

HIGHLIGHTS

Faith Lutheran Church

LA GRANDE, ENTERPRISE — Faith Lutheran Church will hold Sunday services, Feb. 28, in La Grande and 10 a.m. and in Enterprise at 2 p.m. The sermon will be drawn from the eighth chapter of Mark. In this reading Jesus explains about the things that would happen when they got to Jerusalem. Jesus assured the disciples that it was God's plan that he would "rise again" to be victorious over the suffering that would occur.

Verse 32 says: "And He said this plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him." Humankind regularly looks for ways to avoid any kind of suffering, even when that suffering

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).

will bring great rewards. Jesus corrected Peter with some firm words: "you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man" (verse 33). This is a correction that we can use in our lives.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

LA GRANDE — The subject of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' "Come, Follow Me" lesson for the week

of March 1 is Doctrine and Covenants Sections 20-22, which are revelations given to Joseph Smith on church organization and government.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was formally organized on April 6, 1830, by a small group of believers gathered in the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York. These sections teach about the fundamental doctrine and sacred ordinances that were taught then and still followed today.

RootsTech Connect, which is the world's largest family history celebration, begins Thursday, Feb. 25, and will be virtual, and free, for all who would like to attend. Sessions will be recorded and available for viewing for the next 12 months. Visit www.rootstech.org to learn more.

Zion Lutheran Church

LA GRANDE — Zion Lutheran Church will not worship in person this Sunday, Feb. 28, due to COVID-19.

A recorded worship service will be posted on Zion's Facebook page and website on Saturday.

A virtual Lenten service will be held via Zoon on Wednesday, March 3, at 6:30 p.m. A link

for that service will be emailed Tuesday. Zion won't worship in person again until a week after Union County is in the yellow zone of the state's metrics. The church office also will be closed until then.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

LA GRANDE — Due to the coronavirus, St. Peter's Episcopal Church will not worship in person until at least mid-March. A link to a recorded worship service for Sunday, Feb. 28, will be posted to Facebook on Saturday.

There will be a Zoom Lenten midweek service on Wednesday, March 3, at 6:30 p.m.

The link for the virtual service will be emailed on Tuesday.

Love and vaccinations

Pastors tapped to overcome racial divide on vaccine

By **ASHRAF KHALIL** and **HILARY POWELL**

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Stately and deliberate, with a distinctive white streak in his black hair, the Rev. Wallace Charles Smith started his Valentine's Day sermon at Shiloh Baptist Church by talking about love and vaccinations.

"That's what love's all about. When you get a vaccination, you are saying to everyone around you that you love them enough that you don't want any hurt, harm or danger to befall them," he said. "In the spirit of love, keep at it until you get your vaccination. That's the only thing that's going to erase this terrible scourge."

The church was empty except for a camera crew and a tiny choir. Thanks

to COVID-19, Smith's Sunday sermons are now virtual affairs.

Still, health officials in the nation's capital are hoping that Smith and other Black religious leaders will serve as community influencers to overcome what officials say is a persistent vaccine reluctance in the Black community.

Smith and several other local ministers recently received their first vaccine shots.

Black residents make up a little under half of Washington's population, but constitute nearly three-fourths of the city's COVID-19 deaths. The District of Columbia is now offering vaccinations to residents over age 65, but numbers show that seniors in the poorest and blackest parts of Washington are lagging behind.

Officials partially blame historic distrust of the medical establishment, especially among Black

seniors, who vividly remember medical exploitation horrors such as the Tuskegee syphilis study, where hundreds of impoverished rural Black men suffered syphilis effects with minimal treatment for decades as part of the medical study.

"We know we need to focus on Black and brown communities," Dr. LaQuandra Nesbitt, the director of the district's health department, said earlier this month. "Let's not give up on communities of color being interested in the vaccine. Let's continue to answer their questions. Let's continue to be very thoughtful in how we answer their questions."

The D.C. government is giving priority for vaccine registration to predominantly Black ZIP codes and running public information

campaigns, including the clergy vaccinations. The latest numbers show the gap is narrowing, but the southeastern core of the city's Black community is still getting vaccinated at the slowest rate.

"There's distrust in our community. We can't ignore that," said Rev. James Coleman of All Nations Baptist, who was vaccinated along with Smith. "The church, and particularly

the Black church, is essential. ... That's what pastors do."

Coleman said he has worked to create a vaccine-positive atmosphere among the seniors in his church. Before a recent Sunday morning sermon, conducted via audio conference call, elderly parishioners in Coleman's church updated one another on their progress and congratulated those who had been vaccinated.

"There was some nervousness to overcome at first," Coleman said. "People outside the Black



In this Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021, photo Reginald Henry, 69, of Washington, D.C., receives his second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at a clinic at Howard University, in Washington, D.C. "I felt confident about getting the vaccine," says Henry, who lives in a senior building, "because God helps those who help themselves."

community sometimes can't relate to that sensitivity."

Health departments nationwide are dealing with the same challenges, and other jurisdictions also are calling on religious leaders to help dispel vaccine fears.

"Our role as clergy and as faith-based leaders is to be optimistic and hopeful. We say to our people that these vaccines are the gift of life. We believe in the science," said Rev. H.B. Holmes Jr. of Bethel Missionary Church in Tallahassee, Florida.

Holmes has gotten vaccinated, and his church has hosted vaccination drives.

"We knew that because of hesitation and reluctance we needed trusted voices. So we brought together persons of great influence in Black and brown communities, particularly from our community, to say, you know, I'm going to take the vaccine and roll up our sleeves and do that publicly," he said.

In Washington, the Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church has been designated a "faith-based



Kathy Boylan, 77, of Washington, who says she has never received any vaccinations herself, protests the COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021, outside the Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church that was hosting a vaccination clinic in southeast Washington, D.C.

vaccination partner," with a portable vaccination trailer set up in the church's parking lot twice a week.

The vaccinations have gone smoothly.

But showing that vaccine skepticism transcends racial lines,

a white D.C. resident, Kathy Boylan, crossed the city on a recent icy day to stand on the sidewalk outside the church with a sign saying "Danger: COVID Vaccine Say No!"

"Our role as clergy and as faith-based leaders is to be optimistic and hopeful. We say to our people that these vaccines are the gift of life. We believe in the science."

— Rev. H.B. Holmes Jr., Bethel Missionary Church, Tallahassee, Florida

Northeast Oregon Directory of Churches

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

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~

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

Phone: 541-568-4230
grace.lutherancove@gmail.com

IMBLER CHRISTIAN CHURCH

440 RUCKMAN, IMBLER 534-2201
www.imblerce@gmail.com

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

Services This Week

CHURCH Service DIRECTORY

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

LA GRANDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
"OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS"

1612 4th Street - 963-2498

Pastor Taylor Gould

For service information go to
www.lagrandeumc.org

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

La Grande Seventh-day Adventist Church
A Place where hope is found in Jesus
Join us in Fellowship & Worship
Saturday all age classes 9:30 am
Saturday Worship 11:00 am

2702 Adams Avenue, La Grande 963-4018
lagrandeor.adventistchurch.org

Learning for Today and Eternity
Little Friends
Christian Preschool/Childcare 963-6390
La Grande Adventist Christian School K-8th Grade 963-6203

La Grande Church of the Nazarene

109 18th Street • 963-3402

Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.

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