

## SPIRITUAL LIFE HIGHLIGHTS

### Zion Lutheran offers online resources for worship

LA GRANDE — La Grande's Zion Lutheran Church will meet for worship this Sunday, Nov. 14, at 9 a.m. Fellowship time will follow. Masks and social distancing are required.

The service will not be available online this week, but other online worship options will be posted on Zion's Facebook and website on Saturday, Nov. 13.

### Service of Morning Prayer held at St. Peter's

LA GRANDE — St. Peter's Episcopal Church in La Grande will meet for Morning Prayer at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 14. Masks and social distancing are required. The service will not be available online this week so other online worship opportuni-

### 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).

ties will be posted on Saturday, Nov. 13, to the church's Facebook page.

### Fellowship includes bowling, Bible study

LA GRANDE, ENTERPRISE — The Faith Lutheran Church congregation will fellowship with bowling, followed by a Bible Study and dinner on Saturday, Nov. 13.

On Sunday, Nov. 14, Faith Lutheran's Matins Service in La Grande begins at 10 a.m., and a Divine Service in Enterprise is at 2 p.m.

The sermon will be based on

Mark 13:1-13, which recounts a time when Jesus would soon be taken from his disciples and he was encouraging them: "And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speaks, but the Holy Spirit."

### Weekly lesson looks at second coming of Christ

NORTHEASTERN OREGON — The primary children will present the Sunday, Nov. 14, Sacrament Service program for seven wards within the La

Grande Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — Elgin, John Day, Baker 1st, Baker Valley, and La Grande 1st, 2nd and 4th. Members of the congregation will be speaking at the other six wards. The second hour meetings will be Priesthood and Relief Society.

The "Come, Follow Me" lesson for the week of Nov. 15 is based on Doctrine & Covenants Sections 133-134, which discusses the second coming of Jesus Christ and states that "governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man."

### Sermon drawn from book of Amos

LA GRANDE — The La Grande First Presbyterian Church will meet in person at 9:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 14. Pastor Laura's sermon, "Fluid

Justice," is based on Amos 5. Masks and social distancing are required.

The service may also be joined virtually at [www.facebook.com/groups/fpclagrande](http://www.facebook.com/groups/fpclagrande). Access to the sermons are available at that link at any time.

### Service includes tribute in honor of veterans

LA GRANDE — Pastor Archie Hook will speak on the "Eleventh Hour," drawn from 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17, during his message at the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in La Grande on Sunday, Nov. 14.

The service will feature a tribute to veterans, including a special presentation of military hats put together by Sharon Hohstadt. Worship begins at 10 a.m.

— The Observer

## Congregation practices 'loving their neighbors'

Some churches continue to take precautions against the coronavirus

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — On Sunday, Nov. 7, Pastor Patty Nance and two young children in suits began a morning service by walking up to the front of their church and lighting candles. They were all wearing masks, trying to reduce the chance of COVID-19 transmission, and they were not alone in their mask wearing.

Every single person in Hermiston First United Methodist Church, 191 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston, was wearing a mask. During the entire service, the only time anyone removed a mask was when speaking at the front of the church, behind a lectern or at the altar.

This comes at a time mask-wearing has become politicized, and some television evangelists have decried both masks and vaccinations. First United, however, has sided with precautions, according to the pastor. For not only was everyone masked, but the church had other signs of the seriousness by which they are taking COVID-19.

A few such signs, just outside the sanctuary, were actual signs — one that posted recommendations for social distancing, masks and hand-washing. Another sign included a checklist of COVID-19 symptoms.

First United had hand-sanitizing stations at entrances and a sign-in book asking people to admit their vaccination



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Churchgoers sing outside of the Hermiston First United Methodist Church Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021, following the church's service. The church has moved singing and communion outside in response to the coronavirus pandemic.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Pastor Patty Nance offers communion Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021, outside of the Hermiston First United Methodist Church, where churchgoers continue to wear masks and take other precautions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

status.

As the service fell on the first Sunday following All Saints' Day, Nov. 1, the church celebrated heroes of Christianity, both past and present. Nance recommended keeping them, and their ways of showing that they were "marked by the fruit of the spirit," in mind.

Guest speakers, Joy Matthews and Jackie Linton, took the pulpit to

remind the congregation of suffering individuals. Their examples show us the need for God's forgiveness and justice, as people "seek the face of God," they said.

Meanwhile, the congregation remained masked, and members did not take their masks off when singing their only song of the service, "When the Saints Go Marching In." They went outside to sing

that song at the end of the service. They also took communion outside. Bread, signifying the body of Christ, was served with a gloved hand and tongs. The juice, which represented Jesus' blood, was delivered in tiny, individual plastic cups.

It was not the most comfortable of situations, admitted Bob Daniel of Hermiston. He was at the Nov. 7 service. He said he has been a member of the church for more than 40 years, and he was "not crazy about masks." Still, he said he wore one for every service because he thought it was the right thing to do.

Another member, Janie Early, Irrigon, was at the service. She wore the mask at church and wherever she goes these days, she said. With her family at church that Sunday, she said the masks were uncomfortable, but she wore them out of love for her fellow man. She expressed the belief that masks reduce transmission and wearing them protects her community.

## End times or not, plant your apple tree



ROBERTA SMYTHE  
WALKING WITH THE SHEPHERD

Recently a parishioner asked me about the idea that we are now living in the end times. He asked because he has heard others say that we are. Their reasons for believing we are in the end times include the COVID pandemic, the swift rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and the increasing number and severity of natural disasters such as floods, fires and hurricanes.

My short response to my parishioner was that every generation has thought they were living in the end times. Even the first generation of Jesus' followers believed Jesus would return before they died, since Jesus said that "this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place" (Matthew 24:34 NRSV).

If we believe the truth of the Bible, those of us living two millennia later must ask ourselves what Jesus meant by "this generation" and "these things." If by "this generation" Jesus meant the people alive as Jesus spoke, then perhaps what Jesus meant by "these things" was the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (70 CE). If by "these things" Jesus meant the end of everything, then perhaps "this generation" is the whole generation of humankind on the Earth. After all, God's sense of time is far more vast than that of us mortals.

Many people over the centuries and millennia have developed various systems for predicting the end times, and thus far, all of them have been wrong. In fact, Jesus says that no one else knows when it will occur, "only the Father."

So why should we believe anyone today can know whether we're in the end times?

Personally, I hope the end times are still millennia away. I hope at least some of humankind will eventually leave the Earth and venture out to explore other planets and other stars.

But right here, right now, I think we should be focusing on living in the present. Martin Luther once said "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree."

So instead of trying to predict the future, and when the world will end, perhaps we should be helping those who are affected by the very events cited as predictors of the end times. Perhaps we should be helping those affected by COVID and other diseases. Perhaps we should be helping those affected by fires, floods and other natural disasters.

If we are truly concerned about the end times and the final judgment, we might want to take a closer look at how we are living our lives, and how we are treating others.

Roberta Smythe is the pastor of Zion Lutheran Church and St. Peter's Episcopal Church, both in La Grande.

## 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.lutheranove@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

**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](http://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](http://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](http://www.flmbclagrande.com)

Services This Week