Camps find creative ways to do camp

By Mary Stamp

Just as faiths vary in their perspectives about opening their buildings for worship, so do camps of the faith communities.

The camps are making decisions about opening based on their facilities and the feasibility of keeping spaces sanitized so campers are physically distant and safe.

Some camps are closing. Some camps are offering alternative programs for families, individuals and congregations because they have spaces that allow people to be separated. Some camps are opening but expect fewer campers. Some camps were still deciding by press time.

The Fig Tree contacted the area camps and includes stories of those who responded to share their discernment process and plans.

N-Sid-Sen Camp and Retreat Center for the Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ (UCC) lost its spring guest groups, allowing it to do a more thorough spring cleaning than usual.

Mark Boyd, managing director, said N-Sid-Sen offered its space, as did its sister UCC camp, Pilgrim Firs in Kitsap County, to be a site for isolation and quarantine for first responders, but N-Sid-Sen’s

Kroc Center diverts focus from fitness to help with food, services in pandemic

By Kaye Hult

As Wade Isley, corps ministry specialist with the Salvation Army Kroc Center in Coeur d’Alene, looked back at the recent months with COVID-19 at the center stage, he realized that the public view of the Kroc Center has transitioned.

The center opened in May 2009. People have perceived it as a fitness facility from the beginning. Now that it has stepped up to help with the pandemic, people understand it to be the Salvation Army.

Until Idaho’s shelter-in-place orders began to relax in mid-May, the Kroc Center was closed as a fitness facility.

The ministry staff, of which Wade is a member, the emergency management team, the advisory board and about 90 staff have participated in the effort to help the Coeur d’Alene community.

In the emergency management team, he operates as the spiritual care officer.

The catalysts for the outreach efforts are Majors Don and Ronnda Gilger, he said. The Gilgers are the senior pastors of the Kroc Church and executive directors of the Kroc Center.

As soon as the community began to set emergency operations in place, the Kroc team reached out to other local agencies and coalitions.

They forged partnerships with Coeur d’Alene Backpack, Community Action Partnership and the Post Falls Food Bank. They loaned staff to the Panhandle Health District Emergency Call Center, both the Coeur d’Alene and Post Falls Food Banks and the Emergency Operations Command (EOC) of the Sheriff’s office. They joined the Homeless Coalition.

The Kroc Center building warehoused EOC supplies. Staff made cloth masks.

The center participated in the Kootenai United Food Drive at the Silver Lake Mall, providing 500 100-pound or smaller boxes of food. They provided personal protective equipment (PPEs) and hand sanitizer, made dinners for volunteers, and provided hygiene kits for homeless people.

Staff volunteered to make food

Agencies partner in COVID to serve women and children

Serving the community in a pandemic has brought creativity and partnership among Vanessa Behan, YWCA Spokane, and Women & Children’s Free Restaurant (WCFR).

The nonprofits teamed up to support women, children and families experiencing poverty, food insecurity, family violence and trauma.

They are providing food, care and outreach with a grant from the COVID-19 Community Response and Recovery Fund of the Inovia Foundation and with other donations from the community.

The Women & Children’s Free Restaurant provides meals to Vanessa Behan and YWCA Spokane Safe Shelter residents.

Vanessa Behan and YWCA refer clients to food services at WCFR, which provides information on resources available to families in crisis through YWCA and Vanessa Behan through pocket guides with lunches and other food distribution.

“We don’t know when we will open again for group rentals or what will be possible in summer of 2021,” he said. “We know that churches are looking at different ways to do ministry now. Can we sing at camp fires or play community games? Will we need to limit numbers in cabins? Will we be able to load campers into a bus to go up the river for a float trip?”

There are many questions about camp traditions, activities, housing and meals.

Continued on page 3
reductions. The solutions to the economic crisis are the solutions must exclude fossil fuels and yield long-term structural emissions the whole creation is more urgent than ever.”

In early May, Operation Noah, an ecumenical response to climate change, said none of the major oil companies comply with the Paris agreement targets. Former archbishop of Canterbury, the Rev. Rowan Williams, said, “The current health crisis highlights the need for coherent international action. Can we recognize the global threat of climate change and so means taking practical, effective steps to reduce our lethal dependence on fossil fuels.”

The multi-faith announcement—from Methodists, Anglicans, Catholics, Buddhists and more—includes British Jews, who divested its $571.5 million portfolio from fossil fuels in February.

Illustrating the need for a just recovery, the Episcopal Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation for the Archdiocese of Semarang, in Indonesia, said, “The COVID-19 pandemic is time to reflect and to act. We are faced with a spiritual crisis of death. We have to revive our ecological hope, in massive repentance of humankind, by taking the path to more sustainable living.”

Faith leaders call for global divestment, more than 350 of the global total of more than 1,400. The action by faith groups pressures governments to enact policies that lead to a comprehensive, just recovery.

Catholics’ participation comes with Pope Francis’ Laudato Si’ 2015 encyclical on climate change and ecology. In April, 21 Catholic organizations with $40 billion in assets committed to selling off their fossil fuel holdings by 2021 with the support of the Catholic Impact Investing Pledge. Toamas Isoula of the Global Catholic Climate Movement, said: “Every dollar invested in fossil fuels is contributing to climate change. We need to divest and invest in a low-carbon path to realizing the Catholic Impact Investing Pledge. Tomás Insua of the Global Catholic Climate Movement, said: “Every dollar invested in fossil fuels is contributing to climate change. We need to divest and invest in a low-carbon path to realizing the Catholic Impact Investing Pledge.”

Advocates gather to talk about how the FAN legislative agenda fared in the past session and strategize for the rest of the year on issues that include climate

During May and June, the Faith Action Network (FAN) held Regional Spring Summits around Washington State.

During the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order, the Habitat-Spokane and North Spokane Re-store has continued to provide safe, affordable housing to families in the Spokane community.

The COVID-19 crisis and re-
sulting economic hardship showed us that safe, affordable housing is more critical than ever,” Michelle said. “Putting God’s love into action means giving 1987 proven permanent, affordable housing for 330 low-income families.

For information, call 534-2552 or visit www.habitat-spokane.org.

For information, call 534-4038 or visit www.habitat-spokane.org.
Continued from page 1 delivers to food banks, the Catholic Charities and other Salvation Army Corps. They also assisted St. Vincent de Paul’s operations.

The Kroc Center at the University of Idaho in Moscow is a place to visit, a place to be—underwritten by local businesses, organizations and individuals who want to ensure Second Harvest is a community asset. The Kroc Center serves as a community resource center for Second Harvest.

The Kroc Center offers a wide range of services, from job training and education to mental health services. The Kroc Center is a place where people can come together to build relationships and support one another.

The Kroc Center is a place where people can find hope and guidance, whether they need help with employment, housing, or mental health. The Kroc Center is a place where people can find the resources they need to move forward.

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Yakima groups support efforts of fruit packing workers on strike

Volunteers with the Yakima Immigrant Response Network (YIRN) are part of the Faith Action Network’s 2019 Justice Leadership Award, not only observing ICE flights out of Yakima but also now support workers striking in May at seven fruit packing plants in Yakima, Selah and Naches.

Members Danielle Sarkatty and Mary Lopez told about YIRN’s efforts and their reasons for involvement. YIRN, which began in 2017 in response to President Trump’s travel ban and in support of the immigrant community of ICE raids, also documents and challenges raids. Danielle also talked about its role in building respect for people of different backgrounds.

YIRN supports immigrant communities through Know Your Rights presentations, Family Safety packets, workshops, employer outreach, rapid response in support of the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network Hotline, raid verification observer training, rapid response, accompaniment and advocacy, and helping parents set up a power of attorney for their children in case they (the parents) are deported.

YIRN responds to community needs that arise and members participate based on interest.

Members accompany immigrants when they go to court, because ICE has been ramping up its arrests outside courthouses.

Danielle gave an update on YIRN’s effort to track flights that deport immigrants or transport them to detention. Their goal is to raise awareness, generate solidarity, advocate for change and let immigrants know they are not alone.

She is among the five members who continue to observe ICE flights, and on May 19, the 64th flight transported 43 men and five women to the Mexican border for deportation.

Airport officials moved the observers to a smaller space so only five could come, not the previous 10 who observed regularly.

“We have counted 4,179 people transferred to the Tacoma Detention Center or deported to the border from the Yakima airport,” she said. “I have been there for all but four flights.”

She reported that only for the last month have ICE agents and their contractors with GEO Group and IAC Airways been wearing masks and doing medical checks before they put people on the plane.

“News reports say the people deported do not have COVID-19, but we do hear of people arriving in Guatemala and testing positive,” she said.

Danielle grew up in Yakima, living in 1979 to go to college in Chicago and worked after graduation with the YMCA International Division in Central Java. She then worked with the Indochinese Refugee Resettlement program through the YMCA in Houston, after which she also worked with the Saudi oil company and the Indonesian consulate. After eight years in Houston, she returned to Indonesia, where she raised her three children for 14 years. She returned to Yakima in 2002.

Danielle brings to YIRN a strong commitment to social justice.

In Jakarta, she started her web design consulting firm and volunteered with a nonprofit publishing house, writing and selling guide books to foreigners. From 1989 to 1997, book sales raised $100,000 to $200,000 annually to fund projects in Indonesia for clean water, scholarships, tuberculosis education and development.

Danielle said lived abroad and seeing the impact of poverty changed her outlook on life.

“I don’t take for granted the prosperity of living in America because I have lived in places where many struggle to survive,” she said.

This affects her outlook and relationships, and inspires her engagement with the immigrant community and her desire to be part of the solution.

“I want people to have a fair shake. The most vulnerable people are undocumented people, who are exploited and marginalized,” Danielle said. “They just come to the U.S. to make live better for their children.”

After working with people of different nationalities abroad and in Yakima, she finds “involvement with other cultures is the spice of life.”

Danielle currently works as a web developer with businesses, governments, schools and nonprofit globally and in Washington.

She also helps coordinate community members who make masks for farm workers, fruit packing warehouse workers and grocery store workers. They hope to collect more than 5,000 face masks to give to farm workers in the county, aware that the health of those who pick and pack food is essential to everyone’s survival.

“Despite Yakima having the highest rate of COVID-19 growth on the West Coast, few frontline retail workers wear masks,” Danielle said. “Our cases have gone up with 75 to 110 new cases every day in the last two weeks.”

News reports and the health department say 63 percent of workers in the Yakima Valley are considered essential workers because they are in agriculture,” she said.

Thousands work on storage and packing lines at seven packing plants where there are strikes because of concern about working conditions, health precautions, disease spread and hazard pay.

Mary, who is a YIRN member and an organizer working with OneAmerica in Yakima, actively supports workers who are striking but have no union.

She said strikers are asking employers to provide better COVID-19 safety measures, such as masks, six feet of social distancing in buildings, a $2-hour hazard pay increase and protection from retaliation for protesting.

Mary has helped bring them food and talks with them to hear their stories and build their confidence.

“One woman worked for the same company for 26 years and is still being paid minimum wages,” said Mary, who not only listens to their stories but also shares them on Facebook.

Many are mothers with children to support, so they continue to work, but are scared for their health.

During a phone interview, she passed the phone to Jenny, a member of the Yakama Tribe from Goldendale who has worked at one warehouse more than two years, and to William, an African American who has been there since last August.

Both heard that someone in their warehouse tested positive, but they were not informed who it was or whether the person was in their section.

They said their employer has installed Plexiglas between them and the fruit, and thin plastic sheathing between each worker, but workers were not always able to be six feet apart.

Both said strikers want supervisors to respect workers and communicate better with employees.

William said the company provided too few masks, so most wore homemade masks. Often hand sanitizer and soap dispensers run out so they cannot wash their hands.

Despite regular site inspections by the Yakima Health District checking on social distancing and sanitizing surfaces, the district confirmed 29 COVID-19 cases among workers at one warehouse.

According to an article in the Yakima Herald, inspectors said measures employers have in place meet guidelines, but “employers could do more to reduce exposure and improve communication.”

By May 29, four of the seven resolved and the Governor announced new rules for agricultural industries as “essential” workers.

Mary said OneAmerica seeks a peaceful world where everyone’s human rights and dignity are respected, communities appreciate differences and work for justice and equality.

OneAmerica believes the pandemc shows everyone’s health and wellbeing depends on their neighbor’s health, and “we are only as safe and healthy as the most vulnerable members of our communities, so ensuring their wellbeing is how we ensure our own.”

For information on YIRN, call 509-966-1525 or email yakimas-responsenetwork@gmail.com.

For information on the strike, call 509-386-3525 or email mary@weareoneamerica.org.

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Lutherhaven is finding alternatives to traditional camps for summer

For the first time in 75 years, the Lutherhaven Ministries board of directors and management staff announced May 13 they would suspend its children’s and youth camps until the summer of 2021, with the promise of safe, alternative options in 2020 for families and day camps for local congregations.

“This was not an easy decision. We believe that summer camp is more than just a ‘summer’ and ever, but after months of consulting with our team of healthcare experts around the nation, it became clear that suspending typical activities is the right thing to do for the safety of our communities,” said Bob Baker, executive director of Lutherhaven Ministries.

Lutherhaven Ministries operates four camp properties on Lake Coeur d’Alene and Shoshone Mountain Retreat and Ranch, and拇指门纳德的湖边的爱德蒙河，Shoshone Mountain Retreat, and McMinnville Meadows in the Pacific Northwest.

Bob spoke of the discernment, prayer, patience and wisdom that went into choosing an“alternate June” for the summer camps during a global pandemic.

“In the past 24 hours, which speaks of being ‘sure of what we hope for, certain of what we cannot see,’ became the guiding verse for Bob and his team in making the decision.

“We are not alone in this season of quarantine. We struggle with the same camps around the nation—and businesses,” he said.

Lutherhaven offers options for families, groups, individuals.

“We consulted with health and camp experts around the nation. We came to this decision because we care about the wellbeing of children and families.”

Lutherhaven Ministries welcomes campers from across the region, nation, and world,” Bob said. “This summer, we had campers coming from 18 states with different coronavirus restrictions, timeframes and re-opening schedules. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other healthcare guidelines for youth camps recommend programs for ‘locals’ only.

In recent survey of 350 camps, only 33 percent were opening as usual and 51 percent were opening with adjustments, he said.

The Lutherhaven Ministries Health Care Alliance was unanimous in their support of no-traditional youth camps at Lutherhaven sites, he said. “The very nature of camp is closeness, the opposite of social distancing,” said Bob. “Camp at Lutherhaven is close friendships, face-to-face conversations, high fives, fist bumps, hugs, singing, s’mores around the campfire, beds bag, talk on the bull field—physical contact. This season of COVID-19 complicates all that, beyond how we feel we can reasonably keep kids and their families back home healthy and safe.

“Camp has so many moving parts. How do we disinfect life Jackets between each use, and canoe paddles, gull, putters, house and dozens of arrows launched into trees—not to mention bathroom sinks, door knobs and s’more sticks,” he said.

Realizing traditional camps could not occur, Lutherhaven Ministries leaders began to plan for new, creative ways to use the camps. The Lutherhaven board and staff are creating alternative ways for families to enjoy camp. Plans are underway to open July 1 for families to rent individual campsites and cabins, and to enjoy water sports, campfire meals and the outdoors. The facilities are also available to small groups from local congregations and agencies with measures to ensure participants can practice safe social distancing.

“Lentilew says, ‘Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders us...and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.’ That is exactly what we are trying to do in this new season,” said Bob. “While this summer’s changed plans are not the race many intended, it’s a race marked out for us by God, a race that we run with campers, staff, parents, pastors and grandparents.”

Families can choose from planning creative ways to use the camps—provides opportunities for hiking, fishing, canoeing and cabin rentals, family camps and retreats, congressional and agency camps, a women’s retreat, online high school leadership experiences, volunteer and college-age opportunities, and a weekend for families with a special needs child.

Those who registered for camps may donate their deposit, transfer it to 2021, leave the payment on their account for a future event or receive a full refund.

The staff team is working with its health care team to develop health and safety protocols in line with guidance from the CDC and regional health district. Those protocols will be announced by June 30. Individuals and groups from areas with high rates of COVID-19 may not be able to come until their county has a health department “all clear.”

There are plans for a high school Servant Leadership Experience for ninth to 12th graders searching a faith-building experience while serving neighbors. There will be two-three week sessions that combine video and live online meetings with staff and peers, including Bible studies and discussion on what it means to be a Servant Leader. Teens will be mentored to develop meaningful service projects in their own communities.

“Lutherhaven is fortunate to be able to craft alternative plans, because many camps around the region and country are closing altogether,” Bob said. “The ministry still strives to safely make camp a possibility for as many families and teens as possible, of every age and ability.”

For information on options, refunds and news, visit lutherhaven.com.

N-Sid-Sen is offering ‘Families at Camp’ to give families a get-away

Continued from page 1

“‘In the future, we will likely have a nurse on staff and have a medical check required for campers before entering,” said Mark. “I have heard of some suggestions being explored. “We need to look at how to do camps safety.””

Mark is grateful to have so many creative people thinking through this.

This summer, volunteer camp directors are also thinking how to connect with campers.

“We won’t be doing virtual camp, because we believe outdoor ministries needs to be out-of-doors and people have already been online more than normal,” he said. “Ideas are being developed. We have to change. Change is hard, but this has come so rapidly,” he said. “It’s an opportunity to look at why we do what we do and whether we do what we achieve what we want.”

Conference Minister Mike Destler has been challenging leaders and committees saying, “We do this so that...and urges leaders within the conference to set the ultimate goals and ways to tweak what they do to achieve them.

“We have had incredible things happening around the conference, generating positive energy to look at a different future,” Mark said. “We would have thought of Families at Camp?” he mused.

Families who have been isolated this winter will cot together Thursday to Monday. They will be able to swim, hike, canoe, have campfires, dive into scripture and challenge themselves.

The camps started with pastors’ families coming May 8 and 15. Andy Casto,Lang, pastor at Westminster Congregational UCC, and her husband Jim, pastor at First Congregational in Colville, were looking for a change to get away after Easter and learned about the Families at Camp, so they included their son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren who were isolating with them.

“Going to camp was the perfect get away. We could walk all over, throw rocks in the lake, swing, canoe, go inside warm, dry cabins when it rained,” she said. “Mark said each family is as-signed a canoe, paddles and life jackets.

A family came each of the last two weeks of May, and three the first week of June. More are booked. There are also RV hookups for self-contained RV’s.

“We are following recommenda-tions from Idaho and Washington, the American Camping Assosiation and the Center for Disease Control, opting for the most stron-ger and safer July 1. Two volunteers will come for the summer to clean between families. There will be limited contact between staff and families. On Mondays when families leave, they will open the windows and doors. The space sits open until Tuesday afternoon, when staff will begin intensive clean- ing, wipe all surfaces, wash linens and quilts all day Wednesday and Thursday morning.

Guests will bring their own food and take leftovers home. On Mondays and Fridays all cancella-tions, along with no summer camps, it will be a tough year financially, but the Pacific North-west Conference received a Paycheck Protection Program loan/grant and plans a fundraising this fall.

Staff are also exploring offering spaces in the fall for individual retreats to bring income.

Miah 6:8, “What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?”

Those words were in Mark’s mind thinking of summer pro-grams.

“Doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly led us to suspend 2020 summer programs we could not provide safely,” said Mark, “but meant we did not close the camp.

“The camps in 2020 will still change lives,” he said. “We will encourage people always to take the camper they are at camp into the bigger world that needs the jus-tice, kindness and humility they experience at camp.”

For information, call (209) 689-3489 or visit www.n-sid-sen.org.

Summer camps seek to find their way through pandemic

"Helping area non-profits grow & prosper"
Camp Spalding is holding onsite option open while developing Plan B

In late May, Andy Sonneland, director of Camp Spalding near Newport, said the camp would work within restrictions of the four-phase reopening in Washington. With clarification of conditions for reopening still ongoing, the camp had not decided if it would offer onsite camp or alternative programming. So they are preparing for both.

Restrictions will determine if we will bring camps onsite, he said, adding that another update will be made the week of June 15 to 19 giving the summer plan calendar of sessions, with protocols and a registration link.

“Plans may change at any time if restrictions are increased or lessened,” he said. “Adaptability is the theme for the summer.”

“We will wait as long as possible to allow for the best possible outcome,” he said. “If we can run onsite camps in any capacity, we will, even ramping up on a short notice if restrictions ease as the summer progresses.” Andy said.

With Washington’s four-phase reopening plan, he is more optimistic about onsite camps, while continuing to work on planning from the American Camping Association (ACA), the Center for Disease Control and state and county restrictions.

The ACA released a guidebook on how to do overnight camps. Camps in Washington are run by nonprofit ministries — are to campers, summer staff and students who do community service.

He told 42 college age summer staff members they could come for an online experience of Christian service, but they would not be able to be paid because of uncertainty about summer income.

Of those, 25 agreed to come as volunteers, prepared to do plan A or plan B with no overnight stays onsite.

Plan A depends on the state being in Phase 3 after June 22, which would allow gatherings of 50, so a high school leadership camp with more than 70 campers would be capped at no more than 50 campers and counselors.

“Numbers will be down in any case. Last year we had record attendance. We recognize some families will not be comfortable sending their children to camp. That alone will reduce numbers,” he said.

Phase 4 might happen by July 15, allowing for major sporting events and concerts in the open.

“We would have a registered nurse and set up health protocols for a safe experience, working with the local health district,” said Andy, who has been directing the camp operated by the Presbyterian of the Inland Northwest for 30 years.

Parents will need to sign a liability waiver, he said.

The alternative ideas include campers 1) coming for onsite day visits, or 2) meeting with small groups in Spokane or online to build relationships between staff and campers.

“We are planning a summer discipleship program with volunteer staff, each assigned to interact with eight ‘campers,’ nurturing relationships and interaction on what life would be like with Christ. Each leader will have three groups based on age and gender to shepherd through the summer. Possibilities would include online craft and nature activities from camp.

In a letter to staff and campers, Andy said he believes that the camping ‘ministry will emerge intact on the other side of the crisis.’ He pled to find ‘creative ways to fulfill our mission in the midst of these challenging times.”

While few think traditional camp translates to an online format, Andy, in conversations with partners, senses “the Holy Spirit providing fresh inspiration and cool ideas to fulfill the heart of our mission this summer: for kids to come to grow closer to Jesus.”

Staff will develop ways to meaningfully engage with campers, focusing on relationship building to connect youth to Jesus.

“We will not charge families for the program we provide, unless we cannot offer traditional camp,’’ he said.

With no revenue from spring groups, no anticipated summer income—usually more than half of the annual revenue—and uncertainty about fall groups, Camp Spalding, like thousands of businesses and nonprofits, faces significant financial challenges in the months ahead. Andy said summer expenses will be down about 90 percent, reducing income needs.

On a recent walk, Andy sensed God saying, “You will see me move this summer!”

“God is walking with us through the midst of these challenging times.”

Ross Point plans to open with protocols

Marta Walker, administrative assistant at Ross Point Camp & Conference Center at Post Falls, said with cancellations they have moved youth camps into July and combined camps.

“We are working on protocols to meet regulations with cleaning, sanitizing and dining room service,” she said. “We purchased four automated hand sanitizing stations.”

In the dining room, tables will be six feet apart and meals will be served by staff cafeteria style, not family style as usual.

“We are still working on details,” she said.

Ross Point will offer three weeks of camps planned by the American Baptist Churches in the Northwest and will offer space for rental to groups.

In Idaho, public schools will be at the end of stage four by then, with normal capacity of 50 to 75.

“Our number of COVID-19 infections are less than in Spokane, but part of the issue is that we would draw from Washington State, which has more restrictions,” Marta said.

Ross Point hires summer staff and organizes with volunteers leading the programs for senior and junior high youth the week of July 12, junior camp and children’s camp (second to sixth graders) the week of July 19, and family camp the week of July 26.

Expecting fewer campers, she said they can spread out in the cabins to be six feet apart.

“Ross Point has been in a healthy financial situation for quite some time, so we will do okay,” she said, “but we faced a huge loss for half of March, all of April and May, and most of June.

“We have emailed those in our database to let them know of the change of pace and plans to keep camp safe,” she said. “Some are excited, but some are concerned about safety.”

“Most of the activities will be outdoor in the sun and fresh air,” Marta pointed out.

For information, call 208-773-1655 or visit rospoint.org.

“Kroc plans to run day camps

The Kroc Center in Coeur d’Alene will offer summer day camps beginning June 15, said Colin Lynch, programs manager.

They will add two-hour mini camp sessions per week of the week of July 4. Camps will run through the week of August 17 to 21.

“We will try to make the camp experience as normal as possible, within guidelines set by Idaho’s Governor Brad Little,” said Colin.

全年 will welcome children of all ages. Half-day camps are for ages four through five. The mini day camps will run for five days, two hours each day.

They will focus on topics that are age specific for ages four through 14.

In July, the focus is on arts and dance.

While the camps are open to all children in the community, they also function as child care for parents who are working, not only for those in jobs considered essential but also for those in non-essential jobs.

At the beginning, campers will be dropped off and picked up in outside. Staff will engage in extra cleaning, both of the facilities and making sure campers wash hands between activities, said Colin.

“We will practice social distancing, which will require some activities, such as contact sports. We have cancelled field trips for early sessions,” he said.

Anticipating Idaho to be in Phase 4 after July 4, he expects things to be normalized by then, but continue social distancing and increased cleaning measures.

For information, call 208-763-0641 or visit krocida.org.

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Camp Cross opts with “loving one another’ and keeping people safe

In a May 19 video and letter to members of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane and Camp Cross alumni and registrants, Bishop Gretchen Rehberg announced she had cancelled camp sessions at Camp Cross on the western shore of Lake Coeur d’Alene for the summer because of the pandemic. “Camp Cross has been a vital part of this diocese since its begin-

ning in 1923, and it is a premier formation immersion opportunity, not only for our children and youth, but also for our adults,” she said in an earlier announcement.

While plans were underway for the summer’s programming and expanded offerings, leaders began discerning how to safely hold camp and what would happen if there was still a stay-at-home order. In conversations with Canon John Palantine, camp director, Skip Hubbard, business and facilities manager, the camp nurse, and camp teams around the country, the bishop decided to have a “robust” summer at camp.

Gretchen committed to follow Church of England’s demands to love one another while also following guidelines of local, state and federal health districts and officials. “We want to be part of the solution to this pandemic, not con-tribute to the problem,” she said.

The question of how to safely hold Camp Cross sessions came up many times. Information was ever changing. Initially, the dio-

cese decided to delay the start of camp, hoping that by July the situation would be better.

On May 19, the bishop wrote: “Every generation has its seminal events, days and times that will never be forgotten, times with impact beyond a day or season.”

She remembers where she was when the Challenger exploded, the Berlin Wall came down, and the 9/11 terror attacks took place.

“Every generation and person has times that are joyous, and times full of disappointment,” Gretchen said. “The question is how we respond.”

“We are currently living in such a time, a global pandemic, and so much of what we experience as normal life has been disrupted. We are not in our congregations worshiping together,” she said.

There is much stress as families do school at home, people lose jobs, businesses close, medical personnel struggle and people are uncertain what is next.

“In the midst of this, we are followers of Jesus, called to con-tinue to walk together in the way of love. Our call is to always act in ways that show love of God and love of neighbor,” she said.

“As bishop, the guiding principle behind my guidelines are that all of our actions be loving towards our neighbor.”

While the decision not to open Camp Cross this summer was “heartbreaking,” she said her times at the camp had been part of the happiest and most formative of her life, as true for genera-
tions of campers from this diocese and beyond.

And she and the other staff decided it was impossible to offer the programming and fellowship the camp experience entails.

Talking of health and safety changes, too many aspects central to campers’ experiences—singing, worship, living in comm-
munity, sharing in sacred circles and small groups, playing games, enjoying the waterfront activi-
ties—were being stripped away and changed in ways that would negatively impact the experience.

So Camp Cross joined other camps on Lake Coeur d’Alene and across the United States who made the hard but necessary deci-
tion to not open this summer.

Summer staff will still work on camp facilities and do leadership training. John and Beth said they are thinking about “what’s next.”

Gretchen invited prayers for the campers, counselors and staff who will have a different summer than they anticipated, including those from other camps on the lake and around our country.

“Camp Cross is not simply a location on McDonald Point, Lake Coeur d’Alene. It is a way of being, a way of offering the love of God to all, a way of creating a community of love. We might not have camp sessions this summer, but Camp Cross still exists and continues in new ways,” she said.

“This year will be a year we will never forget. It will change us,” she said. “Let us make sure that it is a change for the better, so all we do may be in service and show love of God and love of neighbor.”

This is the first season it has not operated a summer program for the diocese’s 32 churches from the Cascades of Washington through North Idaho. Those who registered will be contacted about their registration. For information, call 624-3191 or visit campcross.org.

Methodists offer virtual camp fires that keep up to 275 campers involved

Alan Rosgad, executive direc-
tor of the camping program for the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Church (UMC) camps, said that leaders have made the hard decision to cancel the pro-
grams at its four camps: Camp Indiana on the Kitsap Peninsula, Ocean Park Camp at Long Beach, Lazy F Camp near Ellensburg and Twinlow Camp on Spirit Lake near Rathdrum, Idaho.

Virtual camps are already under-
way, however, on Youtube and Facebook, with campfires and singing at Indiana, Ocean Park and Twinlow. Lazy F has an introduction of staff.

Twinlow also has had virtual day camp stories and crafts for nine weeks. Alan said that 50 to 275 camp-

ers follow the videos—hopefully singing along in isolation.

“It’s a way we can continue to connect. We send emails to con-
stituents to let them know, and we hope families are watching them together online,” he said.

Alan said they had looked at opening with the American Camp-

ing Association guidelines, and following the local health depart-
ments, but realized the programs would have to be altered with groups not interacting much, mostly outdoor activities, lim-
ited housing capacity, small cabin groups and eating outside—all keeping social distancing in mind.

“It’s daunting that we can’t do what we usually do. We love camp, knowing its impact on kids, giving families a break, and offer-

ing spiritual growth,” Alan said.

Plans are still on for providing retreats and perhaps some limited programs later in the summer as restrictions allow.

“We are looking at safe alternati-
tives to our traditional programs,” he said. “For now, we will con-
tinue to develop virtual camping experiences.”

For information, call 206-

384-1209 or email arogstad@ pnwumc.org.
Funeral directors finding online platforms helpful in arranging services

Leila Bradish, general manager of the Dignity Memorial Funeral Homes in Spokane, said online platforms make it possible to arrange services for those who stay at home or who live far away. Those platforms are also being used for pre-planning.

The Dignity Memorial network she manages includes Hazen and Jaeger in Spokane and Spokane Valley, Thornhill Valley Chapel in Spokane Valley, Ball and Doders Funeral Home and Advantage Funeral and Cremation Services in Spokane, and Sirate Funeral Home in Davenport.

Leila said Dignity Memorial is North America’s largest provider of funeral, cremation and cemetery services with a network of 2,000 funeral homes in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico.

Wohl is the primary platform they use. The funeral home sends email invitations and shares the computer screen and videos for what Leila said is a “more dynamic presentation and way to connect” than phone or email.

“We also offer creative ways for friends to send messages,” she said. “We have put messages left by friends and family at the online obituaries on balloons and staged the balloons in seats during the service.

“Services are more modest, because few can travel or leave their homes to attend. We rotate visitsation times so more people can come to a committal now and a proper service later.”

Rick is concerned about the impact of COVID-19 death.

“We have done graveside comittal services, looking out for the safety of staff, families and the community.

“Most services in recent months have been graveside committals, but there have also been a few outside graveside funeral Masses for immediate family, standing six feet apart. At funeral Masses “only the priest receives the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, while those in attendance pray and partake spiritually,” Rick said.

Staff sanitize the tent, chairs and equipment before and after the services. The ground crew wears appropriate PPE. Some family members wear masks, and the funeral homes make masks available for all family members, even though masks are not required when outside, six feet apart.

“We purchased video equipment so we could make videos available to families who were unable to come,” Rick said. “But many families take their own videos.”

He notes that his parish, St. Joseph’s in Otis Orchards, as well as churches in Spokane Valley; Ball and Dodd Valley; Thornhill Valley Chapel in Spokane, and Ball and Doders Funeral Home and Advantage Funeral and Cremation Services in Spokane, and Sirate Funeral Home in Davenport

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Fairmont Memorial director is concerned that limits delay grief process

David Ittner, CEO of Fairmont Memorial Association, owns 130 acres of cemetery sites including Fairmont, Greenwood, Woodlawn, Riverside, Pines, Pines South and Spokane Memorial Gardens, plus the Heritage Funeral Home. The association also owns Pacific Northwest Cremation.

The cemeteries are also sites of events. Greenwood’s Easter Sunrise Service was cancelled but they recorded the message for social media. Fairmont, Greenwood and Riverside hold Memorial Day activities that have included a car show, concerts and a walk through flag-lined roads. This year, those events were cancelled and American Legion Riders led a caravan of cars through the flag-lined roads.

David said Fairmont Memorial Association has handled the majority of the more than 30 COVID-19 deaths in Spokane County, with both cremations and burials.

“They learned early that the risk of staff getting infected by working with people who died of COVID-19 was low, but our staff use PPE, such as face masks and gloves,” he said. “Aware of the danger of the virus, they have been cautious.”

When a family loses a loved one, it is often the worst day of their lives, but now there is added stress with declining pandemic services are limited to immediate family, limiting their ability to celebrate the loved one’s life and say goodbye, he said.

People are unable to begin the grieving process the way they want or need to,” he said. “Our task within restrictions is to provide the family a meaningful experience, learning about them by meeting on Zoom, a video conference or phone.

David has learned two things:

1) It is important to have a service to celebrate a person’s life, and not doing so short changes families and impedes their grieving process.

2) The number of deaths because of COVID-19 has brought to mind the need for people to discuss their mortality, so Fairmont has had more people call or come to do pre-planning to save family members from making decisions after a death.

David said that over the last 30 years, more people choose cremation. While nationally 50 to 55 percent choose it, in Washington, more than 75 percent choose it.

“There seems to be a correlation between choosing cremation and the decrease in religious affiliation. Some choose it because they want simplicity and want to save costs,” he said.

“People shy away from conversing about mortality, and discussing burial or cremation, so more choose cremation because they perceive it as easy and quick. Many of them are less likely to have a service,” he said.

Cremation still involves choices of how to memorialize a person. Some keep an urn of ashes, some bury the urn or put it in a niche at the cemetery.

David’s path to the funeral industry was through landscaping.

After earning a degree at Washington State University in crop science and turf management, he was assistant grounds superintendent at the Spokane Country Club. Then he was offered the opportunity to be grounds superintendent at Fairmont in 2003 and transitioned through different roles to become CEO, learning in the process that it takes to run a nonprofit cemetery that is like “a little city” with roads, grounds, monuments and buildings to maintain.

With COVID-19, most services are at the graveside, so David said it is particularly important to provide a nicely landscaped setting.

Fairmont is also using a service called One Room that allows it to livestream services for those who cannot come. The family drives with a son or daughter who drives with a son or daughter. Because of his faith as a Christian, David said he believes it is important to create a good working environment for his staff.

“If our employees are thriving, their natural empathy and abilities will shine through, and they will take better care of the people we serve,” he said.

“From diving into God’s Word, I believe our role is to serve others, love others and put others’ interests before our own, along with loving God with all our heart,” he said.

For information, call 326-6813 or email dittner@fairmontmemorial.com.

Hennessey supports families after services

Melissa Johnson, managing partner of Hennessey Funeral Home and Crematory at 2203 N. Division, said the funeral home has a chapel, viewing room and reception hall. Each could potentially hold 10 people, six feet apart, but most services have just used one room for family.

The extra space helped when the mother of 10 children, with numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren died recently.

The family decided that just the husband—who drove with a son and daughter—would be allowed to gather for services.

Melissa Johnson, Disease Control (CDC) guidelines indicate embalming is highly suggested for COVID-19 cases.”

Using a photograph, she has embalmed bodies of people who died traumatically or in accidents if the family wants the comfort of seeing the body restored.

Melissa earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and forensics at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn. She worked for coroners there and in Phoenix, going to death and accident scenes, taking the decedent to the morgue and determining what took place.

In 2010, she earned an associate degree at Mesa Community College in mortuary science. She started with Dignity Memorial there and moved to Seattle for seven years, earning a master’s degree in funeral science.

She learned that Hennessey, a full-service funeral home with the legacy of four generations of the Hennessey family, was seeking a partner, so she sought to fulfill that role.

Melissa said Hennessey’s serves families beyond the funeral services.

“We connect with and support families after the phone calls end and neighbors stop bringing meals. We also help families understand the jargon on a death certificate,” said Melissa.

Some keep an urn of ashes, some bury it or put it in a niche at the cemetery or at a graveside, so David said it is particularly important to provide a nicely landscaped setting.

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Faith Leaders group hears health perspectives of effects of COVID-19

In late March, the Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience of Eastern Washington and North Idaho (FLLC) saw a need to speak truthfully about the pandemic with facts and a commitment to “love our neighbors as ourselves.”

In April, Bob Lutz, M.D., Spokane Regional Health District Public Health Officer, spoke at the FLLC Truthful Tuesday Vigil on these challenging times, lifting up the spirit of the local community and the importance of keeping everyone healthy and well. The message was so uplifting that it inspired other faith leaders to also engage in virtual congregations and offices.

Leaders and pastors also spent time developing alternative means of gathering through live streaming and Zoom. They have not only used those tools to gather for worship, but also for meetings, worship, and sharing events, such as social gatherings and even in the case of the Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ, to gather for its Annual Meeting virtually.

The Inland Northwest Presidency announced the Seattle office, something that was projected for the future but became reality in recent months. “As COVID-19 emerged and ‘stay at home’ orders were announced in March 2020, the presidency office closed and staff members began working remotely. They worked closely with the faith leaders at working as a virtual office,” said the Rev. Sheryl Kinder-Pyle, Presidency executive secretary.

“Committees and offices continue to work on Zoom for the time being, but eventually will be at church buildings.”

Even the addition of a “cares” emoji, the equivalent to saying “prayer” in texting, has led to some confusion among social media users. The emoji is being used to respond to posts about the pandemic and other matters.

In the midst of the pandemic, many faith leaders and leaders of conscience are finding new ways to engage with their communities and share messages of hope and support.

Despite numbing quantity of tragedies, may we still be outraged and act on them?

Joan Borkewitz shared a poem from the Jewish community, and Lani Delong brought encouragement from the atheistic point of view, including that the wearing of a mask is an act of compassion for others.

Hispanics and other communities are not deterred from their stance on justice. As media chase, lap up and analyze every development, let this be a summer of action—even if by virtual meetings and protests, letter writing, phone calls and phone texts. Our faith calls us to care for people’s lives and social justice. May we persevere through numbing clouds of disaster and disaster and act with care and action.

Mary Stamp - Editor
Unity in the Community will be Aug. 15

Unity in the Community is planning to hold the 26th annual multi-cultural celebration from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 15, at Riverfront Park.

Co-organizers April Anderson and Mareesa Henderson say it’s a time to celebrate the joy of similarities and differences that make people stronger and build community.

The event includes a Career, Education and Health Fair, a Cultural Village, a Senior Resource area, live entertainment, free K-8 school supplies, free bike helmets and other activities.

Unity in the Community began in 1994 as an event of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church to break down racial and cultural barriers. In 2004, AHANA (African American, Hispanic and Native American Association) took over the event.

The YWCA shelter for domestic violence victims is full with some in overflow space at local hotels.

Vanessa Behan adapted their new space to serve more school-aged children and increased capacity by dredging that stressful times create immense family violence.

Because of the pandemic, more victims of domestic violence and their children are isolated at home with their abusers. The stress of the pandemic, with financial challenges, job losses and school closures, adds to an already dangerous environment, said Amy.

Local law enforcement officials report they have not seen an increase in domestic violence, but they worry that the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order has increased incidents and suppressed victims from reporting them, she said.

Three nonprofits collaborate to serve

Continued from page 1

Three leaders decided to partner when Innovia announced funding to increase service for those impacted by the COVID-19 emergency and in need in the community.

WCFR provides free meals and groceries to nearly 400 families a week, and meals to 19 home-less shelters and care centers. Its weekly meal count exceeds 23,000, an increase of 20,000 meals since mid-March.

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Virtual conversation explores impact of pandemic on people of color

Robert and James Wilburn hosted a virtual "Courageous Conversation Memorial Day" weekend, drawing more than 30 to a conversation on "The Impact of COVID-19 on Black and Hispanic Communities."

Vivianne Griffiths, an adult nurse practitioner from Louisville, Ky., and Vicki Hines Martin, a psychiatric nursing professor and assistant dean at the University of Louisville, joined Walter Kendrick, a member of the Washington Commission on African American Affairs and pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church in Spokane, along with Roberta and James, co-founders of Wilburn and Associates.

Panelists told of the pandemic’s disproportionate impact on communities of color, and looked at health and safety issues that mean more risk in their communities.

Vivianne quoted journalist Zeeshan Aaleem, who said “Coronavirus isn’t an equalizer but a magnifying of inequality.” Vivianne also quoted the Latino Civic Alliance (LCA) calls faith, nonprofit and community partners together to urge the Governor and Legislature to establish protocols.

To the workers will continue into the fruit packing companies in the Yakima valley. The Farm Worker Ministry of the Spokane Washington Commission on African American Affairs and pastor of Morning Star Baptist Church in Spokane, along with Roberta and James, co-founders of Wilburn and Associates.

The LCA has a toolkit for congregations. On May 21, the alliance appealed to stand with agricultural workers so they have protections needed during the pandemic and beyond. Before COVID-19, farmworkers were vulnerable to illness from productivity and worker conditions, she said. The risk to the workers will continue into the future.

November. The LCA has a toolkit for congregations. On May 28, the Rev. Connie Yost of the Farm Worker Ministry Northwest announced that four of the fruit packing companies in the Yakima strike have settled with their workers. Three others were still in talks.

Connie said the ministry has sought "to give these essential workers essential pay, essential safety, and essential dignity and justice."

For information, call 206-661-0051, email nina@latinocivilcivicalliance.org or visit www.latino-civicalliance.org.

The Latino Civic Alliance (LCA) calls faith, nonprofit and justice organizations and tribes to stand with agricultural workers to protect strikers.

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Latino Civic Alliance calls for faith and other organizations to protect strikers

The Latino Civic Alliance (LCA) calls faith, nonprofit and justice organizations and tribes to stand with agricultural workers to protect strikers.

The Faith Action Network (FAN) and Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC) are among the organizations joining together to urge the Governor and Legislature to protect workers by enforcing compliance with workplace standards and establishing protocols.

“As the pandemic spread in the ag industry, workers became sick or died, putting the supply in danger,” said Nina Martinez of the LCA board. “In Washington, where 95 percent of the agricultural workforce is Latino, data shows COVID-19 spreading at an alarming rate among them. “The food industry has a responsibility to produce safe food in a safe workplace, and the government is responsible for setting safety standards, conducting inspections and ensuring that standards are met,” Nina said.

“Food and ag workers are deemed essential, critical to the U.S. infrastructure, but have been excluded from benefits,” she said. "Washington has one of the largest concentrations of farm workers and also has one of the largest training and higher education programs in the country. Food in terms of hunger and access; community and social context in terms of social integration, community engagement and discrimination, and the health system and care in terms of quality, insurance coverage, provider availability and provider linguistic and cultural awareness.

In the pandemic, more minorities are in essential services but are lowest paid, lowest housed and lowest vaccinated. African Americans and Hispanics struggle to meet household needs, earn lower income and cannot social distance. As the richest country, we can do better,” he said. Walter urges the state commissions on African-American and on Hispanic affairs to work together.

“With COVID-19, we need to ask who and what we are. Do we want to go back to the normal 1990s, when everyone should have health care and enough food. “The richest country, we can do better,” he said. Walter urges the state commissions on African-American and on Hispanic affairs to work together.

“From the time we were in slavery through after we were freed, the country has been built on our sweat and labor, but since slaves were freed in 1863, we had no health care or social safety net. “I don’t want to return to what was normal in January. The capitalistic economic system does not support us. We need something better,” he said.

“Because of the high rates of poverty and incarceration, there are more cases, and many are not even counted,” Walter said, urging efforts to awaken people to deal with systemic inequities.

Walter added that many people of color are on the front line working in grocery stores and as essential workers tending to the 111,000 deaths from the pandemic are African Americans. “How much is a life worth? When we open the country, some will die. That’s the price of the economy,” he said. "We need to inform our community that this is killing us. Going back to work for many is a death sentence, and people of color are often the ones on the front line.”

Walter reviewed history of how our ancestors died to make change. “Our spoken the high mortality on the Navajo reservation, one of the highest mortality rates in the world. He spoke of the dilemma of African Americans who are unemployed and must go back to work.

Walter also suggested that people have their doctors write letters to employers about their medical conditions that put them at risk, so they can continue to receive unemployment.

Roberta added that “it’s time to come together and think of the bigger picture.”

She hoped the conversation makes participants more informed so they are better able speak to the issues.

For information, call 542-7636, email willburnassociatesllc@gmail.com or visit willburnassociates.org.

Leonhard reviewed history of how our ancestors died to make change. "Our people of color are often the ones that are hard with the state losing funds, because African Americans should have health care and enough food. As the richest country, we can do better.”

Walter said the Spokane Ministers Fellowship received a $15,000 Innovia grant, which he, as its president, has shared for African American pastors to give to members in need, because they know the needs.

The crisis and virus show the inequities of the systems and systems of oppression.

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