

HIGHLIGHTS

Grace Community Church joins Union Methodists
COVE, UNION — This Sunday Cove's Grace Community Lutheran Church will conduct its worship service at the Methodist Church in Union at 10 a.m. Pastor Carl's sermon, "You Can Walk on Water," will be taken from Mark 6. Sunday School begins at 9 a.m. Fellowship with the Methodist congregation will follow the service. Transportation is available for all church activities.

Expect a miracle
LA GRANDE — The La Grande First United Methodist Church will celebrate the 10th Sunday of Pentecost at 10 a.m. Pastor Al Trachsel will preach from John 6:1-21, which tells of Jesus feeding the multitudes. The sermon, titled "All You Need Is A Miracle," will teach that we can expect a miracle only when we give God something to work with.

Unity and maturity are focus of message

LA GRANDE — Sunday school begins at 9:15 a.m. at the La Grande Church of the Nazarene, followed by a 10:30 a.m. worship service. Pastor Al Mortimer will present the morning's message, "Here's What I Want You to Do," drawn from Ephesians 4:1-16. The sermon will explain how to "share the road" and will explore unity and maturity.

Quilters group meets Tuesday at Zion
LA GRANDE — Zion Lutheran Church in La

Grande will worship this Sunday at 9:30 a.m. A time of fellowship and coffee follows.

On Tuesday, the Quilters will meet at 9:30 a.m., and a meeting of the non-denominational Bible Study begins at 6:15 p.m. On Thursday, the church will host a 6 p.m. meeting of the LGBTQ Community Group.

Presbyterian congregants celebrate nature
LA GRANDE, ELGIN — The congregation of the La Grande First

Presbyterian Church will share a worship service and fellowship time at the Insko cabin just outside Elgin Sunday. In the spirit of the summer theme — "Creation, Creativity

and Community" — the congregants will be celebrating God's greatest creation, the natural world. Regular services will resume next Sunday at 9:30 a.m. at the church.

Submissions

Churches and faith-based groups are encouraged to submit Highlights for the Spiritual Life page by noon Thursday for publication on Friday. Submit your Spiritual Life announcements by email to news@lagrandeobserver.com (with Highlights in the subject line) by fax to 541-963-7804, or by hand to the office at 1406 Fifth St., La Grande.

Don't be tempted to negotiate with God

I am told on a regular basis to "write something that makes us feel good." I understand that we gravitate toward information that allows us to relax and enjoy life, and it's wonderful to train our mind to be a positive thinker. However, in our quest to live in "happy land," there are also difficult realities whether we choose to accept them or not. In Hebrews 4:12, God's word is described as a two-edged sword that has the power and wisdom to know all things including our conscience. We are called to praise God not only in the good times of blessing and peace, but also to humble ourselves and submit to him in situations we would rather not think about or deal with.

Humankind has always been gullible to confusing evil with good because our old human nature loves to justify and excuse our guilt. Adam and Eve — the original pioneers of agreeing with Satan — did not hesitate to defend and justify their disobedience. Since then, this world has drifted so far from the shores of honesty it can hardly see



LIVING ON PURPOSE
DR. BILLY HOLLAND

land. Is it any surprise that most of the world is still trying to blame others for their own decisions? When the compass of God's truth is thrown overboard and guidance is left up to those who are spiritually blind, there are going to be serious problems. If evil were not made to appear good, there would be no such thing as temptation or deception — allow me to add that when people are more concerned with being politically correct than obedient to God, we can guarantee that society is destined for failure. Isaiah 5:20 says, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."

A word I hear on a regular basis is "balance," and while I use it myself from time to time, I've discovered that we can use this concept as an excuse to justify our own ideas. If we study with the intention of learning about our spiritual responsibilities,

we will discover challenging demands from the Lord that require us to make painful decisions. God operates in simple terms. He is filled with mercy and long-suffering, but he is also strict when it comes to obedience. For example, when he says, "Do not look back," he means what he says, as Lot's wife found out. I realize this is not a happy ending but nonetheless it is a valuable lesson to be remembered.

We are seeing a trend in this day and age of Christianity being projected as a soft and easy lifestyles and God described as a sympathetic old man. This really becomes noticeable especially at funerals where everyone no matter who they were are now suddenly declared as a devoted saint. This message seems to imply that if we sing the old hymn "When we all get to heaven," we can rest assured that we will all end up there. This trend avoids the uncomfortable scriptures that command us to take up our cross and follow Christ, which includes being transformed and completely changing who we are. My

carnal human nature does not waste a moment trying to persuade me that it knows how to handle these religious concepts without any degree of sacrifice or suffering even though the Bible clearly explains that becoming a follower of Jesus will cost me everything.

So, with love and grace we willingly accept that the sword of God's truth has two edges and that all biblical instruction is not hot-fudge cake. Saul, before his conversion in Acts 9, was a fierce enemy of Christ, but after he encountered the living Jesus on the Damascus road, he fell in love with the one he so fervently rejected. Verse 18 says, "There fell from his eyes something like scales." Paul did not just focus on the happy verses, attempt to compromise, justify, negotiate a deal, or try to escape his personal responsibility. He simply trusted in God's truth (even the difficult parts) to make him free.

Dr. Holland lives in Central Kentucky with his wife, Cheryl, where he is a Christian author, outreach minister and community chaplain.

Thank God for his mercy

By Franklin Humbler
Summerville Baptist Church

I am thankful that I have a merciful God. The Bible describes the Creator God as a God that desires for people to experience mercy, but they must choose his mercy.

There are biblical examples of people who reject God continually until they come to a place where they forfeit the opportunity for his mercy to be shown to them any longer. There are other examples, such as Nineveh, in which an entire city repented to God for its wickedness and was spared his judgment and experienced his mercy.

It is a terrible place to be when there is no mercy to be had from God. God desires for all to experience his mercy according to 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 Timothy 2:4-6. God gave his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, to come to earth from

heaven and ransom us from sin's bondage and the wrath of God so that we could enjoy his mercy instead.

It is such a wonderful thing to receive God's mercy. The God of the Bible is unlike the gods of other religions of the world. Most of the gods described by the books of other religions are vengeful gods that must be appeased by the efforts of their followers. The God of the Bible makes his sacrifice available to those who meet his righteous demand.

God does not call us to hate but to love. He no longer calls his followers to destroy life, but rather to redeem it through his truth found in the Bible.

Franklin Humbler is the pastor of Summerville Baptist Church in Summerville, Oregon

He has pastored Summerville Baptist Church in Summerville, Oregon since 1999.

Northeast Oregon Directory of Churches

Services This Week

<p>IMBLER CHRISTIAN CHURCH 440 RUCKMAN, IMBLER 534-2201 www.imblerchristianchurch.org</p> <p>Sunday Services 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship Service</p>	<p>First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 901 Penn Avenue 963-2623 lgdisciples@gmail.com</p> <p>Worship 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>~Join us at The Lord's Table~</p>	<p>Calvary Baptist Church</p> <p>Sunday Services Sunday School 10:00 am Morning Worship 11:00 am Sunday Evening 06:30 pm</p> <p>Wednesday Services Prayer Meeting 7:00 pm</p> <p>707 Main St, Cove 541-568-4888</p>	<p>Amazing Grace Fellowship 1316 T St., La Grande, OR 541-568-4567</p> <p>Sunday 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>2 Cor 12:9 My Grace is sufficient for you.</p>	
<p>COVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1708 Jasper St., Cove, OR</p> <p>NORTH POWDER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 390 E. St., North Powder, OR</p> <p>JOIN US... <i>Catch the Spirit!</i> Worship: 9:00 a.m. Cove Worship: 10:00 a.m. N. Powder</p>	<p>ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH SERVICES La Grande - Our Lady of the Valley 1002 L Avenue Saturday 5:30 pm Mass Sunday 10:00 am Mass Weekdays 8:00 am Mass Union - Sacred Heart 340 South 10th Avenue Sunday 8:00 am Mass No Weekdays Elgin - Saint Mary's 12th and Alder Sunday 12:30 pm Mass No Weekdays</p>	<p>VALLEY FELLOWSHIP 963-0340 507 Palmer Ave (just east of city pool) Sunday Worship 10:02 am Come and share in a time of worship, prayer and the study of God's word with us. Worship includes communion on Sunday. www.valleyfellowship.church Email: vfchurch2@gmail.com</p>	<p>LaGrande CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE 109 18th Street • 963-3402</p> <p>Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>First Baptist Church</p> <p>SIXTH & SPRING, LA GRANDE</p> <p>541-963-3911</p> <p>Sun. 8:45 AM - Bible Classes Sun. 10:00 AM - Worship Wed. 6:15 PM - AWANA</p>
<p>La Grande Seventh-day Adventist Church <i>A Place where hope is found in Jesus</i> Join us in Fellowship & Worship Every Saturday 9:30 a.m. - Bible Study/Fellowship 10:45 a.m. - Worship Service 2702 Adams Avenue, La Grande • 963-4018 Pastor: Mike Armayor www.lagrande22adventistchurchconnect.org <i>Learning for Today and Eternity</i> Little Friends Christian Preschool/Childcare 963-6390 La Grande Adventist Christian School Christian Education K-8th Grade 963-6203</p>	<p>FIRST LANDMARK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH 1812 1st St. La Grande Pastor Dave Tierce • 541-605-0215 <i>We use the King James Version Bible</i> Sunday School - 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am Sunday Evening Bible Study - 3:00 pm (Effective June 10) Wednesday Evening - 6:30 pm <i>"Where you can find TRUTH according to the scriptures"</i> www.flmbclagrande.com</p>	<p>Zion Lutheran Church (an ELCA church) 902 Fourth Street, La Grande, OR (541) 963-5998</p> <p>9:30 am - Worship 10:30 am - Fellowship & Refreshments 11:00 am - Classes Pastor: Rev. Colleen Nelson www.zionlagrande.org</p>	<p>Union Baptist Church 1531 S. Main St., Union 541-562-5531 www.unionbaptistoregon.org Sunday School 9:45 am Morning Worship 11:00 am Sunday Night 6:30 pm Thursday AWANA 6:30 pm Knowing, Loving and Proclaiming Jesus Christ</p>	<p>GRACE COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMC 502 Main Street In Cove (in the Seventh Day Adventist Church building) <i>"We are called to Serve"</i> Sunday School for all ages - 9:00 am Sunday Worship 10:00 am Pastor Carl Seelhoff Phone: 541-805-0764 grace.lutherancove@gmail.com</p>
<p>Agape Christian Fellowship</p> <p>870 Alder Street, Elgin, OR 97827 541-910-5193 Pastor Glen Carter Service times: Sunday 10:45 AM All are welcome</p>	<p>Grande Ronde Mennonite Church invites you to a</p> <p>Hymn Sing at the Park</p> <p>On Sunday, July 29th in the Riverside Park pavilion Refreshments 30 6:00 p.m. following</p> <p>Everyone Welcome!</p> <p>For more information, call 541-960-8024</p>	<p>SUMMERVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH</p> <p>Sunday Services: Sunday School & Adult Bible Classes 9:45AM Children's Church & Worship Service 11:00AM Family Worship Service 6:00PM</p> <p>Wednesday: Prayer Mtg. Children's Bible Club, Youth Group 7:00PM</p> <p>A church for your whole family Visit us at summervillebaptistchurch.org</p>	<p>LA GRANDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH <i>"OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS"</i> 1612 4th Street - 963-2498 Pastor Al Trachsel lgumc@eonl.com www.lgumchurch.org Office Hours: Mon-Thur 9am-Noon Worship 10:00 am Fellowship Coffee Hour 11:00 am • Nursery provided •</p>	