

## SPIRITUAL LIFE HIGHLIGHTS

### The 'Good Gift' initiates and helps us sustain our faith

LA GRANDE — The message at Faith Lutheran Church's 10 a.m. service on Sunday, July 24, will expound on the Gospel of Luke 11:1-13. In these verses we learn that the Heavenly Father gives the Good Gift to those who ask. The Good Gift is the Holy Spirit, who initiates and sustains faith in Jesus Christ so that we will have peace now and forevermore.

On July 25-27 members of Faith Lutheran are scheduled to paint the fellowship hall. Prep work will be done on Monday, painting on Tuesday and finishing details on Wednesday, Lord willing.

### 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](mailto:news@lagrandeobserver.com) (with Highlights in the subject line).

### Communion will be celebrated July 24

LA GRANDE — St. Peter's Episcopal Church will celebrate a Communion service this Sunday, July 24, at 10 a.m., with fellowship immediately following. Bible study continues with the book of John in the church library.

### Guest speaker to lead worship and preach

LA GRANDE — Zion Lutheran Church meets for worship this Sunday, July 24, at 9 a.m. Vicky Hart will preach and lead worship. Fellowship time will follow the service.

### Watch Tabernacle Choir's concert event online

NORTHEASTERN OREGON — In wards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Sunday, July 24, members of the congregations will speak at Sacrament meetings, and the second hour of worship services will be Relief Society, Priesthood

and youth group meetings.

The "Come, Follow Me" lesson for the week of July 25 is on the story of Esther and Mordecai in the Old Testament book of Esther. They risked their lives to become instruments in the hands of the Lord as they protected the people of Israel.

For an uplifting spiritual experience, watch the Tabernacle Choir perform its annual summer musical concert titled "Love Thy Neighbor: A Special Tabernacle Choir Event," which was recorded on July 15 and is now available for viewing on the website of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or on YouTube.

This was the first time the choir has gathered for a public performance at the Conference Center on Temple Square since the pandemic began in March 2020.

### Message comes from story of widow with only two coins

LA GRANDE — "It's About More Than Money" is the message Pastor Archie Hook will share at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on Sunday, July 24. He will refer to Luke 21:1-4, the story of the poor widow and her two coins. Worship begins at 10:30 a.m.

—The Observer

# 'Who are you, Lord my God, and who am I?'

You've heard it said, "You are what you eat." You may also have heard it said, "You are what you think." But I say to you, "You are what you believe."

The dictionary gives us two definitions: first, to believe is to accept that something is true or exists; second, to believe is to have trust or confidence in someone or something.

We often call the initial decision to accept a particular truth a "leap of faith." However, the first leap is not an arrival, but a beginning, the first threshold crossing in a lifelong journey of spiritual formation.

One story about St. Francis recounts how a brother heard him



**LAURA ELLY HUDSON**  
BELIEVING AND BECOMING

praying, "Who are you, Lord my God, and who am I?" At each new spiritual threshold, we need to ask these two inextricably linked questions. Whatever beliefs you hold about the divine will have a profound influence on how you understand yourself, how you are to live and who you will become.

When I started writing this column, I named it "Believing and Becoming" because I wanted to call out the relationship between those two ongoing processes in the spiritual life. Maturing in

faith, our beliefs move beyond a basic acceptance of spiritual truth to a wholehearted, full-bodied confidence that encourages tangible action. Action follows upon belief; reflection, which clarifies belief, follows upon action. We spiral through these movements again and again that we may become humans who show forth God's image in the world.

What beliefs lead us to become assured, courageous and loving human beings?

I appreciate the Buddha's practical advice on this matter. He told his students to test the truth of any teachings they received, looking at cause and effect. Unskillful beliefs lead to harm and illness; skillful beliefs lead to peace and

joy for themselves and others.

But many people who claim belief in creeds or doctrines never really test them out, and so they never move beyond the first station of belief. Another problem is that we all carry unconscious beliefs that we act upon, whether we intend to or not. For example, there are Christians who say they believe in a gracious God of forgiving love and mercy, but their actions outside of church show that they truly believe in a punishing god who sees mercy as weakness.

The trouble is, much as we become our belief, we can also become our fears. In the face of fear, we all struggle to stay true to our best and most beau-

tiful beliefs. Fear disguises itself as truth. But, as author Robin Sharma puts it, "A fear is just a lie that you've rehearsed so many times you believe it's true."

What we believe matters. Living through the rapid changes of our time, we struggle to release fear and believe in love. There's never a better time to pray with St. Francis' questions, asking to be shown the kind of believing by which we become people of peace and well-being, not only for ourselves, but for the whole creation.

■ Laura Elly Hudson is co-pastor of the La Grande First Presbyterian Church and founder of Story Journey. You can find her at [lauraellyhudson.com](http://lauraellyhudson.com).

## WORDS OF THE BUDDHA

Generosity, kind words, doing a good turn for others, and treating all people alike: these bonds of sympathy are to the world what the linchpin is to the chariot wheel.

—Jataka 20

Much though one recites the sacred texts, but acts not accordingly, that heedless one is like a cowherd who only counts the cows of others — one does not partake of the blessings of the holy life.

—Dhammapada 1.19

One is not low because of birth nor does birth make one holy. Deeds alone make one low, deeds alone make one holy.

—Sutta Nipata 1.136

—www.pariyatti.org

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# Northeast Oregon Directory of Churches

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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](mailto:lgdisciples@gmail.com)

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

~Join us at The Lord's Table~

**IMBLER CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

440 RUCKMAN, IMBLER 534-2201  
[www.imblerccc@gmail.com](http://www.imblerccc@gmail.com)

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

**GRACE COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
*The Place where hope is found in Jesus*  
62848 Phylinda 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](mailto:grace.lutherancove@gmail.com)

**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

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For service information go to [www.lagrandeumc.org](http://www.lagrandeumc.org)

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2702 Adams Avenue, La Grande 963-4018  
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Wednesday Evening - 6:30 pm  
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**CHURCH Service DIRECTORY**

*Services This Week*