

BOARDMAN'S LIMEY PASTOR

# Godspeed to the Gertlars



COLIN BROWN  
Faith

It was a joyful and sad event. The Gertlars, who had been part of the founding of our church, had sold their house and the following week would be moving to be Seattle to be close to their grandchildren. There was weeping, trembling and laughing as this stage of life was invited in.

Phyllis, our amazing improviser of bounty, had organized an onslaught of cake and chicken that created a foundation of food that was added to by others.

Cake is a big part of Lutheran life, suitable for every occasion, and it was perfect material to float a sea of goodbyes from our congregation to these dear friends. Cake is a universal symbol of abundance.

The week before I had preached on the Ten Commandments, the big "shall nots," and this week I preached on the commandments of Jesus using a handout a pastor had put together in 1925. This handout listed all the things that Jesus suggested we might have a go at if we wanted to be more like him.

How we "learn to love" was the topic of my sermon. Loving people

has always been hard, and people always seem to have a hard time with it, often choosing anger and resentment as it allows an entertaining range of emotions where love requires listening and working to embrace and console those different than ourselves.

The Apostle Paul spent much of his time visiting the burgeoning house churches in his orbit of the Mediterranean, trying to fix the arguments of the crabby new Christians that were his church family, writing letters of gentle correction to the quarrelsome flocks.

Jesus gave us two particularly central commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22:37-40.

This should have been fairly straightforward, until you seek to put it in action. I think that it is difficult for people to understand that Jesus did not

want adulating followers. He wanted copiers, people who would care for the poor, tend to others with the same love they hold for their own selves or dearest. He was the first person in our faith to offer up his own life for love of others but he has been continually followed by a stream of many others.

The Gertlars reminded me of my own parents. Age has shortened them, as it had my mother and father. My heart ached in resonance with them as they enjoyed and grieved this time of change. I have seen grandparents returning to be near their grown children and getting to know grandchildren in proximity. I think it is like coming into Heaven where all of those we had lost and loved will be. It shall be a phenomenal reunion.

So I pray for the Gertlars in their journey toward greater love knowing that our house of love, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of the little town of Boardman, will follow one day into the great, embracing heart of God where all tears will be wiped away.

Collin Brown is pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Boardman.

BRIEFLY

## Boardman Baptist church sets Bible school

BOARDMAN — The Boardman First Baptist Church is gearing up for its Vacation Bible School.

The event runs July 6-10 from 5:30-8 p.m. at 200 Willow Fork Drive, Boardman.

The program will conclude with a hot dog feed and concert Sunday, July 10 beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Nashville recording artist Cale Moon will perform at 7 p.m. To ensure there is enough food, those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by contacting Rev. Bill Griggs at bilbea@eotnet.net or 541-481-9437.

## Presbyterian church day camp seeks donations

PENDLETON — The Pendleton First Presbyterian Church is seeking donations for its Vacation Bible School Day Camp.

The event begins Monday, July 11 at Westminster Woods, located near Meacham. Each year, more than 100 kids from the community are transported using school buses. People can sponsor seats for \$5 each.

In addition, food donations are being accepted, including snacks such as crackers, Chex cereal, licorice, peanut butter, M&M's, raisins, cheese sticks and cookies. Also, bottled water, plastic silverware and paper products are needed.

For more information or to make a donation, call 541-276-7681 or stop by the church at 201 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton.

## Nazarene church celebrates fathers with breakfast

HERMISTON — A Father's Day breakfast is planned at Hermiston Church of the Nazarene.

A meal will be served to the whole family as a celebration of the men in people's lives. The event is Sunday at 9:30 a.m. at the church, 1520 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston.

For more information, contact 541-567-3677, hermistonnaz@gmail.com or visit www.hermistonnazarene.org.

Friday's faith page features local, national and international faith-related news. Send information about local faith-related news and events, including concerts, special speakers and activities to community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

# About God and I

At my mother's 1983 memorial service in Chattanooga, I spoke of the Notre Dame theologian John S. Dunne who wrote about the spirit of the journey, the adventure, and the bridging with love to other peoples that had characterized my mother's life: "To find God, I came to believe, we must give over the quest of certainty for a quest of understanding. How are we to come to understand? By passing over to the standpoint of other lives and times and coming back to that of our lives and times, a seeking and a finding. It is the spiritual adventure, the changing standpoint of a person who says, 'I am and I will die, yet shall I live.' This spiritual adventure is a journey with God." Add in Daniel Batson's "quest" orientation, which describes the sort of person who is "interested in religious questions but suspicious of easy answers," unafraid to challenge and doubt his or her own beliefs.

Out of such speculation I have come to believe that the universe has purpose, and identity — meaning. Despite the incidence of entropy — unpredictability of information content, disorder, all things going to hell in a hand basket — from the beginning of time, good things were practical, inevitable, meant to happen, flourish and dominate the evil likely inherent in entropy. Call it God?

My personal search and discovery began back in the early 1970s with Ludwig von Bertalanffy's general systems theory. I wrote in my co-authored 1972 book that we have an "instinct for systems" and that "America is a system, a complex and unitary whole" concluding that "if the top soil begins to shift . . . is the thigh bone connected to the leg bone?"

But eventually growing weary of a world of general systems being mere "transactions of decline in a landscape of despair," I figured out that God, at least for myself, is of a singular reality: the fractal/chaos/super-complex/quantum elements of a universe working together



TOM HEBERT  
Faith

as a mega computer-like brain with identity. With the whole being greater than the sum of its parts, thus the universe is a living thing. I have read that David Chalmers, director of the Centre for Consciousness at the Australia National University, believes scientists will eventually conclude that consciousness is a fundamental property

of the universe — like space, time or gravity. I think so, I hope so.

So, in my patchwork career in management and consulting, I have also studied the interplay between chaos, disorder, change, beauty, excellence, adventure and original conditions — the source of truth. They hang together, but how?

What I find in the wasteland, which has always been attractive to me, is its various kind of dangers and the challenge to transform it. Who would "search for excellence" when one could search for the grail? Oh, yes, like the Quixote I am, did I mention that I often fail? That I rarely stop to first ask the King: "What ails thee?"

That said, the older I get the more I think about harmony: "a pleasing combination of elements in a whole." Perhaps I'm now more interested in a search for harmony, rather than a grail quest, bridging, or adventure. Oh, I know, as a philosopher I should just saddle up and ride out. Because, as J. Frank Dobie wrote in his 1934 "The Mustangs," "a man who has had a good horse in his life — a horse beyond the play world — will remember him as a certitude, like a calm mother, a lovely lake, or a gracious tree, amid all the flickering vanishments."

That's as far as my search for the numinous has taken me. For me the universe simply adds up to something more: wholeness, harmony, and hopefully, meaning — God.

Tom Hebert is a writer and public policy consultant living on the Umatilla Indian Reservation outside Pendleton.

# Christians fighting IS in Iraq hope for U.S. support

By BALINT SZLANKO  
Associated Press

ALQOSH, Iraq — Clutching his rifle intently, the Iraqi recruit maneuvered between piles of bricks and cement obstacles. The sound of shooting pierced the air and he jumped behind a wall, lifted his rifle and imitated the staccato sound of gunfire.

It was only a training exercise — the man is among the few dozen Assyrian Christian militiamen conducting military drills in a training camp at the foot of the mountains overlooking the Nineveh plains of northern Iraq.

The militia, known as the Nineveh Plain Protection Units, or NPU, is one of three Christian armed groups hoping for American support after the U.S. House of Representatives called for direct assistance to be delivered to local security forces in the north of Iraq.

American assistance "will give equality to all the ethnic groups here," said Col. Jawat Habib Abboush, the deputy commander of the group.

"This is our country, we had a civilization here for a thousand years and we are still citizens of this country," he added. "We cannot be marginalized."

Assyrian Christians, many of whom speak a dialect of Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus and his disciples, once constituted a significant minority in Iraq but their numbers have dwindled in recent years as many have emigrated to escape long-standing discrimination.

When the Islamic State group spread across northern and western Iraq in the summer of 2014, Assyrian Christians were brutally targeted and thousands of members of the community were displaced from their homes, fleeing to Kurdish-controlled areas.

Col. Abboush said his group poses no threat to anybody but IS. The militia had formed to protect the community in the wake of the Islamic State's onslaught and the collapse of the Iraqi army.

"We joined to fight terrorism and Daesh, and to

liberate our land, to protect our dignity and honor," said recruit Michael Rai Staef, using the Arabic acronym for IS. His hometown, Qaraqosh, is still held by the militants.

The NPU has received training from American private military trainers and Col. Abboush said his men were currently being trained by U.S. military personnel.

A spokesman for the anti-IS coalition couldn't confirm if the NPU was, indeed, receiving training from the U.S. military but said they were considering training another Christian group, known as Dwekh Nawsha.

The House of Representatives' draft 2017 U.S. defense bill specifies that direct assistance may be provided to "local security forces, including ethnic and religious minority groups, with a national security mission." The bill still needs to be approved by the Senate and signed by the president, and its vague wording gives Washington considerable discretion over who to support and how.

But groups such as the NPU hope it means that financial aid and direct military support could be forthcoming.

The 300 or so fighters of the NPU have purchased some of their weapons themselves, and received around 100 rifles from the Iraqi army. Their salaries have been paid by the Iraqi government since spring.

Yet the Christians are divided among themselves. There are at least two more Christian armed groups operating in the area, where they vie for influence.

One rival group, the Nineveh Plains Forces, is based in the town of Telskof, where half-collapsed buildings and bomb craters remain from vicious fighting against Islamic State militants in May.

The NPF have also received training from American private military trainers. But unlike the Iraqi-supported NPU, the NPF's support comes from the peshmerga, the armed forces of the northern semi-autonomous Kurdish region in Iraq.

# Worship Community

## NEW HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

1350 S. Highway 395, Hermiston  
Sunday Worship Services

English- Pastor Dave Andrus  
9:00 & 10:45 am

Spanish- Pastor Genaro Loreda  
9:00 & 10:15 am

Classes for kids during all services

For more information call

541-567-8441

## Peace Lutheran Church

210 NW 9th, Pendleton, ELCA  
Join us Sundays

9:30 am Sunday Worship  
10:30 am Fellowship  
11:00 am Sunday School & Adult Class

~Come and be at Peace~  
on 1290 KUMA noon each Sunday

## Faith Center Church

Worshiping God  
Loving People

108 S. Main • 276-9569

Sunday Worship  
10:30 am

Sr. Pastor,  
Ray O'Grady

pendletonfaithcenter.org

## Living Word Christian Center

Sunday Worship 10:00am  
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00pm

Youth Classes - Nursery-6th grade Sun & Wed  
YOUTH GROUPS: Jr Hi, Wed 7pm  
Sr Hi, Sun after the service

Sharon Miller, Pastor  
401 Northgate, Pendleton  
541-278-8082  
www.livingwordcc.com

## Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Saturday Services  
Pendleton

1401 SW Goodwin Place  
276-0882

Sabbath School 9:20 am  
Worship Service 10:45 am

## Community Presbyterian Church

14 Martin Drive,  
Umatilla, OR

922-3250

Worship: 10 AM  
Sunday School at 11:30

## First United Methodist Church

352 SE 2nd Street  
Pendleton, OR

541-276-2616

Sunday Worship 9am  
Open Hearts, Open Hands, Open Doors

Facebook: www.facebook.com/FUMCPendleton  
Services are broadcast every Sunday on KUMA-1290 AM @ 11am  
Rev. Dr. Jim Pierce, pastor

## PILOT ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH

585 SW Birch  
Pilot Rock, OR 97788  
(541) 443-2500  
prbcnline.blogspot.com

Sunday School: 9:30 am  
Worship Service: 10:45 am  
Kids' Club: 6:00 pm  
Wednesday Services:  
Youth Group: 7:00 pm

## Grace Baptist Church

555 SW 11th, Hermiston  
567-9497

Nursery provided for all services

Sunday School - 9:30 AM  
Worship - 10:45 AM  
6:00 pm

Wed Prayer & Worship -  
7:00 PM  
"Proclaiming God's word,  
growing in God's grace"

## St. Johns Episcopal Church

All People  
Are Welcome

Scripture, Tradition  
and Reason

Family service 9am Sunday  
Gladys Ave & 7th Hermiston  
Fr. Dan Lediard, Priest. PH: 567-6672

## FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
215 N Main • Pendleton

Sunday Worship: 10:40a  
Bible Class: 9:30a

Office 276-5358  
M-F 8:30-12:30

WWW.FCCPENDLETON.ORG

## GRACE AND MERCY LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

OPEN HEARTS - OPEN DOOR  
www.graceandmercyelcalutheran.org

Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.  
Sunday School 10:00 a.m. (Nursery  
Provided)

Fellowship, Refreshments & Sunday School  
Check Out our Facebook Page or Website  
for More Information

541-289-4535  
Tom Inch, Pastor

Grace and Mercy Lutheran Church, ELCA  
164 E. Main St. / P.O. Box 1108  
Hermiston, Oregon 97838

## Redeemer Episcopal Church

241 SE Second St. Pendleton  
(541)276-3809

www.pendletonepiscopal.org

Sunday Holy Communion 9:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Holy Communion Noon  
Weekly Adults Spiritual Life Group

All Are Welcome

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

-Presbyterian Church (USA)-  
201 SW Dorion Ave.  
Pendleton

Service of Worship - 10:00 am  
Children's Sunday School -  
10:20 am

Fellowship - 11:00 am  
www.pendletonpresbyterian.com

Open Hearted...  
Open Minded

## Come meet Jesus at PENDLETON BAPTIST CHURCH

3202 SW Hye Ave Pendleton, OR  
541-276-7590

Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 AM  
Sunday Bible Classes 9:45 AM  
Sunday Youth Group 6:00 PM

Mon. Community Women's Study  
9:30 AM & 6 PM

Awana Kids Club (K-6th grade)  
Wed Men's Study 6 PM

MOPS meeting the 1st Thur of the Month 6 PM

## The Salvation Army Center for Worship & Service

Sunday Worship Service  
9:30 - Sunday School

10:30 - Worship Service

Wednesday Bible Study  
5:30 Family Fellowship Meal 6:00 Bible Study

COME AS YOU ARE  
150 SE EMIGRANT  
(541)276-3369

## PENDLETON FIRST CHURCH OF GOD

FIRST SERVICE 8:30 AM

SECOND SERVICE 10:30 AM

712 SW 27<sup>TH</sup> ST.

541-276-1894  
www.fcogpendleton.com

## a place to belong Pendleton First

INVITING ENRICHING  
INVOLVING EMPOWERING

SUNDAY SERVICES  
AM Celebration-10:00am  
AM Kids Place -10:00am  
The Connection-6:00pm

Groups for all ages:  
Adults, Children, Youth, & College

Thursdays  
Celebrate Recovery-6:00pm  
Celebration Place-6:00pm

Other Groups Available Weekly

For more info visit  
WWW.PENDLETONFIRST.COM

1911 SE Court Ave  
541-276-6417

Assembly of God Church

## FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

in Mission for Christ LCMC

Bible Study.....9:00 AM  
Sunday Worship.....10:30 AM

Red Lion Hotel  
( Oregon Trail Room )

www.faithpendleton.org



To share your worship times call

Terri Briggs

541-278-2678