

HIGHLIGHTS

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

LA GRANDE — Zion Lutheran Church will not worship in person this Sunday, Feb. 16, due to COVID-19. A recorded worship service will be posted on Zion's Facebook page and website on Saturday. There will be a recorded service for Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, posted to Zion's Facebook page and website on Tuesday.

The Zion congregation won't worship in person again until Union County is in the yellow zone of the State's metrics. The

Submissions

Churches and faith-based groups are encouraged to submit Highlights for the Spiritual Life page by 4 p.m. Tuesday for publication Thursday. Submit by email to news@lagrandeobserver.com (with Highlights in the subject line).

office will remain closed until then as well.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

LA GRANDE — Individual wards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continue to meet in person, with lim-

ited size groups and condensed time schedules. Members are encouraged to contact their ward's leaders for meeting information. Face coverings and social distancing are required at all meetings.

For the week of Feb. 15, the church's at-home "Come, Follow Me" lesson is on Doctrine & Covenants 14-17, which covers the

time when Joseph Smith began to board with the Whitmer family while completing the translation of the Book of Mormon and securing its copyright. Members of the Whitmer family were blessed with the opportunity to receive direct revelation through Joseph Smith and to be witnesses of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. As church building use increases, members are reminded of our duties to care for them.

RootsTech Connect, a virtual family history event, will take place Feb. 25-27. Visit the newsroom on the Church's website to

learn about the keynote speakers.

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

LA GRANDE — St. Peter's Episcopal Church will not worship in person this Sunday, Feb. 14, due to COVID-19. A link to a recorded worship service for Sunday will be posted to Facebook on Saturday. There also will be an online service for Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, posted to St. Peter's Facebook page on Tuesday.

St. Peter's does not plan to gather for in person worship until at least March.

A mix of hope and dismay as religious leaders assess Biden

By DAVID CRARY and ELANA SCHOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's departure from the White House and the start of Joe Biden's presidency have stirred new hopes among many religious leaders in the United States, while causing dismay among others.

Here's a look at some of the issues that major faiths will be grappling with as the new administration takes shape.

Abortion

For leaders of the two largest Christian denominations in the U.S. — the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention — the paramount concern about the Biden administration is its strong support for abortion rights.

Biden, a practicing Catholic, already has rolled back some Trump policies aimed at curbing abortion access. On Jan. 22, the 48th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision establishing a nationwide right to abortion, Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris said they would seek to enshrine that right into federal law to protect it from court challenges.

That stance was assailed by Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, who chairs the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

"It is deeply disturbing and tragic that any president would praise and commit to codifying a Supreme Court ruling that denies unborn children their most basic human and civil right," he said.

The Rev. Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said in a recent radio broadcast that Biden "is entirely, unquestionably sold out to the abortion rights movement."

Clergy of other denominations who support abortion rights, including from mainline Protestant



Alex Brandon/Associated Press

Doug Emhoff, left, Vice President Kamala Harris, President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden stand during the national anthem Jan. 21, 2021, during a virtual Presidential Inaugural Prayer Service at the White House. President Donald Trump's departure and the start of Biden's presidency have stirred new hopes among religious leaders in the United States, while causing dismay among others.

churches and the Reform and Conservative branches of Judaism, will likely embrace the administration's efforts to expand access.

"We're not pro-choice in spite of our faith — we're pro-choice because of our faith," said the Very Rev. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, an Episcopal priest and president of the National Abortion Federation.

LGBTQ rights

Another issue uniting Catholic and Southern Baptist leaders is concern about expanding nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ people.

They say such measures — some already taken and others expected later — could infringe on religious freedom for faiths that oppose same-sex marriage and question the inclusion of gender identity in nondiscrimination policies.

In a recent statement, five prominent bishops warned about "the imposition of new attitudes and false theories on human sexuality which can produce social harms."

Massimo Faggioli, a Villanova University theology professor who authored a book about Biden and U.S.

Catholicism, said these issues will fuel serious tensions. The bishops, he said, fear Catholic institutions will lose their right to provide government-subsidized social services if they do not abide by certain nondiscriminatory policies.

Francis DeBernardo of New Ways Ministry, which advocates for LGBTQ Catholics, predicted that Biden will find a balance even as he bolsters LGBTQ rights.

"As a person deeply committed to his church, he is not likely to trample on the religious liberties of faith institutions," DeBernardo said.

Leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, another conservative denomination, may be relieved at Trump's departure and willing to work with Biden on some issues, said Mat-

thew Bowman, chair of Mormon studies at Claremont Graduate University in California.

Bowman said they would ask that any nondiscrimination initiatives provide exemptions for religious institutions, including faith-based schools such as Brigham Young University.

Immigration

Faith-based groups have called for raising the annual cap on refugee admissions to the U.S. and relief for beneficiaries of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, which shields some young immigrants from deportation.

Evangelical organizations that assist refugees offered advance praise for Biden's expected raising of the admissions ceiling after what one called "numerous

harmful changes" under Trump.

Leaders of the Catholic bishops' conference cheered Biden for shoring up DACA on his first day in office, while urging him to go further by creating a path to citizenship for its beneficiaries as a "first step" toward a broader overhaul.

More action is set to come from the White House as soon as this week, and lawmakers also vow to pursue it through legislation. Whether religious groups can maintain their support for future immigration measures may depend on the specifics.

Racial inequality

Many denominations in the U.S. have committed to combating racial injustice. Their leaders were critical of Trump's divisive rhetoric and expect Biden and Harris to make substantive efforts to reduce racial inequality.

"It's my hope that the administration will do everything they can to promote racial justice, truth-telling and healing," said Michael Curry, the first African American to serve as presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. He added that criminal justice and education are areas where racial disparities must be addressed.

The Rev. Terri Hord Owens, the first African American to lead the Disciples of Christ, was encouraged by the Biden transition team's extensive outreach to faith leaders and hopes the administration can address economic inequality in ways that will simultaneously combat racial injustice.

The chairman of the Catholic bishops' Committee on Racism, Bishop Shelton Fabre of the Houma-Thibodaux diocese in Louisiana, said differences with Biden over abortion won't prevent cooperation on race-related matters.

"While we have strong disagreements regarding abortion and other issues ... I nonetheless look forward to working together to address racism as it impacts society and individuals," Fabre said.

The Rev. Russell Moore, head of the Southern Baptists' public policy arm, acknowledged that some white evangelicals don't consider racial inequality a high-priority issue. But he argued that it's crucial to develop a "Christian vision of racial justice" and said an increasing number of multi-ethnic evangelical churches share his view.

Domestic security

The Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol lent fresh urgency to the debate over combatting domestic security threats, including hate crimes targeting houses of worship in recent years.

Faith-based groups such as the Jewish Orthodox Union lauded an increase in federal grant money for protection at religious institutions, aid that's distributed through a program Biden vows to strengthen.

But discussion of expanding legal authority to prosecute alleged domestic terrorists has raised alarms among civil rights groups, including Muslim organizations that fear it could be unduly deployed against minority communities.

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Northeast Oregon Directory of Churches

<p style="text-align: center;">COVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1708 Jasper St., Cove, OR</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NORTH POWDER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 390 E. St., North Powder, OR</p> <p style="text-align: center;">JOIN US... <i>Catch the Spirit!</i> Worship: 9:00 a.m. Cove Worship: 10:00 a.m. N. Powder</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">First Christian Church <i>(Disciples of Christ)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">901 Penn Avenue 963-2623 lgdisciples@gmail.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Worship 10:00 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">~Join us at The Lord's Table~</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GRACE COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Place</i> 62848 Philynda Loop in Island City <i>"We are called to Serve"</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sunday School for all ages - 9:00 am Sunday Worship 10:00 am</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Phone: 541-568-4230 grace.lutherancove@gmail.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IMBLER CHRISTIAN CHURCH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">440 RUCKMAN, IMBLER 534-2201 www.imblerce@gmail.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sunday Services 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship Service</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.5em;">Services This Week</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">SUMMERVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sunday Services: Sunday School & Adult Bible Classes 9:45AM Children's Church & Worship Service 11:00AM Family Worship Service 6:00PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday: Prayer Mtg, Children's Bible Club, Youth Group 7:00PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A church for your whole family Visit us at summervillebaptistchurch.org</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LA GRANDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS"</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1612 4th Street - 963-2498</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pastor Taylor Gould</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For service information go to www.lagrandeumc.org</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Zion Lutheran Church <i>(an ELCA church)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 902 Fourth Street, La Grande, OR (541) 963-5998</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9:00 am - Worship 10:00 am - Fellowship & Refreshments 10:30 am - Classes Pastor: Roberta Smythe www.zionlagrande.org</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">La Grande Seventh-day Adventist Church <i>A Place where hope is found in Jesus</i> Join us in Fellowship & Worship Saturday all age classes 9:30 am Saturday Worship 11:00 am</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2702 Adams Avenue, La Grande 963-4018 lagrandeor.adventistchurch.org</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Learning for Today and Eternity</i> Little Friends Christian Preschool/Childcare 963-6390 La Grande Adventist Christian School K-8th Grade 963-6203</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LaGrande CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">109 18th Street • 963-3402</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FIRST LANDMARK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1812 1st St. La Grande Pastor Dave Tierce • 541-605-0215 <i>We use the King James Version Bible</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">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>