

HIGHLIGHTS

Service explores baptism in word and in action

LA GRANDE — The La Grande First United Methodist Church will celebrate the Second Sunday after Epiphany at 10 a.m. Pastor Al Trachsel's sermon, drawn from Luke 3:15-17 and 21-22, will be titled "Baptism: What Does It Mean?" Pastor Al will be performing a baptism as well as explaining what it means to be baptized.

NCU guest speaker visits First Christian Church

LA GRANDE — First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in La Grande will hear from guest speaker Keith Potter, vice director for advancement and

director of the Center for Leadership and Ethics at Northwest Christian University, which is located in Eugene. His message, "First Things First," will refer to Colossians 4:2-6.

There will be a soup and bread social immediately after the worship service.

The Christian Women's Fellowship will begin Cookie Gram sales on Sunday. Cookie Grams will be sold until Feb. 8 and delivered Feb. 13-14. To place an order, stop by the church at 901 Penn Monday through Wednesday.

Fellowship and team meetings follow service

LA GRANDE — Zion Lutheran Church in La Grande will worship at

9:30 a.m. Sunday.

A time of fellowship and team meetings will follow the service.

Housing Matters Union County will meet from noon to 2 p.m. Monday. Lunch will be provided. Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. the ZLCW Bible Study will meet at Zion.

Lord's Supper celebrated at Adventist service

LA GRANDE — Is God's forgiveness all that the cross provides? Pastor Mike says there is more good news for our self-centered natures, and he will focus on this in his message during the 11 a.m. Saturday service at the La Grande Seventh-day Adventist Church. The service will also include a celebration of

the Lord's Supper.

Pastor Mike's Revelation seminar continues on Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. in the pastor's conference room. The seminar is open to the public and may be joined at any time.

Sermon describes Jesus' first miracle

LA GRANDE — The sermon at the 10 a.m. Sunday service at Faith Lutheran Church in La Grande will expound on the setting of Jesus' first miracle in Cana. His mother was there, made a request, and then left the matter in his hands to "do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5).

Following the service church will hold its first council meeting of the new year.

Parishioners: Don't forget your pledges and surveys

LA GRANDE — St. Peter's Episcopal Church in La Grande will celebrate Morning Prayer at 9 a.m. Sunday. After the service there will be a coffee hour and a short annual meeting. Parishioners are encouraged to get their pledges and surveys in this week.

Saturday conference focuses on missions to China

LA GRANDE — The La Grande First Baptist Church is hosting a China Missions Conference from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Jan. 19. Veteran missionaries will share how God has been working to reach the Chinese with the gospel.

During the conference, the congregation will review First Baptist's history of outreach to the people of China, learn about current efforts and discuss sending a future team. The public is welcome to attend.

Submissions

Churches and faith-based groups are encouraged to submit Highlights for the Spiritual Life page by 4 p.m. Tuesday for publication Friday. Submit by email to news@lagrandeobserver.com (with Highlights in the subject line), by fax to 541-963-7804, or by hand to the office.

What if the gospel of Jesus is true?

Life is filled with thoughts and ideas. Many people spend their time trying to keep busy because they do not want to think about what God expects from them. The strategy is to live in a state of distraction so their conscience will never have the occasion to pause and ponder about the true meaning of life. Everyone is unique, and that makes life interesting, but I was thinking the other day about how so many people are always on the go and never sit still for a moment unless they are forced to stop. Somewhere down the line, there will come a time when we will not be able to run or hide behind a distraction. On the other hand, there is another group that enjoys the quiet and peace of God's presence and desires to listen and obey his voice simply because they love him. Whichever group you belong to, it can be said we have only one life and one chance to get it right, so whether we choose to live in denial or embrace our spiritual reality, one day truth will be revealed.

I read a sign one time that compared two differ-



LIVING ON PURPOSE
DR. BILLY HOLLAND

ent philosophies of living. The quote is as follows: "Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a ride!'" Of course, the quote has been modified through the years but you get the general meaning. This declaration has been attributed to a man named Hunter S. Thompson and has been widely accepted as an enthusiastic motto to live by.

For those who live on the edge and experience everything to the absolute maximum, this describes the attitude of a wild and carefree life. Instead of a sensitive, and peaceful journey, this philosophy encourages people to drain every drop of excitement, indulgence, thrill and pleasure they can out of every chance they have.

These pie in the sky ideas have been floating around since the beginning of time, but it's just another way our human nature tries to influence the conscience not to be concerned with what God wants. The Bible is clear about our destiny and the definition of true salvation, which includes surrendering our plans and being transformed into a completely different person. Sadly, it's common that many people do not take their spiritual life seriously.

God is not obligated to give us unlimited windows of mercy to embrace his truth, but he does so because he is filled with patience and love. His intention all along has been for us to love him back, but most of the human race simply ignores him. The masses are convinced eternity and this "God thing" is no more than a slight chance of being true and they are perfectly content with rolling the dice. It seems many have concluded: if God is really filled with mercy, then why should I worry? This is another one of those ideas that says it doesn't matter what a person does or does not do,

because they are covered by that highly popular religious word "grace." With this way of thinking, they think they can relax because everything will work out in the end.

But those who are convinced they were given the gift of life to do whatever they want are living in a fantasy world. We were born to know, worship and serve God. Most people want blessings and heaven but have not really decided to seriously investigate their purpose because they have no interest or intention of accomplishing it.

The other day I saw a bumper sticker that said, "What if it is true?" And it did exactly what it was meant to do; it caused me to think. I thought about the gospel of Jesus and prayed that everyone would believe it is true.

It's a brand-new year, and he is inviting everyone to make a brand-new start. God is waiting to forgive and deliver us, but before we can embrace the cross as our ransom, we must humbly acknowledge that we were the reason Jesus had to go there.

Words of the Buddha

One is not noble who injures living beings. One is called "noble" because one is harmless toward all living beings. (Dhammapada 19.270)

Know this, O good one: evil things are difficult to control. Let not greed and wickedness drag you to protracted misery. (Dhammapada 18.248)

Winning gives birth to hostility. Losing, one lies down in pain. The calmed lie down with ease, having set winning and losing aside. (Dhammapada 15.201)

Just as rust arising from iron eats away the base from which it arises, even so, their own deeds lead transgressors to states of woe. (Dhammapada 18.240)

Difficult to detect and very subtle, the mind seizes whatever it wants; so let a wise one guard one's mind, for a guarded mind brings happiness. (Dhammapada 3.36)

Irrigators direct the water, Fletchers fashion the shaft, Carpenters bend the wood, The wise control themselves. (Dhammapada 6.80)

—www.pariyatti.com

Northeast Oregon Directory of Churches

Services This Week

IMBLER CHRISTIAN CHURCH 440 RUCKMAN, IMBLER 534-2201 www.imblerchristianchurch.org Sunday Services 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship Service	First Christian Church <i>(Disciples of Christ)</i> 901 Penn Avenue 963-2623 lgdisciples@gmail.com Worship 10:00 a.m. ~Join us at The Lord's Table~	SUMMERVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH Sunday Services: Sunday School & Adult Bible Classes 9:45AM Children's Church & Worship Service 11:00AM Family Worship Service 6:00PM Wednesday: Prayer Mtg, Children's Bible Club, Youth Group 7:00PM A church for your whole family Visit us at summervillebaptistchurch.org	Amazing Grace Fellowship 1316 T St., La Grande, OR 541-568-4567 Sunday 10:30 a.m. <i>2 Cor 12:9 My Grace is sufficient for you.</i> IS 40:31	GRACE COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH <i>LCMC</i> 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
COVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1708 Jasper St., Cove, OR NORTH POWDER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 390 E. St., North Powder, OR JOIN US... <i>Catch the Spirit!</i> Worship: 9:00 a.m. Cove Worship: 10:00 a.m. N. Powder	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	VALLEY FELLOWSHIP 963-0340 507 Palmer Ave <i>(just east of city pool)</i> Sunday Worship 10:02 am <i>Come and share in a time of worship, prayer and the study of God's word with us.</i> Worship includes communion on Sunday. www.valleyfellowship.church Email: vfchurch2@gmail.com	La Grande CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE 109 18th Street • 963-3402 Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.	LA GRANDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH <i>"OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS"</i> 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 •
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	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	Zion Lutheran Church <i>(an ELCA church)</i> 902 Fourth Street, La Grande, OR (541) 963-5998 9:30 am - Worship 10:30 am - Fellowship & Refreshments 11:00 am - Classes Pastor: Rev. Colleen Nelson www.zionlagrande.org	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	SIXTH & SPRING, LA GRANDE 541-963-3911 Sun. 8:45 AM - Bible Classes Sun. 10:00 AM - Worship Wed. 6:15 PM - AWANA