

Found 'pennies from heaven' bring more than memories

By Lucy Luginbill
Tri-City Herald

It didn't add up. And yet, there stood the jar of pennies on the bedroom dresser.

"When I was a little girl, Grammy would always say, 'You need to pick up those pennies from heaven,'" Stacy Hall said, reminiscing as tears spilled at the memory. "Because then we would think about that person."

But in June 2012 it was Stacy's grandmother who was gone, and that's when pennies appeared one-by-one.

"I'd find them in the morning in the same spot," the Richland, Washington, resident said, thinking back to the copper coins nestled in the carpet near her clothes closet. "And I'd think, 'She's OK' or 'I'd think about something she had said. It depended on the moment.'"

To this clear-thinking elementary school teacher — and former television reporter — finding the pennies from time to time had to have a logical explanation. In some ways, she felt her faith was in conflict with the idea that money could

just drop from heaven.

"Either my husband, Jim, is dropping a lot of pennies or ..." Stacy's voice trailed at the thought. "So I decided to put them in a jar."

It's the kind of story featured in the pages of Guideposts magazine's Mysterious Ways section: events that are more than mere coincidences and seem to point to God's love. In this instance, the pennies, only discovered at home, brought encouragement and special remembrances to a grieving granddaughter; one who had a

lifelong relationship with her sweet "Grammy."

"At the end, we knew she was going to die," Stacy said, thinking back on the difficult moment. "Grammy asked me, 'Is this hard for you?'"

Wrapped in painful emotion in that moment, the words didn't come easily for Stacy at her 98-year old grandmother's bedside. "It's hard for me," the granddaughter had confided to her Grammy, "but I know you'll always be there with me."

Then the diminutive grandma had gently taken

Stacy's hand as she answered quietly, "Yes, I will."

Later those last shared thoughts resonated as found pennies began to fill the jar; an inexplicable occurrence that spoke volumes to Stacy's grieving heart.

It was an experience she held privately, sharing only with family and one close friend. Concerns about how people would view this story and her credibility made her hesitate to share.

"So yesterday evening I'm at school and I'm unpacking

boxes," Stacy said about preparing her elementary classroom for the first day of school. "And I'm saying to myself that I'm not going to talk to Lucy (for her column) because it seems superstitious, silly. I had made the decision not to tell the story."

But then something happened that changed Stacy's mind. There in the bottom of the last emptied box sat a shiny penny. At that moment, the thought to share the story of a grandmother's loving promise made sense.

HIGHLIGHTS

Presbyterians gather outside for worship

LA GRANDE — The congregants of La Grande's First Presbyterian Church will join their brothers and sisters in Christ from Baker City and Pendleton on Sunday at Westminster Woods near Emigrant Springs. Worship will begin at 10 a.m. and will be followed by a potluck lunch.

Women offered two retreats to attend

LA GRANDE — Pastor Ray Smith will speak Sunday on "New Life" at the 10 a.m. service at the La Grande First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). His message, from Matthew 3:13-17, will explore what Jesus' baptism means to us.

The annual overnight Cove Christian Camp Fall Women's Retreat will be held from 4 p.m. Sept. 21 to 4 p.m. Sept. 22. It is an opportunity to escape for 24 hours and enjoy great fellowship, food and

an uplifting message. There is a \$25 discount if you register before Sept. 7. There will also be a Christian women's retreat in September in Cascade, Idaho. Complete registration information for both retreats is available in the church office.

Pastor examines Christ's messages

LA GRANDE — Jesus said a lot in the gospels about his second return to this earth, much of it in the form of warnings. The concluding sermon on Christ's preparatory messages for his second return will be given during the 11 a.m. Saturday service at the La Grande Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Grace Community Lutheran changes worship location

UNION — Grace Community Lutheran will begin worshipping at a new location beginning this Sunday.

The church will hold its services and Bible studies at the Union Methodist Church building. Bible study will begin at 9 a.m. followed by the worship service at 10 a.m. Fellowship will follow the service.

Transportation will be available from Cove and La Grande. Call Bob at 541-568-4230 for details.

Confirmation caps two years of study

LA GRANDE — Faith Lutheran Church in La Grande will welcome two junior confirmation students into communion fellowship on Sunday. These 13-year-olds have gone through two years of instruction that confirms who they are, who God is and how God distributes his grace. The confirmation rite will be part of the 10 a.m. Divine Service along with the third sermon in a series from John 6. In verses 6-8 Peter confesses that Christ

has the words of eternal life. A Council Meeting will follow the service.

Hymn Sing service features scriptures

COVE — Cove United Methodist Church will have a Hymn Sing at 9 a.m. on Sunday led by Vickie Hill-Brown. She will use favorite hymns and scriptures from the congregation. Fellowship will follow the service.

Members of the church will be selling cherry pies and other goodies at the Cove Cherry Fair tomorrow. The church hosts Fresh Food Alliance, offering free perishable food at 10 a.m. every Tuesday. The August Cove Food Pantry will be open from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday the 25th.

We seek three things in journey

LA GRANDE — The La Grande First United Methodist Church will celebrate the 13th Sunday of

Pentecost at 10 a.m. with Pastor Al Trachsel. His sermon, "The Threefold Journey," will be taken from Ephesians 5:15-20 in which Paul says life is a journey with three legs: seeking wisdom, seeking God's will and seeking the Holy Spirit.

Message given from 1 Samuel

ELGIN — The Sunday sermon, "Listening for God," will be given by Gerald Hopkins at the Elgin United Methodist Church, based on 1 Samuel 3:1-10. The service will begin at 11 a.m. and will be followed by fellowship, coffee and treats.

On Aug. 26 the church will be participating in the Elgin Ministerial Association Church in the Park and will not hold its regular service.

We learn by keeping company with God

LA GRANDE — Sunday

school begins at 9:15 a.m. at the La Grande Church of the Nazarene, followed by a worship service at 10:30. The message brought by Pastor Al Mortimer will be from Ephesians 5:1-20, teaching us that by keeping company with God, we can learn to do what he does, like children learning proper behavior from their parents.

Lunch provided at Housing Matters

LA GRANDE — Zion Lutheran Church in La Grande will worship Sunday at 9:30 a.m. with Pastor Colleen Nelson. The theme will be Jesus, as the bread of life. Fellowship and coffee will follow the service.

Housing Matters Union County will meet from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Monday. Lunch will be provided. The women's evening Bible study will meet at 7 p.m. Monday in Imbler. The Quilters will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday at the church.

We have a personal responsibility to search for divine truth on our own

I've studied different religions and even within my own faith of Christianity I have discovered there are many conflicting opinions concerning what God wants us to be and how we are to live.

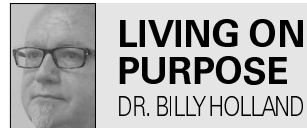
At this time I will limit my views to the Christian faith because that is where I have spent more time in research and also declare my allegiance.

I was raised in a traditional Baptist church in the 1960s and '70s. As I began to study on my own, I realized there were many other creeds and

ideologies in the religious world that at least deserved careful consideration.

Every denomination has different ideas and uses certain Bible passages to prove their points. With so many conflicting opinions, we can see why there is so much division and also understand why God advises us to seek out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

I'm not suggesting that we turn away from reading and listening to other people's views, but we have a personal responsibility to seek the Lord



LIVING ON PURPOSE
DR. BILLY HOLLAND

and search for divine truth on our own. I John 2:27 says, "But the anointing which you have received of God abides in you, and you need not that any person teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things and is truth and not a lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him." Bible teachers can help us learn, but it's our responsibility to become a disciplined

Bible student on our own.

It's common knowledge that many ministers and teachers have certain areas they like to focus on. For example, similar to how we have primary physicians along with a wide array of medical specialists, we also have pastors and evangelists who regularly preach salvation messages, while some are known for Bible prophecy and eschatology and other members of the clergy have a reputation for instructing about faith, positive thinking and prosperity, etc. Ministers should do what

God is telling them to do, but I am also convinced that with each area of expertise there needs to be a more complete presentation within the context of the full gospel. We should be alarmed how the olive press, the threshing floor and God's refining fire, which are critical components of the Christian faith, are being replaced with deceptive feel-good philosophies.

There is a divine order to the way God wants us to live, and His desires must be first and foremost. Our highest goals after we are born again

are to know and obey God's voice, to learn and receive his word, to yield our will, develop faith, love, and live holy.

The disciple's mission is not easy or a popular subject. Being crucified with Christ and taking up our cross is all about surrendering our will and allowing Jesus to be our Lord and to control our lives. The lifelong commitment and responsibility of a Christian requires for the mind and conscience to be renewed into his image, because unless we are changed from the inside out, Christ cannot be seen in us.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Northeast Oregon Directory of Churches</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Services This Week</p>				
<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>SUMMERVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH of Christ for All</p> <p>Sunday Services: Sunday School & Adult Bible Classes 9:45 AM Children's Church & Worship Service 11:00 AM Family Worship Service 6:00 PM</p> <p>Wednesday: Prayer Mtg., Children's Bible Club, Youth Group 7:00 PM</p> <p>A church for your whole family Visit us at summervillebaptistchurch.org</p>	<p>Amazing Grace Fellowship 1316 T St., La Grande, OR 541-568-4567 Sunday 10:30 a.m.</p> <p><i>2 Cor 12:9 My Grace is sufficient for you.</i></p> <p>IS 40:31</p>	<p>GRACE COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMC 667 N. Main in Union "We are called to Serve" Sunday School for all ages - 9:00 am Sunday Worship 10:00 am Pastor Carl Seelhoff Phone: 541-786-0447 grace.lutherancove@gmail.com</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>La Grande 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>LA GRANDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH "OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS" 1612 4th Street - 963-2498 Pastor Al Trachsel lgumc@eoni.com www.lgumchurch.org Office Hours: Mon-Thur 9am-Noon Worship 10:00 am Fellowship Coffee Hour 11:00 am - Nursery provided -</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 We use the King James Version Bible Sunday School - 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am Sunday Evening Bible Study - 3:00 pm (Effective June 10) Wednesday Evening - 6:30 pm "Where you can find TRUTH according to the scriptures" 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>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>