

## HIGHLIGHTS

### The wise men knew

LA GRANDE — Why believe in the Bible's account of the Christmas narrative? The fact that the wise men followed the star support the story. Pastor Mike will speak on this Saturday at La Grande's Seventh-day Adventist Church. The service will begin at 11 a.m.

The church's Living Nativity will be open to the community 5-8 p.m. tonight and tomorrow.

### Episcopalians meet at 11 a.m.

LA GRANDE — St. Peter's Episcopal Church will celebrate Holy Eucharist Sunday at 11 a.m. Pastor Roberta Smythe will officiate. Coffee and fellowship

will follow the service.

### 'Come, Follow Me' lessons discussed in Sunday school

LA GRANDE — The High Councilors from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be speaking in Sunday Sacrament Meetings. They will cover President Dallin H. Oaks' talk, "Cleansed by Repentance," a copy of which can be obtained at [www.churchofjesuschrist.org/general-conference/2019](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/general-conference/2019). The second hour will be Sunday school. The "Come, Follow Me" lessons for the prior two weeks will be discussed. The lesson for Dec. 16-22, "Christmas," will celebrate the birth and

### 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](mailto:news@lagrandeobserver.com) (with Highlights in the subject line), by fax to 541-963-7804, or by hand to the office.

life of Jesus Christ.

In La Grande, the community's Dec. 15 "Messiah" performance is open to the public. The concert begins at 6:30 p.m. in the La Grande High School Auditorium. Admission is free.

### Mini-bazaar open to congregation after service

LA GRANDE — Zion Lutheran Church in La Grande will worship at 9

a.m. on the third Sunday of Advent. Holy Communion will be served and Pastor Roberta Smythe will officiate. After the service there will be a time of fellowship and a mini-bazaar.

On Monday from noon to 2 p.m., a Housing Matters Union County meeting will be held at Zion. Lunch will be provided. On Tuesday, the Quilters will meet at 9 a.m. at the church.

### Third Advent candle lit

LA GRANDE — Pastor Ray Smith's sermon Sunday at La Grande's First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will be "The Light of Jesus." His message will come from John 1:1-8, 19-28. Auldin and Carol Prescott will light the third Advent candle, celebrating joy. The service will begin at 10 a.m.

### Wednesday Advent service scheduled

LA GRANDE — The sermon at Faith Lutheran Church's 10 a.m. service in La Grande will be based on Matthew 11:2-15. In these verses Jesus involves John the Baptist's disciples in proclaiming the good news of

what they see and hear. As people get actively involved they become stronger followers.

Following the Divine Service will be the monthly church council meeting, Sunday from 2-4 p.m. the Faith Lutheran congregants will be caroling at several locations.

The Wednesday evening Advent service for Dec. 18 will include a SHINE Preschool presentation. The sermon for the Advent service will be "Behold the Child Who Bears Flesh in Weakness." The evening begins with a soup supper at 5:30 p.m. and the service is at 6:30 p.m.

— Observer staff

## Have a very blessed 'Incarnation Celebration'

Everyone has their own favorite aspect of their Christmas celebrations. Our family is currently in the midst of our decorating process. My daughter and I put up our outside lights this past weekend, and we were quite pleased with the outcome even though there were plenty of challenges with light strands that would not light up fully. I am sure anyone who uses lights in their Christmas decorating knows exactly what I am talking about.

I love the lights, the ornaments, the garland and the gathering together with family and friends. However, the main thing I love about Christmas is the theological fact of what it is truly all about, that being the miraculous incarnation of God coming into humanity in a human body so he could deliver us from the power and penalty of sin. This celebration of the incarnation of Jesus is the main focus of the Christmas festivities. Jesus in the Light of the world, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the Christ, the Messiah, the true God who took upon himself the form of a man to live among us and die for us.

It is amazing how much confusion there is regarding the person of Jesus

Christ when God has been so clear in his only personally inspired book, the Holy Bible. God's word is very clear about who Jesus is and what he came to do for mankind. The Bible declares Jesus to be God in several of the prophecies that speak to the coming of the Messiah. One of the greatest known Messianic prophecies is Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." In this prophecy, the Messiah is called "the mighty God" and "the everlasting Father," clearly referring to the deity of the Messiah to be equal to God the father.

Also, in Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Here we see the miraculous event of the virgin conception of a baby boy being the sign of Messiah's birth on earth in human form. We see here the name he would be given; the interpretation of this name is specified for us in Matthew 1:23, being "God with us." In Matthew 1 and in Luke



**FROM THE PULPIT**  
PASTOR FRANKLIN HUMBER

1, we see the miraculous conception of Jesus in the virgin womb of Mary, the mother of the physical body of Jesus, which not only fulfills Isaiah's prophecies but also fulfills the prophecy given by God through Moses recorded for us in Genesis 3:15 that the Messiah sent from God to defeat Satan would be of the seed of a woman, not of a man.

In Hebrews 1, we see that Jesus is called the Son of God and God, as well as being declared to be superior to the angels as God and not merely as man. Jesus is the miraculous combination of deity and humanity. He is the God-man, so he could shed his blood to cleanse us of our sin, giving us eternal life if we will trust in him as our saviour and receive his sacrifice for the payment of our own sins by faith alone.

Jesus is not merely a man. He is not only a prophet, and he is not the same as the angels nor as the angel Lucifer himself. Jesus is the eternal God and creator of all the angels and all the universe as well as mankind. The creator cannot be created. The creator is the Almighty God. This truth is the centerpiece of the meaning and purpose of Christmas. It is the celebration of the Incarnation of God becoming man in order to redeem us. This is why I love Christmas.

## Nativity scene draws criticism

By James Queally  
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — A Methodist church in Claremont, California, unveiled a nativity scene Saturday night depicting Jesus, Mary and Joseph as refugees in cages, likening one of the most well-known images of the Christmas season to photos that have become synonymous with criticism of the Trump administration's border separation policies.

The display, which has stoked debate on the Facebook page of the church's lead pastor, shows classic nativity figurines of Joseph and Mary in cages on either side of a cage containing the manger of Jesus.

"We see this as, in some ways, the Holy Family standing in for the nameless families," said the Rev. Karen Clark Ristine, the lead pastor at Claremont United Methodist Church.

While the nativity scene shows Jesus shortly after birth and is the foundation of the Christmas holiday, the Claremont depiction appears to be invoking Joseph and Mary's flight to Egypt.

Under most interpretations, the infant Jesus and his parents had to escape Jerusalem for fear King Herod would have the baby slaughtered, perceiving the child as a threat to his reign.

Ristine, who has served as the church's lead pastor only since July, said the church often uses its nativity scene to tackle a societal issue. Southern California's homelessness crisis has been invoked in past depictions, she said.

A more traditional nativity scene, showing the Holy Family reunited, can be found inside the church, which serves a congregation of about 300 people, Ristine said.

## Northeast Oregon Directory of Churches

**CHURCH**  
*Service*  
**DIRECTORY**

### First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

901 Penn Avenue 963-2623  
[lgdisciples@gmail.com](mailto:lgdisciples@gmail.com)

Worship  
10:00 a.m.



~Join us at The Lord's Table~

**Services  
This  
Week**

### IMBLER CHRISTIAN CHURCH

440 RUCKMAN, IMBLER 534-2201  
[www.imblerchristianchurch.org](http://www.imblerchristianchurch.org)

#### Sunday Services

9:00 a.m. Sunday School  
10:00 a.m. Worship Service

**CHURCH**  
*Service*  
**DIRECTORY**

### 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

### LA GRANDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS"  
1612 4th Street - 963-2498  
Pastor Taylor Gould  
[lgumc@eoni.com](mailto:lgumc@eoni.com)  
[www.lgumchurch.org](http://www.lgumchurch.org)  
Office Hours: Mon-Thur 9am-Noon  
**Worship 10:00 am**  
Fellowship Coffee Hour 11:00 am  
- Nursery provided -

### GRACE COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Place  
62848 Philynda Loop in Island City  
"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](mailto:grace.lutherancove@gmail.com)

### 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

### 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.lagrande.adventistchurch.org](http://www.lagrande.adventistchurch.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](http://www.flmbclagrande.com)

### Zion Lutheran Church

(an ELCA church)  
902 Fourth Street,  
La Grande, OR  
(541) 963-5998  
9:00 am - Worship  
10:00 am - Fellowship & Refreshments  
10:30 am - Classes  
Pastor: Roberta Smythe  
[www.zionlagrande.org](http://www.zionlagrande.org)

### UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

1531 S. Main Street, Union  
541-562-5531  
[www.UnionBaptistOregon.org](http://www.UnionBaptistOregon.org)  
Sunday School 9:45 am  
Morning Worship 11:00 am  
Thursday AWANA 6:30 pm  
**Birthing, Building and Being the Body of Christ**

### First Baptist Church

SIXTH & SPRING, LA GRANDE  
541-963-3911  
Sun. 10:00 AM - Worship  
Sun. 8:45 AM - Exploring the Bible  
Wed. 6:15 PM - AWANA

### CALVARY CHAPEL

1433 Jefferson Ave.  
963-5884  
Contemporary Worship  
Expositional Teaching  
Sunday Service - 10:30 a.m.  
*Studying The Book of Galatians*  
Wednesday Service - 7:00 p.m.  
*Studying The Book of Joshua*  
Wednesday Night Youth - 6:00 p.m.  
Tune in to Calvary Radio 88.1 CSN

### LaGrande CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

109 18th Street • 963-3402  
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.  
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.



### St. Katherine's Catholic Church

Fr. Thomas Puduppalliparamban  
301 E Garfield Enterprise  
Mass Schedule  
Sundays:  
St Pius X, Wallowa - 8:00 am  
St Katherine of Siena, Enterprise - 10:30 am  
Saturdays  
St Katherine of Siena, Enterprise - 5:30 pm  
Weekdays  
St Katherine of Siena, Enterprise - 8:00 am  
(Monday - Thursday and First Friday)  
All are welcome

### 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](http://summervillebaptistchurch.org)