

SPIRITUAL LIFE HIGHLIGHTS

Season of Lent begins with service March 2 for Ash Wednesday

LA GRANDE — This Sunday, Feb. 27, the sermon at the 10 a.m. service at Faith Lutheran Church will use Luke 9:28-36. In these verses Jesus and three of his disciples (Peter, James, and John) went onto a mountain to pray. As Jesus was praying, “the appearance of His face altered, and His clothing became dazzling white” (v. 29), and two Old Testament personalities — Moses and Elijah — appeared there with him and spoke of Jesus’ departure that would be in Jerusalem.

Wednesday, March 2, is the beginning of the season of Lent, which is the 40 reflective and penitential days before Easter. This season begins with Ash Wednesday and the reminder that “you are dust and to dust you

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).

shall return” (Genesis 3:19). An Ash Wednesday service, with the imposition of ashes, will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Faith Lutheran, with a soup supper at 5:30 p.m.

Pastor speaks on ‘New Reality’ in Enterprise

ENTERPRISE — The 11 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 27, service at the Enterprise Community Congregational Church, also known as the “big brown church,” will feature the message “New Reality,” based on Mark 9:2-13. The congregation’s interim pastor, Rev. Dr. Craig Pesti-Strobel, will show how, when we invite God into our

lives, we invite positive change and transformation. Bible study is offered at 9:30 a.m.

Congregations worship together Sunday, Feb. 27

LA GRANDE — The Zion Lutheran Church congregation will join St. Peter’s Episcopal Church for worship this Sunday, Feb. 27, at 10 a.m. A time of fellowship time will follow the service. Masks and social distancing are required.

The service will be streamed live, and the link will be posted on both churches’ Facebook pages and on Zion’s website on Sat-

urday, Feb. 26. The same link can be used to watch the service at a later time.

Family history virtual conference begins next week

NORTHEASTERN OREGON — On Sunday, Feb. 27, the Union and Elgin wards, along with the Pine Valley Branch, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will hold ward conferences under the direction of the Stake Presidency. In the other area wards, members of the congregations will speak during the first hour, and Relief Society, Priesthood and youth group meetings will be held during the second hour.

The “Come, Follow Me” lesson for the week of Feb. 28 is based on Genesis 28-33 and looks at what we can learn from the lives of

Esau and Jacob, the sons of Isaac, about the rewards of faithfulness.

RootsTech 2022 takes place virtually March 3-5 and presents an opportunity to learn about family history. Visit the church’s website or rootstech.org to learn more.

We want to know: 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

Forgiveness is the heart of true love



LAURA ELLY HUDSON BELIEVING AND BECOMING

“True love?” My friend scoffed. “It just comes down to whether or not you are willing to take on another person’s baggage.”

“You’re such a pessimist!” I protested. I was an idealistic 20-something with romantic dreams of happily-ever-after with my still-unknown soul mate. “If you can’t believe in the possibility of true love,” I argued, “of course you’re never going to find it!” My older, wiser and somewhat world-weary friend just gave me an amused smirk and stood by his realism.

Years later, as another Valentine’s Day has come and gone, I am grateful to have

found true love, but I’ve also learned that my friend wasn’t wrong. Over our 19 years of learning to love one another, my partner has often helped me carry my baggage, and I’ve helped him carry his. Sometimes it feels like a lightweight carry-on (his), and sometimes it feels like a two-ton truckload (mine).

When human beings meet, fall in love and make a lifelong commitment, we bring the whole history of our previous lives, with suitcases full of hurts and coping strategies. Sometimes it will be difficult and even frightening to trust each other. To continually rediscover trusting intimacy, lovers must labor to find a common language and healthy habits to share their burdens. This heavy luggage lifting requires relinquishing false pride and venturing vulnerability, again and again.

Whenever I have the pastoral privilege of offering premarital counseling, I always

share my friend’s wry comment about baggage. Then, I add my encouragement to learn what I am sure is the heart of true love: forgiveness.

“As soon as possible,” I tell younger and older couples alike, “figure out how you will practice forgiveness together.” Get good at saying, “I’m sorry. Will you forgive me?” Find your own unique shorthand that speaks those words in action, like offering to do the dishes — more practical than buying chocolate or roses, and probably more effective.

Forgiveness has the word “give” in it, because you will have to give something up: perhaps an old grudge, a false idea about yourself or your partner, or a habit that no longer meets your partner’s needs. It may cost your time and your compassion to listen to your partner’s hurt, anger or grief.

Forgiveness is costly. The cross is the

ultimate symbol of forgiveness and reconciliation for that reason. Jesus’ cross is where God’s love meets human sin with forgiveness to bring new life.

So, perhaps it’s fitting that our day to celebrate love is named for St. Valentine. Legend says he was a Roman priest in the third century, martyred for defying the emperor by marrying couples to spare the husbands from war. We can’t know his whole story, but St. Valentine surely knew something about bearing true love’s burdens.

When we approach our loved ones with readiness to carry their baggage — and forgive one another when we fail — we may finally begin to touch the divine heart of true love.

Laura Elly Hudson is co-pastor of the La Grande First Presbyterian Church. You can find her at www.lauraellyhudson.com.

Faith columnist releases new book about healing and miracles

The Observer

NICHOLASVILLE, Kentucky — Dr. William “Billy” Holland, whose faith column appears from time to time on The Observer’s Spiritual Life page, in January 2022 released a new book, “Receiving Our Healing – Going to War on our Knees.”



Holland

Described in a press release as an “inspirational and encouraging

resource that focuses on divine healing and miracles,” Dr. Holland’s book has at its foundation two scriptures: Matthew 8:30, in which Jesus declares, “I am willing, be healed,” and Hebrews 13:8, which promises that Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Holland, who writes the “Living on Purpose” faith column among other ministries, believes that healing and miracles continue to be the will of God for us today.

In the book he presents biblical commentaries,

in-depth spiritual insights, explanations of mysteries and faith-building true accounts of modern-day miracles.

“It’s important for everyone to know that whatever you are facing, your situation is not larger or more devastating than God’s ability and authority. Our Lord Jesus is Yahweh Rapha the God that heals!” he writes. “The Bible declares that nothing is impossible with Him, but in order for His authority to be demonstrated, we must believe

that He is who He says He is.”

Dr. William F. Holland Jr. is a Kentucky-based ordained independent minister and chaplain.

He is also the author of “A Lifestyle of Worship – Living in the Awareness of God’s Presence” and “Convictions and Considerations – Encouragement for the Soul.”

For more information about his books, articles, original music and outreach ministry, visit billyhollandministries.com or email him at psalmz103@gmail.com.



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Northeast Oregon Directory of Churches

Grid of church advertisements including Cove United Methodist Church, First Christian Church, Grace Community Lutheran Church, Imbler Christian Church, Summerville Baptist Church, La Grande United Methodist Church, La Grande Nazarene Church, Adventist Church, and First Landmark Missionary Baptist Church.

CHURCH Service DIRECTORY

Services This Week