

Church that was attacked will be demolished

By PAUL J. WEBER
and EMILY SCHMALL
Associated Press

SUTHERLAND SPRINGS, Texas — The Texas church where more than two dozen people were killed by a gunman during Sunday services will be demolished, the pastor said.

Pastor Frank Pomeroy told leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention earlier this week that it would be too painful to continue using First Baptist Church as a place of worship.

Pomeroy discussed the state of the building with the denomination's top executives, who traveled to the rural community in a show of support, a national Southern Baptist spokesman said.

The pastor described the church as "too stark of a reminder" of the massacre, spokesman Sing Oldham said.

No final decisions can be made without consulting congregants, but Pomeroy discussed turning the site into a memorial for the dead and putting up a new building on property the church owns, Oldham said.

Charlene Uhl, mother of 16-year-old Haley Krueger, who died in the attack, agreed that the church should come down.

There should still be a church "but not here," she said Thursday as she visited a row of white crosses commemorating the victims in front of the building. She said her daughter attended worship services and a weekly Thursday night youth group meeting held by another victim, Karla Holcombe.

Jeannie Brown, visiting from Indiana, stopped at the site with her daughter, who used to live in Sutherland Springs but left decades ago for San Antonio.

Asked whether the church should be destroyed, Brown said: "Yes. Who would want to go back in there? But then if it is



Crosses showing shooting victims names stand near the First Baptist Church on Thursday in Sutherland Springs, Texas. A man opened fire inside the church in the small South Texas community on Sunday, killing more than two dozen and injuring others.

destroyed, does that mean he (the gunman) won?"

Other sites of mass shootings have been torn down, including Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, where a gunman killed 20 children and six adults in December 2012. A new school was built elsewhere.

A one-room Amish schoolhouse near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was torn down in 2006, 10 days after an assailant took children hostage and shot and killed five girls ages 6 to 13.

The previous site of the school is now

a pasture. A nearly identical schoolhouse with a security fence was erected nearby and named New Hope School.

The father of the gunman broke the family's silence and said his relatives are grieving.

Michael Kelley spoke to ABC News on Wednesday from his home in New Braunfels, about 35 miles north of Sutherland Springs.

He said he does not want the "media circus" surrounding the attack by Devin Patrick Kelley to destroy "our lives, our grandchildren's lives."

AP Photo/David J. Phillip

LIMEY PASTOR

The Church of the Night

I miss my friends at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. I miss the bulky greenness of Boardman, with its windy promontories and weather, and ... oh I miss its surprising weather!

I enjoy the congregational letters to me very much. I am pleased to hear that the congregation is still soaring with song — with Renee tapping the heavenly gifts and that people are feeling the spirit rise in them there strongly. All of these are good things. All of these are gracious things.

Right now, down in the citted lowlands near Salem, my friends and I feel that our little weekend Sabbath service we are instituting is in its right shape down in Aurora. Our musician there, Lori, plays flute and keyboard, and is herself an instrument vibrating to the ethers. God shakes her like a cymbal. Heaven rustles.

This new, nighttime service is designed to align several Christian spiritual practices that are not commonly used and to provide a place where people can feel in contact with their Lord and Savior and with their own inner selves, which is joined to God.

It is also designed to appeal to those of multiple denominations. No restriction. We use the chanting of the Taize services from France, the Centering prayer of the Benedictine monks, the serene peace of speaking in tongues of Glossolia that we read about in New Testament times, and prayers of supplication and prayers that are spoken or called out by the Holy Spirit in an order determined primarily by the perceived will of the Father. The Holy Spirit is gentle but is willing to shake us like an earthquake shakes palm trees.

Unlike the traditional Sunday service and its classical forms, this service is designed to be under the control of our maker, molding our movements, feelings and sounds into a vibrating and ecstatic pattern of divine life that we can perceive moving our spirits. It is an abnormal experience that most haven't experienced before, not unpleasant but certainly wildly unusual.

Next service we shall open our service to receive more people, to allow them to experience this movement of the Holy Spirit in us and among us. I still work a sermon into the mix, using a lectionary text, and allow it to be received slowly, as the word, through the ears. It is my plan to do this service regularly in the weekend evening time frame, so that we make use of the darkness, the same darkness that the secret student Nicodemus used as cover when he came at night to ask Jesus the important questions.

We call our little evening service, "The Church of the Night" — a place where one has to make an effort to enter the darkness within our own breasts where our fear, sadness and hope reside, where we can find the Lord and ask him what it is we need to know.

If it goes as planned, and as God wills, I will integrate this with the standard Sunday services of other churches that folks feel normal with — and people can receive a mystical influx of the Holy Spirit that they invite within as part of this prayerful service. In this way we can deepen our exploration of Christ's gift and share his gift with others.

The Holy Spirit, like a dove, is known to take flight and alight according to a higher call, so I am not sure how this will be received. I believe that God is in it and this is why I am doing this now.

May God's will be done and may we all be blessed by his guiding spirit.
Amen.

Colin Brown is the former pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Boardman.



COLIN BROWN
Faith

BRIEFLY

Faith Center offers free Thanksgiving dinners

PENDLETON — Families that may not be able to afford a Thanksgiving dinner this year are encouraged to apply to Faith Center Church, which will again be providing free Thanksgiving dinners for the first 25 families that sign up.

The dinners will include a frozen turkey, ham, potatoes, canned vegetables, margarine and gravy mix. Applicants must call 541-276-9569 and leave a message to sign up. The church will call applicants to confirm their meal.

Those chosen to receive a meal can pick it up Tuesday, Nov. 21 from 6-7 p.m. at the church, 108 S. Main St., Pendleton. For more information, call Rev. Ray O'Grady at the church.

Grief Share focuses on holidays

HERMISTON — Surviving the Holidays is the topic for an upcoming Grief Share in Hermiston.

The faith-based ministry offers encouragement and support after the loss of a spouse, child, family member or friend. Coordinated by Hermiston Church of the Nazarene, the meeting is Thursday, Nov. 16 from 12:30-2:30 p.m. at Sun Terrace, 1550 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. The session will be facilitated

by Melody Finn-Kinswa, the church's connections pastor.

For more information, contact melody.hermnaz@gmail.com or 541-567-3677.

Ladies event features coffee, crafts and conversation

BOARDMAN — A ladies' social event will feature drinking coffee and making Christmas crafts.

Coffee and Crafts is Saturday, Nov. 18 from 10 a.m. to noon at the First Baptist Church, 200 S.W. Willow Fork Drive, Boardman. The event is open to women and girls ages 10 and up.

Several craft options will be available for \$5 each, while supplies last. Those planning to attend need to RSVP due to space limitations.

For more information, contact kaitlingustafson@gmail.com, 541-481-9437 or search Facebook for "Coffee and Crafts."

Community Fellowship Dinner finds new home

HERMISTON — The Community Fellowship Dinner in Hermiston — which is held on Thanksgiving and Christmas — will serve up free holiday meals in a new location.

Since the senior center is unavailable,

the organization's board of directors announced the twice-yearly meals will be held in the main commons at Hermiston High School. Board chairman Gary Humphreys said volunteers are excited about the new venue, which offers improved access, additional seating space and enhanced kitchen facilities.

The faith-based ministry has served free holidays meals for more than 25 years. One of its missions is to ensure people can enjoy a holiday dinner in the company of others.

Read more about the upcoming Thanksgiving meal, including how you can help, in an upcoming community story. In addition, information will be available about other community Thanksgiving meals.

For immediate questions about the Community Fellowship Dinner, contact the board at cfdhermiston@gmail.com, 541-371-9772 or search Facebook.

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.

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