation. It’s an ongoing story.

It’s the kind of news that gives people hope and helps them realize they, too, can

make a difference.

It’s not just bland, cheery stories, but it’s stories, as many in this issue, about people who have struggled and experienced trauma. Rather than being defeated by the pain, they emerge to decide they want to walk beside others who are experiencing struggle and trauma, not just on the personal level but from injustice, oppression, hate, stereotypes, isolation and exclusion.

It’s especially heartening to have such news when the whirlwind of politics continues to spread anxiety on the one hand and offer assurance of calm on the other hand. After all the stress and disruption COVID has brought us, with seeming endless insecurity, it’s reassuring to have

some news of the avenue forward of possibilities, not chaos, for the new year.

Whatever the changes, we still need to be called by the examples of people who know they must continue to find ways to respond to the new problems and new opportunities to make a difference in their own lives, their families, their communities, their cultures, their societies, their nations and the world—as have many who spoke at the recent ethics conference on the Columbia River.

The article on leadership gives us a new perspective that leadership is not power over others but sharing power with others to move people toward justice, equity and inclusion.

Mary Stamp - Editor

Daily commitment to hike, with dogs, reminds hiker to ‘rejoice always’

Yub Nub, my energetic Pomeranian, was pulling me up that last hill towards the Rocks of Sharon in Dishman Hills. I had been up it multiple times, but it never gets easier. I was tired. Zak, my son, was not far ahead of me, yet nowhere in sight.

Then, “Joy-in-a-Dog-Suit,” Zak’s seven-pound Pom, R-2, sprinted down the hill with a goofy, happy look on his little fur-face. He ran up to me, pranced around my feet, then disappeared again back up the hill. I laughed and trudged up the rest of the hill. He was waiting, perched on top of a rock.

Being at the top of that difficult hill was good. It was gorgeous, but the sense of joy that overwhelmed me came from that little dog.

R-2 loves to hike and never seems to get tired. When he accompanies us on hikes, he fills the world with joy. No matter how difficult or how daunting the hill, R-2’s presence makes the expenditure of energy worth it. R-2 is “Joy-in-a-Dog Suit.”

Our hikes started 281 days before I wrote this. We have hiked every day since March 17, 2020. COVID-19 had come to Washington and was spreading. To try to curb its spread, the governor decreed that schools, gyms, theatres, sporting events and every place people

gathered for food and entertainment had to close. We were told to go home, work from home and quarantine at home. That day, many churches, including the one I serve, Rockford United Methodist, closed to indoor worship until further notice.

It felt as if the wind had been knocked out of me. We were entering a time of fear and uncertainty with this crazy new pandemic. I could understand closing most places. I reminded myself that this was just for a few weeks, maybe. What got to me was that the places I went to fuel my body and alleviate stress—the YMCA and the Jiu Jitsu gym—and the place I have gone my entire life to feed my soul—the church—were closed.

If this was causing panic in me, what was it going to do to the sanity for others? I felt alone and helpless. For my church, I felt useless. This was way too difficult!

That was when we started our hikes, 281 days ago, as of when I sat to write this.

We started because we wanted the daily exercise. We started because Zak was just getting into photography and wanted to go places to use his camera. We started because it gave us an excuse to get out of the house in a socially distanced way. I take photos with my phone, too. I share them on Facebook hoping friends see them.

What has happened is I have discovered joy in the most unexpected and surprising places in the midst of—and even because of—some very difficult times. Getting up each morning at 5 a.m.—and I am NOT a morning person—and going outside armed with a phone and a daily devotional has been life-giving. It is my sanity to intentionally walk inside the artistry of God’s creation looking for joy. It reminds me of the awesomeness of our ever-present God, no matter how difficult life can be. Even when it is freezing cold or pouring rain, or I am struggling up a killer hill, it is the most joy-filled part of my day.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thes. 5:16: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus.”

It is easy to find joy when times are good. It would be joyful to return to life the way it was a year ago, but it isn’t a year ago. Life has changed. We are tired. We have lost friends and family members. We are scared. We are on edge. We can’t celebrate holidays together. My church can’t worship in our sanctuary, and we have been doing this for nine months. At least 281 days! Still the Apostle Paul tells us to “rejoice always” and “give thanks in all circumstances!” How do we do that?

“Joy-in-a-Dog-Suit” brings me joy as I struggle up a difficult hill. I smile just thinking of it: Joy is found in some of the most unexpected and surprising places.

In the last 281 days, I have learned that climbing the toughest hill always leads to the mountain top. On the coldest days, the frost creates lace patterns on dry weeds. On the rainiest days, the soil is nourished and seeds flourish. After the death of foliage on the coldest winter days, spring returns with glorious color. Even after the longest and darkest nights, the sun rises.

God created the world this way—a way that reminds us who holds us in loving, creating, comforting hands—a way that reminds us that even in times of deepest despair, we are not left alone. That by itself is cause for great joy. That is a promise from God: “Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” (Psalm 30:5)

Our hikes started when everything closed because we wanted exercise. We continue out of joy. I share my photos because I want to take friends along with me. So, hang in there. God has this. Things will get better. While we wait, let’s keep our eyes open. We will find joy in this difficult time.

Lauri Clark-Strait - Fig Tree Board

National Council of Churches

Sounding Board

Statement on Racist Threats

Photos for headers & p. 2 ad by Lauri Clark-Strait

National Council of Churches urges solidarity against racial threats

Statement on Racist Threats to U.S. Churches

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) is deeply troubled by the increase in racist rhetoric, threats, and actions leveled against churches, especially Black churches, leading up to and now in the aftermath of the 2020 election results.

Some elected officials have stoked these upticks in hatred and division with racist innuendo and their refusal to accept election results pointing to mostly Black cities as areas where “illegal” votes were cast, none of which is true.

These false claims led to threats against churches that are a part of the NCC family, including Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, and Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church, Asbury United Methodist Church, Luther Place Memorial Church, and National City Christian Church in Washington, D.C.

We unequivocally denounce and condemn these threats, harassment and racist actions that led to people being stabbed during protests in the District in mid December.

After receiving hate mail and phone calls, as well as an increase in malicious comments and harassment on their social media platforms, Ebenezer Baptist announced that “individuals holding hate in their hearts for our church are coming into

our digital spaces and leaving disparaging and often blatantly racist comments, many of which, unfortunately, are directed at our senior pastor,” Raphael Gamaliel Warnock, who has served since 2005.

A candidate for the U.S. Senate, he was a member of the NCC’s Justice and Advocacy Commission and was chair of the Social Justice Commission for the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

NCC agrees with Ebenezer Baptist: “The tactics are destined to divide, distract and exhaust us, and hate will not prevail.”

No church should receive racist threats or have to increase the presence of security personnel.

It is particularly painful knowing Ebenezer Baptist’s past. Until his assassination in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was co-pastor of Ebenezer with his father, Martin Luther King, Sr.

During weekend protests in D.C. by supporters of the President, including the Proud Boys, a white supremacist hate group, churches were vandalized, and Black Lives Matter signs destroyed and burned on church property.

“Black Lives Matter” signs at Asbury UMC, a predominantly Black congregation, and at Metropolitan AME Church, National City Christian Church and Luther Place Memorial Church were burned or destroyed.

“This is unacceptable behavior and it

must end,” stated Jim Winkler, NCC president and general counsel. “As the special Jan. 5 election for the U.S. Senate races in Georgia approach and the false narratives about illegal votes and a stolen election continue, more demonstrations are planned by these groups.

“The threats, racial vitriol and violence continue. They must stop. Our faith demands we speak out against these horrific acts, and urge all people of faith and good will to do the same,” Jim continued.

The NCC participated in and stood with Asbury UMC in Washington, D.C. on Dec. 17 as they blessed and re-hung a new Black Lives Matter sign in front of the church and held a prayer service.

The NCC believes American society needs to be transformed and is committed to eradicating white supremacy as it has been laid bare in the converging crises of global pandemic, economic downturn, racial reckoning and the surge of white nationalism.

We call on all churches associated with the NCC to express solidarity with the five congregations, and lift them in prayer.

The NCC also asks Americans to condemn these acts of aggression and racial vitriol and work to transform our society’s policies to bring justice to all.

We express our hope that anti-racism campaigns will rise above these expressions of hatred and that denials of the

root causes of white nationalism will be forever cast aside and a new transformed society, where the pain felt by the oppressed and the oppressors, is eradicated. We know that love will prevail against the hate of racism.

The National Council of Churches has served as a leading voice of witness to the living Christ for 70 years.

It is a diverse covenant community of 38 member denominations with more than 35 million individuals in 100,000 congregations from Protestant, Anglican, historic African-American, Orthodox, Evangelical and Living Peace traditions.

Members have a common commitment to advocate and represent God’s love and promise of unity in the public square.

It is the leading ecumenical organization that is involved in broad theological study, religious education and spiritual formation, national interfaith dialogue and collaboration, and biblical translation.

In terms of the faith-driven advocacy, the NCC has identified several current priorities. These include: ending racism through our A.C.T. Now! to End Racism initiative, ending mass incarceration, and interreligious relations with a focus on peace.

The NCC works on these priorities with denominational and interfaith partners as well as with secular organizations.

Calendar of Events

- | | |
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| <p>Dec 30 • The Fig Tree Delivery, pick up at Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct, 10 a.m., 535-1813</p> <p>Jan 5, 12, 19, 26 • "The Color of Compromise," an open Zoom book study with Andre Dove, Restoration Church and Spokane Friends, 327-7852</p> <p>Jan 6 • The Fig Tree Mailing, pick up at Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct, 10 a.m., 535-1813</p> <p>Jan 6, 13, 20, 27 • Winter Farmer's Market, Pavilion at Riverfront Park, 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Jan 7 • The Fig Tree Benefit and Board, Zoom, noon, Benefit, 1 p.m., Board, 535-1813, email mary@thefigtree.org for link</p> <p>• Peace and Justice Action Committee, working on national legislative priorities on war, peace and police reform, 5:30 p.m., Zoom, slichty@pjals.org</p> <p>• Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council Racial Equity Committee, virtual, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., 477-3860, spokanecounty.org/calendar</p> <p>Jan 7, 14, 21, 28 • Taizé Prayer Service, The Ministry Institute, Zoom, 4:15 to 5 p.m., 313-5765, bartletts@gonzaga.edu</p> <p>Jan 13 • "Sabes Que? Speakers Series," Hispanic Business / Professional Association membership meeting, 6 to 7:30 p.m., hbaspokane@gmail.com, hbaspokane.net</p> <p>Jan 14 • Showing Up for Racial Justice Committee, book discussion on <i>How to Be an Anti-Racist</i>, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870, slichty@pjals.org</p> <p>Jan 14 • Martin Luther King Jr. Fifth Grade Children's Program, Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls schools, Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations, North Idaho College Schuler Performing Arts Center, 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m., 208-765-3932, idahohumanrights.org</p> <p>Jan 15 • "Let It Not Happen Again: Lessons of the Japanese American Exclusion," Humanities Washington, Clarence Moriwaki shares the story of Bainbridge Island, 6:30 p.m., humanities.org/event/let-it-not-happen-again-lessons-of-the-japanese-american-exclusion-37/</p> <p>Jan 17 • Martin Luther King Jr. Community Celebration and Speaker. Check for plans at mlkspokane.org</p> <p>• Yakima City-wide Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Service. Check on plans with rtrimble51@gmail.com</p> | <p>Jan 18 • Martin Luther King Jr Day Rally and March. Check for plans at mlkspokane.org</p> <p>• Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Peace March. Check for plans at rtrimble51@gmail.com</p> <p>Jan 18 • Martin Luther King Jr. Day of service. Check at mlkspokane.org</p> <p>• NAACP Spokane Membership Meeting, online, email spkncpbr@gmail.com for link</p> <p>Jan 21 • "From Crime to the Classroom: How Education Changes Lives," Though Amili, Humanities Washington, 6 p.m., humanities.org/event/online-from-crime-to-the-classroom-how-education-changes-lives-2/</p> <p>• "Heating Up: The Ethics of Climate Change," Brian Henning, professor of philosophy and environmental studies at Gonzaga University, 6 p.m., https://www.humanities.org/event/online-heating-up-the-ethics-of-climate-change-8/</p> <p>• "Civil Conversation in an Angry Age," David Smith, associate professor of philosophy and religious studies now at the University of Washington, Humanities Washington, 6 p.m., humanities.org/event/online-civil-conversation-in-an-angry-age-5/</p> <p>Jan 26 • Grant Forsyth, chief economist of Avista and former economics professor at Eastern Washington University, 7 p.m., Zoom link at pegnw.org/events</p> <p>Jan 26 • "Is Truth Really Dead in America?" Humanities Washington, WSU professor Steven Stehr, 6:30 p.m., humanities.org/event/online-is-truth-really-dead-in-america-3/</p> <p>Jan 28 • Showing Up for Racial Justice Committee, national legislative priorities focused on war, peace, and police reform, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870, slichty@pjals.org</p> <p>Jan 30 • Eastern Washington Legislative Conference with keynote speaker, panel, discussion, workshops and legislative briefing, "Beyond Words: Doing Justice," Zoom, 8:50 a.m. to 1 p.m., 535-1813, 535-4112, event@thefigtree.org or register online at https://secure.givelively.org/event/the-fig-tree/beyond-words-doing-justice/virtual-2021-eastern-washington-legislative-conference</p> <p>Feb 3 • The Fig Tree Delivery and Mailing, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct, 10 a.m., 535-1813</p> <p>Feb 4 • The Fig Tree Benefit and Board, Zoom, noon, Benefit, 1 p.m., Board, email mary@thefigtree.org for link</p> |
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RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

‘Transformative’ leadership incorporates justice, equity, inclusion

Gonzaga University’s School of Leadership Studies moves students beyond “command and control” leadership to awareness of just, equitable, inclusive leadership models.

As the nation today seems divided on leadership models—power over and power with—a new book expands on “transformative” leadership, a concept developed by Carolyn Shields of Wayne State University in 2010.

Leadership models sound theoretical, but they describe how individuals, organizations, communities, societies and nations function.

Historically, different models have been practiced and studied: authoritarian, bureaucratic, laissez-faire, executive, team, situational, managerial, democratic, authentic, charismatic, consultative, spiritual and servant. Other concepts are transactional, transformational, transforming and transformative.

It may seem like just words, but the words define relationships and goals of an approach, which inform when and how people act.

Kristine Hoover and James (Jim) Mohr recently co-wrote a chapter in the book, *Transformative Leadership in Action: Allyship, Advocacy and Activism*, published by the International Leadership Association (ILA), an association of professionals and academic schools of leadership studies. The book, edited by Jacklyn Bruce and Katherine McKee of North Carolina State University, is a collection of chapters on transformative leadership.

Kristine’s and Jim’s 15-page chapter is on “Developing Learner Identities through Countering Othering.”

“Othering is the process when we define and secure our own positive identity through stigmatization of an other, creating ‘us’ and ‘them’ or ‘in-groups’ and out-groups,” she said.

Kristine, director of the Institute for Hate Studies at Gonzaga for five years and associate professor of organizational leadership, said transformative leadership “is an interactive leadership process that encourages ongoing learning and curiosity.”

Jim, the vice chancellor of student affairs at Washington State University, a Gonzaga leadership studies doctoral graduate and director of the Institute for Hate Studies from 2008 to 2010, values the thinking behind transformative leadership, because it includes “a clear commitment to justice and equity in organizations.”



Kristine Hoover

“Transformative leadership focuses on shared values and understanding,” Kristine said. “It calls everyone into the work of leadership as a communal process, emphasizing we are relying on one another for leadership and not on any single person.”

Jim said the premise of a leadership approach invites critical thinking on how an organization operates. Basic premises are found by asking: Do the organization’s policies and practices justly and equitably distribute power, interconnection and relationships?

“Othering plays a role,” he said, noting that transformative leadership requires “thinking about how our actions affect other people.”

Kristine said today’s division and injustice drive people to seek change and that requires moral courage.

“For generations, transformative leadership skills have been taught in ally, advocate and activist communities as in faith communities, organizer camps, field offices, classrooms and kitchens,” she said.

The book invites readers to do self-work and offers a road map to 21st-century leadership skills, she said.

In the chapter, Jim and Kristine say transformative leadership is a way to build bridges between communities to counter othering, overcome inequities, produce justice and undo prejudice “by deeply valuing the richness of the human experience and asking where that richness is missing in our lives in places we support and frequent,” Kristine said.

Their focus is to help learners build a foundation for people to see the *other* as meaningful and to honor each person’s uniqueness.

“A transformative leader commits people to action, converting followers into leaders and lead-



Jim Mohr

ers into change agents,” Jim said.

It’s about leadership for the common good to establish systems that sustain an organization’s values and remove barriers to achieving goals, Kristine said.

“Today’s struggle calls for accountability and moral courage,” she said. “We need to offer a critique to achieve a healthy society. A critique needs to be in balance so shame and fear do not impede progress toward promise and hope.”

“The greatest learning happens at the edge of discomfort, when we are being stretched by intentional conversation. Critique is not about shame, but about accountability linking us to where we want to be: the promise of the beloved community,” she said. “Accountability is critical to decentering whiteness by bringing in more perspectives to understand how the world can work for all of us.”

As an example, she pointed to the need to consider gender perspectives and experiences in rules for tenure. Rather than having rigid rules and deadlines based only on meritocracy without considering different life experiences, a university can value the

enrichment of human life, such as women taking off time to have children, rather than completing tenure within six years.

“We learn by bringing all voices to the table to understand how we are organized as a society and as neighbors to create a world that allows all of us to flourish,” she said.

Kristine said the focus is on conversation and dialogue with the goal of learning, reaching an “aha” moment, rather than necessarily coming to consensus or agreement.

“Dialogue is different from debate or arguing, which serve a different purpose,” she said. “Neither is a shouting match based on different facts.”

“Transformative dialogue invites people who are intentional about listening, feel safe and are ready to communicate,” she said. “It is about relationships and dignity.”

“We ask people where they can learn about their own backgrounds and the experiences of others—reading books, attending performances, watching documentaries—and observing where a diversity of people are and are not, then exploring why. This is work for all of us as part of transformative leadership to build skills and behaviors to create welcoming communities,” she said.

At the end of the chapter, Jim and Kristine raise questions to invite readers into discussion to learn from others, think about their biases and challenge their assumptions:

- What support do people need to live up to their values?
- How do people have integrity and authenticity as leaders committed to a purpose bigger than themselves?
- What choice do people have to engage in leadership to take a stand in an organization for justice and equity?

• How do people create more equitable organizations?

“With transformative leadership, we can create a climate in which diverse voices are not just present, but also are heard and draw attention to issues,” Jim said.

“We need to look at how we can change as individuals because if we change as individuals, we change organizations,” Kristine added. “When I look at my values, biases and assumptions, I can see how I *other* others and how there are new ways to interact, so policies and practices are relationship-based.”

Transformative leadership changes relationships to change how organizations function, she said, adding that while Gonzaga’s School of Leadership Studies considers various theories of leadership, transformative leadership names justice and equity, which are needed to move society toward “the beloved community.”

Transformative leadership calls for individuals to be part of a rich fabric of solutions, rather than being “white knights” or “white saviors.”

Transformative leaders are “upstanders, rather than bystanders, calling people to action,” said Kristine.

“We hope people will know their actions can shape what happens,” she said, “and how we can build understanding when we seem to live in different worlds with different values and different information/facts.”

While the book is geared for those in higher education, she said it offers tools and insights for anyone.

“The skills lead to better organizations, better society and better government,” Jim said.

For information, contact Kristine at 313-3665 and GIHS@gonzaga.edu or Jim at 358-7526 and james.mohr@wsu.edu.



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