

SPIRITUAL LIFE HIGHLIGHTS

Country Gospel band performs at First Christian Church

LA GRANDE — Soul Renovation, a country Gospel band from Wallowa County — will perform at the La Grande First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on Sunday, Oct. 24, at 10 a.m. Soul Renovation has been performing since 1995. Their desire is to lift Christ up through their message in song. All are welcome. Face masks are required.

Faith Lutheran services offered in Union and Wallowa counties

LA GRANDE — Faith Lutheran Church on Sunday, Oct. 24, will hold a worship service in La Grande at 10 a.m. and in Enterprise at 2 p.m. The sermon

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 be drawn from Mark 10:46-52, which tells of a man who had been taught about Jesus. When he knew Jesus was passing by, he called out to him for mercy. We are blessed by those who have helped us to know about Jesus and Jesus' desire for us to be near him.

Join St. Peter's service virtually, live or later

LA GRANDE — St. Peter's Episcopal Church in La Grande will meet for in-person worship at 11 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 24. The service will include Holy Communion. Masks and social distancing are required. The service will be

streamed live and also recorded. The link to the livestream will be posted to the church's Facebook page on Saturday, Oct. 23. That same link can also be used to watch the service at a later time.

Livestreaming of service resumes at Zion Lutheran

LA GRANDE — The Sunday, Oct. 24, worship service at La Grande's Zion Lutheran Church begins at 9 a.m. The service will include Holy Communion and will be followed by a time of fellowship. Masks and social distancing are required. The service will also be livestreamed to YouTube, and the link for that stream

will be posted the day before on Zion's Facebook page and website.

Children present Primary Program at region's services

NORTHEASTERN OREGON — Children will present the annual Primary Program during the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Sacrament Service in the Pine Valley, Union and Enterprise wards on Sunday, Oct. 24. Members of the congregation will speak in the other La Grande stake wards, and the second hour will be Priesthood and Relief Society meetings.

The "Come, Follow Me" lesson for the week of Oct. 25 will be based on Doctrine and Covenants Section 124, which is a revelation given to Joseph Smith in January 1841 that provides direction for the members settling in Nauvoo,

Illinois, and provides information on the temple they were to build. Lesson materials may be enhanced by a series of podcasts released this past week titled "The Nauvoo Temple: A Joseph Smith Papers Podcast." Visit www.newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org to learn how to access this material.

What does spirituality mean to you?

LA GRANDE — The Observer welcomes thoughts and comments from community members on spiritual matters. If you would like to share how you experience spirituality, email news@lagrandeobserver.com or call 541-963-3161. Ongoing monthly columns and one-time submissions will be considered. Columns are generally 500-600 words and include a photo of the writer.

— *The Observer*

The greatest good for the greater good



MATT HENRY
THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

As a retired pastor, I tend to stay connected to local clergy for friendship and support.

I was having coffee recently with one of them, a good, wise, experienced pastor who serves a community church in Weston. We both have analytical minds by nature, shaped and formed by our Christian faith.

So it was that he asked me the million-dollar question: "Do you think we have an unconscious death wish?"

My unspoken thoughts immediately crackled like a dry grass fire. Who is "we" and who is to decide the definition of that? Unconscious — or rather, as I suspect, quite conscious? And perhaps most important: Are there enough of us who want to live to overcome those of us who seem hell-bent on dying and leaving a scorched earth behind?

The first sermon I ever preached in a church setting was as a lay person. The pastor of the church asked me if I would "give the message" at the

Easter Sunrise Service of all things. Thinking we were both nuts, I humbly accepted. I was scared to death. What did I have to tell anyone, especially fellow believers who were much more experienced with the Holy Scriptures than me?

My solution was to not center my reflection on any specific passage but to rather concentrate on the central message of Jesus' Gospel itself — that of supreme self-sacrifice. But my audience could repeat the Easter story in their sleep so what was left to say? In my own simple way, I just brought it home, down out of the transcendent distance and into the imminent moment.

I asked them to close their eyes and imagine their favored child or loved one. Holding that person in front of their eyes, I envisioned the classic sci-fi scenario of an alien race invading earth, possessing the technology to kill all humans immediately with the mere thought of it. But here's the deal — they will not do that, and leave, never to return, if one human would give them their most cherished and loved human to take away. For most of them, that was their child. It was that simple. The

simple swap of one — their one — for all, everyone else on the entire planet, even those they call "enemy." What would be their decision? What would be yours? That decision had been both Abraham's and God's, and we have been given their responses: The greatest good for the greater good. The One for the All.

In both cases, I'm sure the decision was beyond imaginable excruciation.

Now think about my friend's question and my inexperienced homily for a second against the current backdrop of particular, historic and largely white-induced hyper-

individualism that is drowning the world and casting a future with much uncertainty and anxiety.

As the second act of "Opera COVID" plays out, the uber self-centeredness, the classic American selfishness of anti-vaxxers continues to stump me, particularly because their decision has no grounding in logic or common sense.

Is this what our frontline health care providers are sacrificing their own lives for? Simple childish obstinacy? Or is it rather as I suspect — they are willing to sacrifice everyone else on earth so that their own, cherished ideological child

survives the dominant alien onslaught above all others? Have we "Americans" bunkered down with a fallout shelter mentality toward each other? You come for the last can of pork and beans on earth and I'll shoot you?

Another Abraham, this one surnamed Lincoln, to someone who was requesting a prayer that "God might be on the Union side to win the war," responded wisely and adroitly, "Sir, I am not really concerned about whether God is on our side. I am very concerned we are on God's side."

One theologian puts it

like this, "It is difficult to stand on God's side. Perhaps that is why we are so often tempted to believe that God stands on ours."

For bona fide Christians, there can only be one side. The Gospel of ultimate self-sacrifice — the greatest good for the greater good — draws a line in the sand that cannot be breached.

The Rev. Matt Henry is a retired American Baptist/United Methodist pastor, who pastored the Pendleton First United Church and now joyfully makes "hippie food" for the houseless at the Warming Station.

WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

Irrigators direct the water. Fletchers fashion the shaft. Carpenters bend the wood. The wise control themselves.

— Dhammapada 6.80

You are your own master, you make your future. Therefore discipline yourself as a horse-dealer trains a thoroughbred.

— Dhammapada 25.380

Better than a thousand useless words is one useful word, hearing which one attains peace.

— Dhammapada 8.100
Source: www.pariyatti.org



LIVING DRUG FREE

RED RIBBON WEEK
OCTOBER 23-31

The Week Communities Pledge to Stay Drug Free
GO TO UCSAFECOMMUNITES.ORG TO LEARN MORE



Union County Safe Communities Coalition



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.imblercc@gmail.com

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

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

LaGrande CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

109 18th Street • 963-3402

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

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

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

Services This Week