Send a Cookie Gram for Valentine's Day

LA GRANDE — The Sunday morning service at the La Grande First Christian Church (Disciple of Christ) will begin at 10 a.m. Pastor Ray Smith's message, "Where Do We Find Life?" will look at the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25-37.

The annual Cookie Gram sale is now under way. Orders will be taken until noon Thursday. To send a plate of homemade cookies, personalized with your brief message and wrapped in red cellophane, pick up order forms at the church office, 901 Penn Ave., from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Wednesday or 8 a.m. to noon Thursdays. A plate of one dozen cookies is $5; a plate of two dozen is $9. If you are picking up your order, your Cookie Grams will be ready after 3:30 p.m. Feb 12. Deliveries will be made Feb. 13th and 14 to homes, schools and businesses in La Grande, Imbler, Cove and Union.

Adult forum follows worship service

LA GRANDE — Zion Lutheran Church in La Grande will worship Sunday at 9:30 a.m., followed by a time of fellowship. The Adult Forum begins 11 a.m. The theme for the six-week study is "Caring for Creation Now: Vision, Hope and Justice."

The Quilters will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday at the church.

Women's luncheon takes place Wednesday

UNION — Grace Community and Union Methodist churches will worship together Sunday with a service beginning at 10 a.m. Pastor Carl's sermon title will be "Unclean Spirits," taken from Luke 4. In this reading Jesus healed a men with a demon. Adult Sunday school is offered before the service, at 9 a.m., and fellowship follows the service.

On Feb. 6, there will be a women's luncheon at Flying J Restaurant at 11:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to attend.

Favorite hymns tell message in Cove

COVE — At the Cove United Methodist Church, Vicki Hill Brown will provide the message for Sunday's 9 a.m. service, titled "Our Favorite Hymns — Did You Know?" The congregation will participate in the message with the singing of selected favorite hymns.

On Tuesdays, the church hosts Cove's Fresh Alliance from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., offering free perishable food to the community. The church also hosts the Cove Food Pantry on the fourth Saturday of the month, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Message examines concept of love

LA GRANDE — The sermon this Sunday at Faith Lutheran Church's La Grande service will focus on 1 Corinthians 13, the "Love Chapter." We message will show we can have true love because of God's love for us. The Matins service begins at 10 a.m. After the service will be the First Sunday Potluck.

What does spirituality mean to you?

LA GRANDE — The Observer is seeking comments from community members on spiritual matters. If you would like to share how you experience spirituality, email news@lagrandeobserver.com or call Observer Editor Cherise Kaechele at 541-963-3161. Ongoing monthly columns and one-time submissions will be considered. Columns are generally 500-600 words.

Annual dinner theater offers original entertainment

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Moments of darkness will help spin a tale of mystery in the parish hall of La Grande's Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church, Feb. 8 and Feb. 9.

The parish hall will be the site of the 16th annual Murder Mystery Dinner Theater, a fundraiser for restoration projects at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church. This year's production, "Party with the Pirates," will feature a 13-member cast portraying pirates, sea creatures and more on a set with decorations designed to make audience members and actors feel like they are at sea.

At one point during the play, the lights will be switched off and a character, to the accompaniment of sound effects, will be forced to walk a plank. Following the production's conclusion, the audience will huddle at their tables and guess who was responsible for forcing the character to walk the plank. Each table will be responsible for submitting one guess, said Zee Koza, who wrote the script and will direct "Party with the Pirates."

One of the scenes audience members may be evaluating for clues is a face-off between Pirate Captain Plasma (played by Steve Hamilton) against two pirate brothers, Walkin Dee Plank (Tony Carman) and Joaquin Tee Plank (Gary Bottger). Hamilton, Carman and Bottger and everyone in the cast are members of the Fourth Street Players, a company so named because Our Lady of the Valley is located on Fourth Street.

People entering the parish hall will be greeted by actors in character before the play begins.

"It will get them in the mood for the whole evening," Koza said.

A "Captain's Table" meal will be enjoyed by the audience during the production, featuring a buffet dinner with prime rib or chicken cordon bleu plus appetizers and desserts. "Buccaneer Bill's" no-host bar will offer adult beverages. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 7 p.m. each evening.

Admission to the dinner theater is $35 a person. Tickets may be reserved by calling the church office at 541-963-7341, emailing office@olvcatholic.org or stopping by 1002 L Ave. between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tickets must be purchased by the end of the day Monday, Feb. 4.

The event is open to those age 21 and older. The parish hall entrance is at the corner of Fifth Street and K Avenue.

The Fourth Street Players' motto for its annual dinner theater production is: "Prime rib and chicken may be on the menu, but there is always plenty of ham on the stage."

The Lord is our refuge, our strength and shield

LIVING ON PURPOSE
DR. BILLY HOLLAND

We have learned since childhood about the blessings of being protected. Remember when you were in the arms of your mom and dad and it seemed the dangers of the world could not reach you? Now that we are grown, we appreciate our homes that give us shelter from the elements and provide security against whatever might want to harm us. But of all the things in this world that can provide a sense of safety and defense, there is nothing that can compare to the power and authority of God.

Psalm 23:4 helps us to see there is no need to be afraid: "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The rod and staff are reminders that we are his sheep and Jesus is our great shepherd. He is carefully watching over his people and wants us to stay close to him.

The other night I had difficulty sleeping, and as I tossed and turned all types of harassing thoughts were bombarding me and trying to interfere with my peace. I began to pray and asked God to help me and was reminded that in the Bible God is referred to as a shield. This brought me great comfort as I began to visualize being completely surrounded by this huge strong shield and the arrows of the enemy harmlessly bouncing away. The next thing I knew, it was morning. As I started on my first cup of coffee, I was still thinking about the shield so I looked up the definition. A shield means a guard to defend and protect, to cover as a barrier, a place of shelter and security to hide behind, and a way to preserve and maintain our safety.

Becoming aware of the promise of God's protection gives us peace even when fear and confusion is raging all around us. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

In this chaotic world, it's refreshing and encouraging to trust that God is always there for us — but if we allow ourselves to become engulfed with an overload of negative information, we can become anxious and worried to the point of exhaustion. We do not always make the right choices to spend time with him, but just to understand that he loves us and listens to our concerns is such a wonderful encouragement. When the storms of life are raging and we are drowning in a sea of worry and doubt, we can trust him and run into his presence.

There is a story recorded in Matthew 8 about Jesus going across a lake in a boat with his disciples. While he took a nap, there arose a violent storm and his friends were terrified the boat was going to sink. They awoke him and he calmly spoke to the wind and waves to stop — and suddenly it was perfectly calm. He is the same yesterday, today and forever and still has the power and desire to command "peace be still" to your storms today. "Our soul waits for the Lord: He is our help and our shield" (Psalm 33:20).

Salvation is usually considered in the sense of being born again into a brand-new spiritual creation, but this covenant is not limited to saving our spirit. Christ gives us total salvation, which includes ministering to our body, mind and emotions. He is concerned and ready to help us in any area we might need. If we examine the definitions of salvation we can see that Jesus is actively engaged to help, heal, restore, preserve, protect, rescue, provide a way of escape and deliver us from any type of harm or danger. He is a strong and mighty tower and if we choose to dwell in the secret place of the most high, we are at peace under the shadow of the Almighty.

Whatever you are going through today, remember that God can do anything. He is our refuge and our shield of security that never fails. "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoices; and with my song will I praise Him" (Psalm 28:7).

To read more visit: billyhollandministries.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
(Disciples of Christ)
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.
2 Cor 12:9 My Grace is sufficient for you.
IS 40:31

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

COVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1708 Jasper St., Cove, OR
NORTH POWDER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
390 E. St., North Powder, OR
JOIN US... *Catch the Spirit!*
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
(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

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
"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 -

La Grande Seventh-day Adventist Church
A Place where hope is found in Jesus
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
Learning for Today and Eternity
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
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

Zion Lutheran Church
(an ELCA church)
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

First Baptist Church
SIXTH & SPRING, LA GRANDE
541-963-3911
Building Together On Christ Alone
Sun. 8:45 AM - **Bible Classes**
Sun. 10:00 AM - **Worship**
Wed. 6:15 PM - **AWANA**