

SPIRITUAL LIFE HIGHLIGHTS

The resurrection provides us with everlasting peace

NORTHEASTERN OREGON — For the Second Sunday of Easter, April 24, Faith Lutheran Church's services will center on John 20:19, 21 and 26, which tells of Jesus greeting his disciples with "Peace be with you." This is a consistent message of the resurrected Lord because his victory over sin, death and the devil provides everlasting peace. The sermon at Faith Lutheran will focus upon his peace as he sends us out to share his Gospel ("good news"). Divine services

SUBMISSIONS

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

are scheduled for 10 a.m. in La Grande and 2 p.m. in Enterprise.

New sermon series begins on 'The Prayer that Changes Us'

ENTERPRISE — The Enterprise Community Congrega-

tional Church begins a new series studying the Lord's Prayer on Sunday, April 24. Rev. Dr. Craig Pesti-Strobel will share his message, "The Prayer that Changes Us," exploring the power of the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. Worship at "the big brown church" begins at 11 a.m., and Bible study is held at 9:30 a.m.

Come to Christ, and don't come alone

NORTHEASTERN OREGON — On Sunday, April 24, La Grande Stake High Council members of the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints will be speaking in area wards during Sacrament Services on Sister Bonnie H. Cordon's talk titled "Come Unto Christ and Don't Come Alone" from the October 2021 General Conference. Sister Cordon serves as the Young Women General President.

The "Come, Follow Me" lesson for the week of April 25, based on Exodus 24 and 31-34, will focus on covenants made with the Lord and how they help us follow his commandments.

Carpet replacements are taking place in buildings throughout

the stake, so be sure to check with ward leaders for updates before scheduling activities. The Columbia River Temple in Richland, Washington, will remain closed through June 20.

Fellowship follows in-person service

LA GRANDE — Zion Lutheran Church meets for worship on Sunday, April 24, at 9 a.m. Masks are not required, though are recommended for those at risk. A fellowship time will follow the service. This week's service will not be available online.

The Earth is a gift — loving it one day each year is not enough



LAURA HUDSON
BELIEVING AND BECOMING

What place on our planet is, for you, a gift of divine love?

For Englishman Foliott S. Pierpoint, who wrote one of my favorite hymns, it was the hilltop outside his native city where he composed this verse in 1863: "For the beauty of the Earth/ for the glory of the skies/for the love, which from our birth/over and around us lies..."

Maybe for you, that place is not a hilltop but a river like the Grande Ronde, where you enjoy catching fish. Maybe it's the forest where you find morel mushrooms in surprising places. Maybe it's your backyard, where you delight in the birds flocking to your birdfeeder.

Places of beauty, wonder and joy can be found everywhere. Picture yours right now in your mind's eye and give thanks for it in your heart. Better yet, go outside, use all your senses, and take time to savor Earth's beauty with gratitude.

Gratitude is a core element of any loving relationship, and beyond mere survival, giving and receiving love is our foundational desire as human creatures. Love provides us enduring purpose, passion, courage and power to face whatever crises arise over the course of our lives.

And it's abundantly clear that everyone who loves Earth faces numerous challenges. The pollution of air and water, plastics clogging up the oceans, creatures facing extinction and greenhouse gasses causing climate change — the list of problems seems endless.

At the root, though, they

all derive from a broken relationship with creation and its creator. Believing ourselves to be owners, we dispose of Earth as we see fit. But "the Earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it," writes the Psalmist, and humans are also creatures dependent on Earth's gifts for our own well-being. We are made to participate with God in loving and blessing the world God so loves.

Earth Day, celebrated on April 22 since 1970, is a rallying point for people who love Earth. It is a day to remember the places and creatures we love and to dedicate our energies to helping them survive. On this day, we can implement some technical changes. We can invest in energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances. We can commit to reduce, reuse and recycle many of the items we consume.

Yet the slogan "Earth Day Every Day" makes clear that one day each year is not enough. Social and economic systems relentlessly shape human behaviors such that we continue to abuse Earth in spite of our best intentions. We need to make long-term, adaptive changes to the attitudes, habits and practices comprising these systems, so that all creatures, humans included, can not only survive but thrive.

Adaptive change calls for us to cultivate the spiritual strengths of resilience and endurance, to stay the course while we develop new ways of life. Love, God's love, revealed in the beauty of Earth and all its creatures, is the wellspring of the spiritual grit and grace we need, Earth Day and every day.

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

Finding connection with a pandemic pen pal



TRISH YERGES
OTHER VIEWS

This spring I participated in the Oregon Humanities "Dear Stranger" letter exchange project designed to connect Oregonians during the pandemic.

The theme of the letters was set for participant writers: "What is your view of the future and what lies ahead beyond the here and now? What are your hopes, dreams or fears about the future? Do you see a future incorporating the old ways or something completely new?"

All letters were addressed "Dear Stranger." I submitted my letter and in late March, I finally received a "Dear Stranger" letter in the mail. We were truly strangers because it was the project coordinator who matched us together.

Reading this letter was like unwrapping a chocolate candy. My curious eyes were delighted by the beautiful penmanship. The writer identified herself as Karen from Canby and that she was excited to converse about how we each pictured our future.

As her letter revealed, Karen has been married happily for 42 years. Despite this, she was very aware of the troubled world around her. She wrote, "Things have been progressively getting worse the last few years." She asked me, "How do you feel about what's going on around us?"

Karen explained that her source of comfort and refuge from this world's troubles comes from Scriptures like Psalm 46:1-2, and she concluded, "I have confidence our Creator sees. He cares and He will help me. Sometimes the adversity is removed or He may give me the strength to endure it."

When both of her parents died within a year of each other, she wrote that she endured the loss by thinking about a future world in which she will be reunited with her resurrected parents as John 5:28-29 promises. Until then, she admitted, "Being patient can be difficult since I miss them so much." Then she asked, "How do you cope with loss?"

Karen, who is one of Jehovah's Witnesses, warmly closed her letter, "I hope you will write me back. I would love to get acquainted with you."

In the final analysis, the "Dear Stranger" Oregon Humanities project succeeded in connecting people through good, old-fashioned letter writing. If you get a letter from someone you personally don't know, write back and make a new friend during this ongoing pandemic.

To participate in

a future round of "Dear Stranger" letter exchanges, visit www.oregonhumanities.org/programs/other-projects/dear-stranger.

■ Trish Yerges is a freelance writer and author from Elgin.



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Are you looking for a career?

Our Health Information Management team has an excellent opportunity for a Release of Information clerk. This full-time, day shift position interacts both in person and over the phone with our patients, providing excellent customer service and assisting with health information needs. You may also assist our patients in navigating their information in MYCHART, our online patient portal.

The largest private employer in Union County, GRH is growing for the future.



Top 100 Critical Access Hospital in the Nation
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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

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:30 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

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.flmblagrande.com

Services This Week