

# Diversity Digest



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# Message From The Chief Diversity Officer



## **Robin Kelley, Ph.D.**

Chief Diversity Officer

Dear Community Members,

You are in for a treat for the December Diversity Digest. This edition reflects on the month's cultural and religious holidays and our progress in creating a culture of belonging. December is a time for joy, celebration, restoration, reflection, and renewal. Most importantly, December is a time to embrace our differences and similarities by recognizing the full array of cultures, traditions, and perspectives that affirms all our humanity.

This month, we honor Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Bodhi Day, and many others. Some special holidays are celebratory, and some are more reflective and introspective. Our diversity is our strength and let us continue to create spaces where everyone feels seen, valued, and respected.

I hope you enjoy all aspects of the Diversity Digest this month, including the faculty, staff, and student spotlights, the Education Corner, Media Recommendations, and more. I am proud of the work that our students, faculty, and staff have done over the fall semester. These efforts demonstrate what individuals and groups can achieve with passion, purpose, and intention.

I encourage you to connect with someone featured in the digest, attend an event listed, or get involved in something meaningful you see in the digest. Additionally, consider getting involved with the Office of Inclusive Excellence by participating in workshops and programs, or joining one of our affinity groups or committees.

Wishing you a joyful, peaceful, and lovely holiday season and New Year!

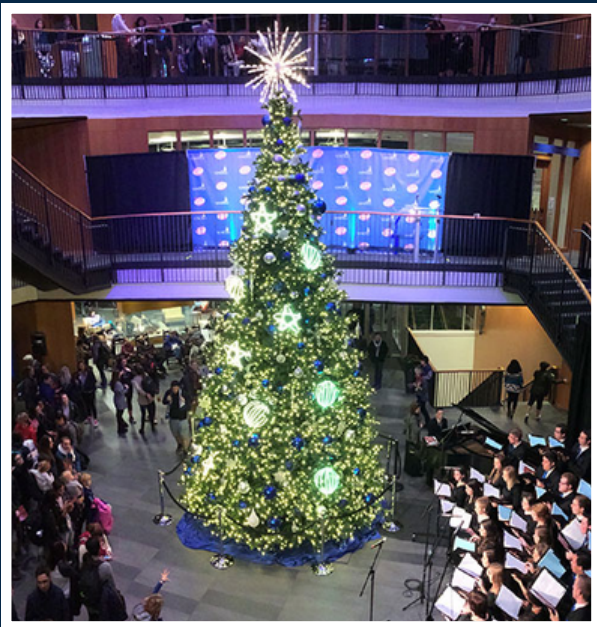
Sincerely yours,  
Robin Kelley, Ph.D.

# HOLIDAYS & TRADITIONS

As the winter falls upon us, so do many holidays and traditions that are celebrated by our diverse student body throughout the months of December and January. We want to highlight the many traditions and holidays celebrated by our students, but first, what is a holiday and tradition?

A holiday is simply a day of festivity. Though commonly associated with national or internationally recognized festivities, a holiday is just any day which is typically accompanied by a day of rest in commemoration of an event. This can be understood through the British meaning of the word- a vacation.

A tradition however, is a pre-established practice. This can be cultural, religious, or even something uniquely celebrated just by you or within your family. Traditions are passed down from generation to generation and carry great significance for those celebrating them. Holidays are often accompanied by traditions that vary based on location, culture, religion, and identity.



## Traditions at Gonzaga

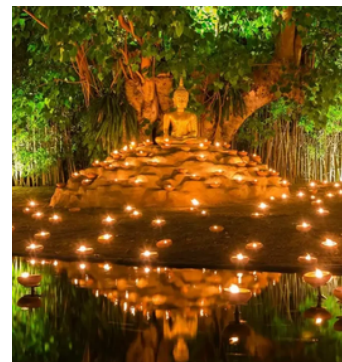
The Gonzaga University Tree Lighting Ceremony has been held annually in the Hemmingson Center since its beginning in 2015. The event is free of cost and takes place at the Hemmingson Rotunda. Last year, the Big Bing Theory, a student a cappella group sang carols to spread the holiday spirit. The lighting of the tree, regardless of holiday traditions celebrated represents a "gathering for community," and the ending of the semester for students, faculty, and staff.

# DECEMBER HOLIDAYS & TRADITIONS

## BODHI DAY

*December 8th, 2024*

Bodhi Day is a Buddhist holiday that commemorates the day that Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree. The holiday is primarily observed in Eastern Asia which is home where Mahayana traditions of Buddhism are practiced. In Japan, this holiday is known as Rohatsu while in China, it is known as Laba. Bodhi Day is a time to reflect on Buddha's teachings and study the Dharma. Some Buddhists may decorate trees with lights, beads, and reflective ornaments.



## OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

*December 12th, 2024*

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe or The Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe is a holiday associated with the Catholic Church and is celebrated primarily in Mexico and parts of Latin America. It's a Catholic Feast Day that commemorates the appearance of the Virgin Mary, Mexico's patron saint. Many families set up altars in their homes with images, decorations, candles, and flowers. A special mass is held at churches around the country followed by a feast with traditional foods.



## CHRISTMAS

*December 25th, 2024*

Christmas is celebrated by Christians to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The holiday is primarily observed on December 25th, but the date varies depending on the region and religion. In the United States, families decorate their homes and give gifts. In France, they host a feast called Le Réveillon. Japanese people have a tradition of ordering KFC for Christmas Dinner. There are a wide variety of traditions and cultural expressions associated with Christmas.

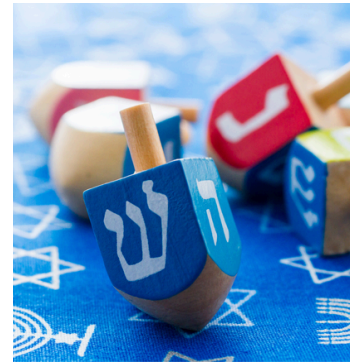


# DECEMBER HOLIDAYS & TRADITIONS

## HANUKKAH

*December 25th, 2024 - January 2nd, 2025*

Hanukkah is an 8-day Jewish festival known as the Festival of Lights. The word Hanukkah translates to “dedication” referring to the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. The lighting of the Menorah is a tradition associated with Hanukkah. During each night, one candle on the Menorah is lit with blessings that vary. Playing dreidel is a traditional game during Hanukkah that was originally created to aid Jews to learn Hebrew. Hanukkah is celebrated by Jewish people all around the world.



## KWANZAA

*December 26th, 2024 - January 1st, 2025*

Kwanzaa is a week-long cultural holiday that celebrates African-American culture and is based on African harvest festival traditions. The seven principles, Nguzo Saba, are celebrated on each day of the holiday. Each night, a candle is lit to represent one of the seven principles. On December 31st, a feast called Karamu is held to celebrate community and features African and Caribbean dishes, music, and dancing. On the last day of the holiday, gifts (Zawadi) are given to children and guests.



## INCWALA

*December 28th, 2024*

Incwala, Festival of the First Fruits, is celebrated by the Kingdom of Eswatini. This holiday marks the beginning of the first harvest season and the main ritual of kingship. Prior to Incwala Day, there is a festival that lasts four days. People perform rituals and ceremonies for the king on the first and second day. The third day is called Big Incwala where king tastes the first fruits of the harvest. The final day is marked by purification, song, and dance.



# EDUCATION CORNER

## Universal Human Rights Month

Universal Human Rights Month is observed each December, highlighting the importance of fundamental rights and freedoms worldwide. The month includes Human Rights Day on December 10th, commemorating the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948. This observance emphasizes the universal human nature of rights such as equality, freedom, and dignity, promoting awareness and advocacy for human rights protection.

During this month, organizations and individuals often host events, workshops, and campaigns focused on topics like social justice, supporting marginalized communities, combatting discrimination, and encouraging civic engagement. This month is an opportunity to reflect on global human rights issues and take action locally or internationally.

**For more information on Human Rights Day, Check out:**

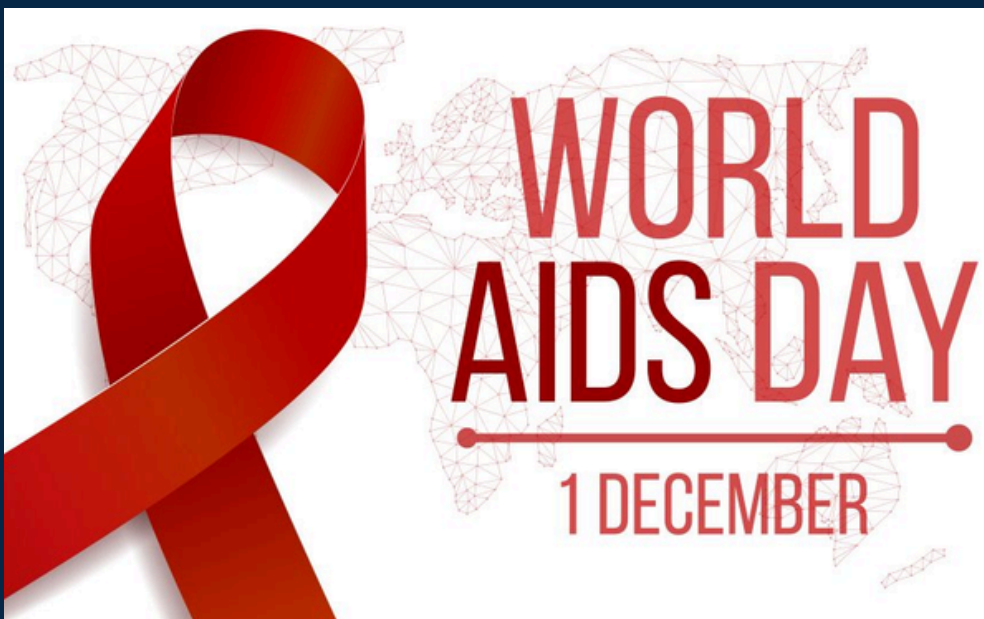
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/human-rights-day>



# EDUCATION CORNER

## World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day, observed annually on December 1st, is dedicated to raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, supporting those living with the virus, and remembering those who have died from AIDS-related illnesses. Established in 1988, it was the first ever global health day and remains a crucial occasion to unite people worldwide in the fight against HIV, reduce stigma, and advance education about HIV prevention and treatment.



**For More Resources,  
Check out these  
Websites:**

[WorldAidsDay.Org](http://WorldAidsDay.Org)

[CDC.gov/World-Aids-Day](http://CDC.gov/World-Aids-Day)

Each year, World AIDS Day has a theme to focus awareness efforts. Recent themes have emphasized “Ending the HIV Epidemic” and “Global Solidarity, Shared Responsibility.” Many organizations hold events, offer free testing, and share updates resources to advance understanding and destigmatize HIV/AIDS. By deepening our understanding, we continue the work of building an inclusive, caring community that supports health equity and access to resources for all.

# EDUCATION CORNER

## International Day of Persons with Disabilities



**For more resources, check out this website:**

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities>

**For support at Gonzaga University:**

<https://www.gonzaga.edu/academics/academic-resources/center-for-student-academic-success/disability-access>

International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed annually on December third. Established in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly, the day promotes the rights, well-being, and inclusion of all people with disabilities in all spheres of society and development. It also raises awareness about the barriers that individuals with disabilities face and encourages global efforts to create more equitable and accessible environments. Highlighting the importance of inclusivity is essential in societal, political, and economic domains as is educating people about the challenges and discrimination faced by persons with disabilities. Advocacy centered around IDPD aims to inspire actions that foster accessibility and address inequality. Each year the UN selects a theme for the day, focusing on specific aspects of disability inclusion.



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## Anissa Foster

Senior, Marketing and Management Information Systems

### **How would your friends describe you in three words?**

Tenacious, thoughtful, funny

### **What brought you to Gonzaga's School of Business?**

The care and diligence that Gonzaga instills into their students at the business school is what made me look at Gonzaga as an option when applying to colleges. I was also looking for a small community to continue my education and found that at Gonzaga's School of Business, they have a tight knit on-campus community and a community that stretches to many places around the world.

### **Fun Fact:**

I am left-handed but if I'm in a rush to jot down notes, I have been seen picking up a pencil with my right hand and having perfect handwriting.

## **How does the Jesuit experience inform your work in and out of the university?**

I think that with Gonzaga's Jesuit education, I have gained a deeper level of care that I put into my work and actions outside of the classroom. Instead of just completing tasks, I now consider the impacts of what I do. I have also gained a sense of responsibility and purpose that drives what I want my future after Gonzaga to look like.

## **What extracurriculars have you been involved in throughout your career?**

I volunteer with a non-profit organization called 4-H. I mentor youth members and teach them how to build workshops, presentations, trainings, and how to become a strong youth leader. I absolutely love the work that I do in 4-H and see myself continuing to volunteer in this role post-grad. I also intern with USL Spokane's Zephyr and Velocity professional soccer teams. This is both team's inaugural season and it has been so much fun working with them. I work specifically with the Partnership Fulfillment department but have interacted with all departments. On gamedays, I help with giveaways and making sure the sponsor of the match is where they are supposed to be. This internship has helped me to have a more concrete vision of what I want to do post-graduation.

# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



## Salena Beaumont Hill

Teaching Fellow, Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies

Dr. Salena Beaumont Hill (she/her), is a member of the Apsáalooke (Crow) Nation and a descendent of of the Amaskapi Pikuni (Blackfeet) Nation. Dr. Hill earned her Ph.D. in Counselor Education & Supervision from the University of Montana (UM) in 2020. Salena has spent her career working in student support services at UM and Little Big Horn College leading programs serving underrepresented students. Her work in college access and student advocacy has been very rewarding. She recently served as the Director of Inclusive Excellence at UM where she developed the office of Inclusive Excellence for Student Success which supported UM's Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ students. While at UM, Dr. Hill also assisted with justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across campus.

*"I'm definilty proud of having that tribal lineage"*

*- Salena Beaumont Hill*



[View the full interview here.](#)

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT



## Phillip Tyler

Associate Director of Campus Security & Public Safety

Phillip Tyler has extensive professional experience in public safety, leadership, and community service. His professional journey in the areas of management and security began in the United States Air Force as a Law Enforcement Specialist. Further professional pursuits included working in the Spokane County Sheriff's Office as a Corrections Sergeant then a Corrections Lieutenant as well as being a Certified Public Official. Officer Tyler demonstrated his leadership skills through positions as President of Spokane NAACP and Wisdom in Words. As Associate Director of Campus Security and Public Safety his work focuses on ensuring a safe and secure campus environment through strategic planning, crisis management, and fostering community partnerships.

*"I love ensuring safety, but it's also about fostering a sense of community where everyone feels supported and cared for."*

*- Phillip Tyler*

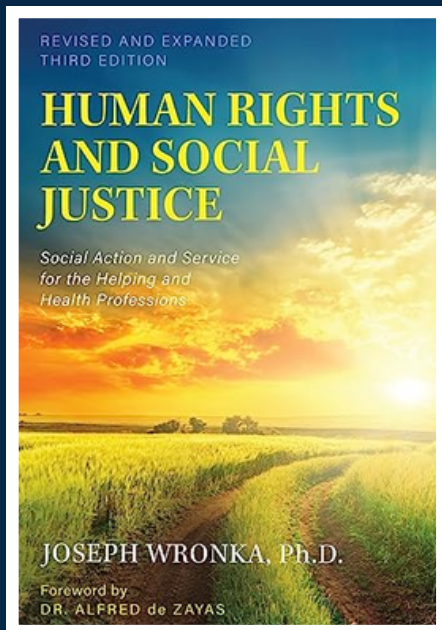


[View the full interview here.](#)

# MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS

## ***Sounds of Shabbat and the Holidays***

A curated musical journey through the Jewish calendar by Hadar's Rising Song Institute. This collection combines source texts and seasonal prayers with videos, songs, and playlists that explore the themes of Jewish holidays.

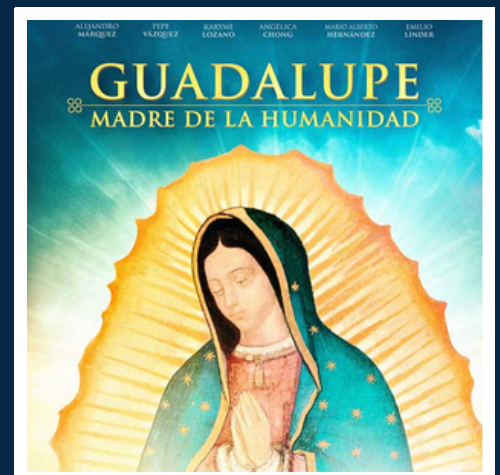


## ***Human Rights and Social Justice* By Joseph Wronka**

*Human Rights and Social Justice* (3rd edition) released in 2023, offers a compelling perspective, framing human rights as the cornerstone of social justice. With a focus on integrating human rights principles into professional practices, such as helping health professionals. The text provides tools and insights for fostering systematic change and promoting equity.

## ***Our Lady of Guadalupe***

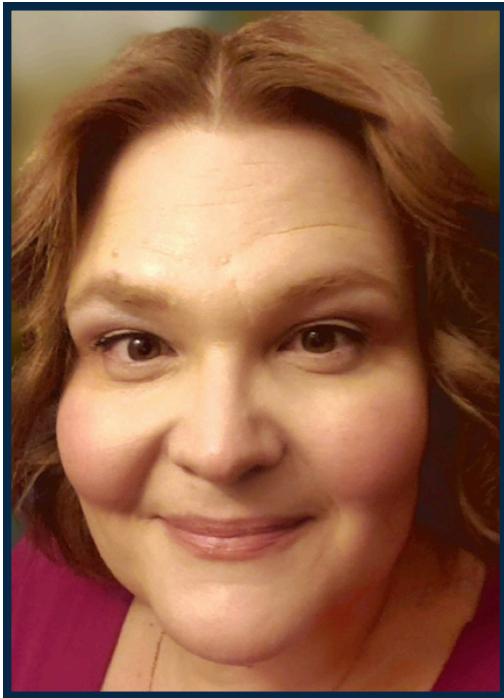
A documentary by Goya Producciones is set to arrive in U.S. theaters on February 22, 2024, gathering personal testimonies from individuals whose lives have been transformed by The Virgin Mary. These stories, recorded across diverse cultural and geographic landscapes; Mexico, the United States, Spain, and Germany—highlight miraculous events and deeply moving experiences of faith.



# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### Office of Inclusive Excellence



#### **Meet Christine Burge**

*Assistant Director, Discrimination and Harassment Prevention*

Hello! I am thrilled to have joined the mission-centered Gonzaga community and to have become a member of the Office of Inclusive Excellence team! I have lived in Spokane for 20 years but lived in many other places before that including two different small islands. I earned my Bachelor of Arts from The Evergreen State College and am very interested in pursuing Gonzaga's Master's in Organizational Leadership. I have worked in higher education for more than 13 years

and have spent the last six years as a part-time Title IX investigator and I am excited to make Title IX compliance my chief focus in my new role. I have three children, Duncan, Angus, and Bronwyn and two cats, Phelyx and Smudge and a dog named Miso. For fun, my husband Chris and I enjoy cooking, eating, entertaining, and playing cards. A fun (and random) fact about me is that I love tardigrades because they are resilient, peaceful, and adorable under a microscope!

#### **IELA Workshop 1**

**Where:** Contact the Office of Inclusive Excellence

**When:** Friday, December 6th, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

#### **Colleagues of Color Holiday Happy Hour**

**Where:** Maryhill Winery, Summit Pkwy Suite 100, Spokane, WA 99201

**When:** Wednesday, December 11th, 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### Queer Student Union

Gonzaga University's QSU (Queer Student Union) is a club that supports LGBTQ+ students by raising awareness and fostering acceptance. Founded over 20 years ago, QSU was originally known as HERO (Helping Educate Regarding Orientation). In 2018, they changed their name to QSU. The club aims to build community and create a welcoming space for LGBTQ+ identifying students. QSU hosts a variety of events, such as a club camping trip and the annual QSU drag show. In the Spokane community, the club works with Spokane Pride, the Odyssey Youth Movement, and the Spectrum Center. Currently, QSU has 180 members and is working on increasing their collaboration efforts both on and off campus.

QSU's Signature event is the annual Drag Show, which was the first UACC event in the Hemmingson Ballroom. Nate Mongan, the Drag Show Event Chair, shared that Drag is an art form that impersonates a gender. It can be comedy, entertainment, and a form of activism. This event is important to the club because it provides students with a safe space to express themselves. This past October, QSU hosted their 10th annual Drag Show themed "Night of the Living Drag Killer Kweens" in line with Halloween. The event included a variety of snacks and mocktails, and encouraged students to come in their Halloween costumes. The program featured three drag queens, one drag king, and four student performers, with a student participation section allowing audience members to lip sync and walk on the runway. Nate Mongan hopes to see this event grow with more audience participation and Spokane community involvement in the next year.



*Photos from QSU's Drag Show  
By TJ Aguma*

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### South Asian Student Union



The South Asian Student Union (SASU) was founded in November 2022. During their freshmen year, Deeya Chandran and Anisa Grewal wanted to create a space where they could celebrate Diwali away from home. They were asked if they wanted to create a student organization and decided to start SASU as co-presidents. Now, SASU has grown significantly, with efforts to engage the Desi community in Spokane and South Asian students at Gonzaga University.

Last year, SASU held their first signature event "Diwali - The Festival of Lights" which featured a variety of performances and a buffet of South Asian cuisine. For this year's event, they renamed their event "Mela" which is Sanskrit for Festival or Gathering. The theme was "Journey of Dreams" which showcased SASU's growth as individual students and as a community. The performances were representative of what brought the SASU members here and where they aim to go next. They had their first club-wide performance with 50 performers and volunteers for the event, hosted multiple vendors selling jewelry and henna, and sold 240 tickets to Gonzaga students and Spokane community members. Deeya and Anisa are looking forward to future "Mela" events and how the underclassmen will put their own spin on it.

Outside of their signature event, SASU hosts weekly club meetings and a Holi event in the spring. Some of their club activities include playing carrom and learning Garba. This Spring, SASU will be hosting their Holi Event which is a significant Hindu Festival where people gather together and throw colored powder. Outside of their club meetings, they collaborate with the Natanam Dance School in Spokane which specializes in Bollywood and Bharatanatyam dance. This year, SASU hopes to grow their club and continue to provide a community for South Asians at Gonzaga.



# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### Campus Events

#### Zags for Abilities

**About:** Join us for an inspiring afternoon at the first-ever Zags for Abilities Fair! Hosted by the Department of Special Education, this event brings Gonzaga and local community organizations together to offer unique opportunities to deepen your understanding of disability inclusion and advocacy. Learn about groundbreaking disability rights legislation, discover strategies to foster radical inclusion, and explore how unconscious bias impacts people with disabilities. Don't miss this powerful event to celebrate abilities, challenge perspectives, and commit to building a community where everyone is seen, valued, and included! Light lunch and beverages are provided! Open to all community members, students, faculty, and staff!

**More information:** Ridge Bynum (bynum@gonzaga.edu)

**When:** Tuesday, Dec 03, 2024 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

**Where:** Cataldo Globe Room

#### Hanukkah Party

**About:** The Jewish Student Union will be hosting a Hanukkah Party! Come celebrate Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of the lights, with them! For more information, reach out to [club-jewishstudentunion@zagmail.gonzaga.edu](mailto:club-jewishstudentunion@zagmail.gonzaga.edu)

**Where:** Hearth Room

**When:** Thursday, December 5th, 2024, 6:30 pm

#### Student Choreography Showcase

**About:** Enjoy the variety of work presented by the Student Choreography Class of Fall 2024, Boundless Dance Classes, and more. This concert is sure to impress as students showcase creativity, vision, and leadership through completed dance works performed by students.

- Recommended for ages 6 and up
- Performance Length: 60-90 minutes with no intermission
- Seating Type: Reserved with back row holds for adjudicators both nights and front house right 4 seats reserved both nights.

Adult tier 1 (center) \$15

Adult tier 2 (wagons) \$10

Student/Youth \$8 (anywhere)

**Where:** Magnuson Theatre

**When:** Thursday December 5th and Friday December 6th at 7:00 pm

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### Campus Events

#### Candlelight Christmas Concert

**About:** Join us for our annual Candlelight Christmas Concert, A Gonzaga community favorite tradition! This year, the choirs will join forces with the Gonzaga Jazz department and special guest performers from the community. With a newly added Saturday matinee performance, we hope you'll make this concert part of your holiday season!

*\$10-25 (Tickets On Sale!)*

**Where:** Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center

**When:** Saturday, December 7th, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm; 7:30pm-9:00pm  
Sunday, December 7th, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

#### Mass for the second Sunday of Advent and Photos with Santa

**About:** Join us for some festive family holiday fun, in addition to photos with Santa (available immediately), we'll have cocoa and cookies, family games, a coloring station, and we'll be offering vintage Gonzaga Christmas tree ornaments for purchase as well as an opportunity for kids to mail a letter to Santa and receive a reply at home before Christmas!

**Cost:** Free

**What:** Mass for the Second Sunday of Advent

**When:** 10-11 a.m.

University Chapel, College Hall, 3rd Floor (502 E Boone Ave Spokane, Wash. 99258)

**What:** Photos with Santa

**When:** Noon\*-2 p.m.

New location this year: John J. Hemmingson Center Ballroom, 3rd Floor (702 E. Desmet Ave., Spokane, Wash. 99202)

*\*Families attending Mass receive early access and line priority for photos. This is a very popular event and lines for photos may be long.*

#### Campana Sobre Campana

**About:** Celebrate the holiday season with Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar and Ballet Folklórico del Rio Grande. This vibrant show weaves the cherished Mexican traditions of Mariachi music and folkloric dance into a magical and memorable story of the season for the entire family. Reserved Seating. Open to All Ages - Family Friendly

**When:** Saturday, Dec 14 at 7:00 PM and Sunday, Dec 15 at 2:00 PM

**Where:** Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center, 211 East DeSmet Avenue, Spokane, WA 99258

**Cost:** \$30-52

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### Spokane Events

#### Jingle-Jangling back to River Park Square!

**About:** Santa Claus returns this holiday to River Park Square and his place at the foot of our show-stopping 50-foot tree.

*Admission: Free*

**Where:** 808 W Main Ave Spokane, WA 99201

**When:** November 23, 2024 - December 24, 2024

#### Visit with Santa Claus at River Park Square

**About:** Children within every spectrum of special needs and their families are invited to a private photo session at River Park Square on Sunday, December 1, to experience the time-honored tradition of a visit with Santa Claus. Timeslots are available from 9-10:30am. Visits with Santa are free. Photo packages that capture holiday memories will be available for purchase at the event.

**Where:** 808 W. Main Spokane, WA 99201

**When:** November 23, 2024 - December 24, 2024

#### A Christmas Carol

**About:** A Christmas Carol tells the beloved story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly old man who despises Christmas and the joy it brings. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by three ghosts who take him on a journey through his past, present and future. Through these experiences, Scrooge learns the true meaning of Christmas and the importance of compassion, empathy and generosity. Contact them Here: (509) 325-2507

*Adults: \$41*

*Seniors (65+), Military: \$36*

*Students (5-25): \$15*

**Where:** Spokane Civic Theatre-1020 N Howard St Spokane, WA 99201

**When:** November 29 – December 22, 2024

Wednesdays – Saturdays: 7:30 pm, Sundays: 2:00 pm



# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

### Spokane Events

#### The Nutcracker With State Street Ballet

**About:** Gather your family and friends for Spokane's favorite holiday tradition. State Street Ballet and over 70 local dancers bring The Nutcracker to life while Tchaikovsky's timeless score is played live by the Spokane Symphony. This year, a brand new sensory friendly Nutcracker performance has been added for Wednesday, December 4th at 6pm. Designed for those on the autism spectrum or with other sensory issues, modifications include altered lighting levels, flexibility to move around during performance, and sensory support tools in the lobby. This is a full-length production.

Contact: [\(509\) 624-1200](tel:5096241200) for more information.

*Admission: \$30 - \$115*

**Where:** Martin Woldson Theater at the Fox  
1001 W Sprague Ave

**When:** November 23, 2024 - December 24, 2024



#### Day of Candles - Colombian Tradition

**About:** Dia de las Velitas, or Day of Candles, is a cherished Colombian tradition that holds deep cultural significance. This day commemorates the Immaculate Conception and pays homage to the Virgin Mary. It marks the beginning of the Christmas festivities in Colombia. It is a time for families to come together, share traditional foods, and enjoy the festive spirit.

Join us as we gather, share traditions, Colombian food and light candles together to symbolize peace, unity and the start of our holiday season in Spokane.

Contact [\(509\) 558-9359](tel:5095589359) for more information.

*Admission: Free*

**Where:** Latinos en Spokane, 1502 N Monroe St, Spokane , WA 99201

**When:** December 4th, 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM



## OFFICE OF **INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE**

Thanks for reading this month's Diversity Digest!

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Questions? Comments? Have an idea for an article?  
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