

LIMEY PASTOR

Birds of paradise

The season of the great Diaspora of families is in process as I write this. Thanksgiving is such a mandate! The motor cars are serviced and ready to range far into the wilder lands of the many states.



COLIN BROWN
Faith

To be reminded that one is not alone, that we come from a cluster of other folk who have been very significant in our lives and return to their bosom, which is not always comfortable, is a great service.

It is our annual reminder of belonging. We are a crop in a perennial cycle. We have a finite number of returns, to gaze upon — and to reconnect.

Families driving out to the older places where they came from, to return in a wave of nostalgia. Seeing how much older the older ones now are, taking measure of what is needed. Realizing that some things, such as relationships, are not forever and that our lives are like the grass of the field.

This Thanksgiving season my son and his wife have moved away from us into their first purchased house. Not big, but kind of perfect for them, miles away from us in Salem.

I can sense the pride and fear in the kids, but they are kids no more, they are now sharers of a larger field of responsibility and an undercurrent of anxiety that is our lot. Anxiety comes with possessions that can be taken from us by circumstance.

The hummingbirds, my favorite magical birds, are still coming by our windows, as my wife had engineered an environment that attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. I like the hummingbirds that look me in the eye through our window panes.

In our front garden my wife arranged for an African key-hole garden to be built, a sizable construction that has at its core a cage for food refuse that we tip our waste food into. The food decomposes and is designed to run out as a nutritious sap to add to the healthiness and nutrient value of the garden.

My wife has been a member of the Oregon Master Gardeners for about a year and nine months. She graduated from their program about a year ago and it has made all

the difference. It is a theology in action, knowing the processes and arts of the creator. A gardener is an engineer of Eden.

Oregon is a holy place because of its gardening enthusiasts, people who want to be assistants to the angels making beauty arise out of the earth. My wife found her peace and her joy by participating in this group — and she travels in the week to a children's program for the local school district.

This last week I have grown closer to the Canby Grove, which back in the 1920s was, I am told, part of a holy revival in Oregon. I spent Saturday morning breakfasting with John, the leader there, and the men who work with the different areas of the center. In 1928, A.W.Tozer preached at the Tabernacle in the Grove and baptized many in the Molalla River — and many were thereby drawn to Christ.

A center of prophecy and prophetic practice, it appears that many of those here now, receiving prophetic insight, expect a resurgence of Canby Grove as a revival center. I do too. There is a movement of the Holy Spirit there that is palpable.

John and his wife are parents to a small girl of uncommon kindness. She is six years old and she asked if I would like to see her run. I said "Sure!"

She began to run, and ran faster and faster until my eyesight could only see a blur as she circled at high rates of speed and whooshed inside the building. For the experience, this six-year-old appeared like a movie special effect.

When she came to a halt and I recovered from my dizziness I told her that I thought that she might be an angel, as humans could not travel that fast. I was not kidding.

My love to you all as you make your way somewhere for Thanksgiving, or as you receive the weary travelers into your own home. May you be blessed and enriched by this season of homecoming. Amen!

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



AP Photo/David J. Phillip

In this Nov. 17 photo, homeowner George Dorsey, center, prays with Samaritan's Purse volunteers who are helping to rebuild his hurricane-damaged home in Houston. Dorsey usually hosts a large Thanksgiving dinner for family but is making other arrangements this year as he continues to recover from Hurricane Harvey.

A post-Hurricane holiday feast

HOUSTON (AP) — The kitchen where George and Arva Dorsey prepare an 18-dish feast every Thanksgiving has been stripped of everything but its granite countertops, standing on their own with no appliances below. The house they renovated and expanded over three decades has been gutted down to its wooden beams.

Almost three months after Hurricane Harvey slammed into the Texas Gulf Coast, killing more than 80 people and damaging at least 200,000 homes, the Dorseys and other families are celebrating Thanksgiving however they can.

"We try to keep our head up, and we know that God is above all," said Arva Dorsey, sitting next to her husband in the dining room where they would have served Thanksgiving dinner. "So many of the blessings have come through this disaster. We're just grateful."

George Dorsey said one possibility was the family — including some members from out of town — could spend Thursday with a friend. Or they might go to a local buffet-style restaurant for turkey and trimmings.

Some people are gathering at

churches that have held large meals for people displaced by the storm and volunteers spending the holiday away from their families to help rebuild. Others will go to annual events like Houston's "Super Feast," where volunteers this year will hand out clothes and supplies along with turkey and stuffing.

Furniture store owner Jim McGivale — a Houston icon known as "Mattress Mack" — is opening one of his Gallery Furniture locations for a feast that starts at 10 a.m. Thursday.

In Houston, the nation's fourth-largest city, there are plenty of signs of progress. Blocks that had piles of debris on every front lawn are being cleared. Work crews are in neighborhoods all over the city, and nonprofit groups have distributed hundreds of millions in aid.

But more than 47,000 people across Texas, including the Dorseys, are still staying in hotels with vouchers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Others are staying with family members or have left Southeast Texas altogether, abandoning mortgages on homes that were wrecked by floodwaters. Some people are still living in

apartments infested with mold.

The Dorseys were rescued from their home the second night of the storm by a National Guard truck, with Guardsmen pulling them out of floodwaters that had reached several feet and still rising.

The Guard took them to a nearby Baptist church, where they slept for two nights on the floor until cots arrived. They spent a week at the church, where they celebrated their 35th anniversary with a dance as other evacuees toasted them holding paper cups filled with punch.

Dozens of volunteers from churches all over the world have since arrived in their neighborhood, many of them unprompted, to help rebuild. George Dorsey, 59, walked through his house last week as volunteers from the group Samaritan's Purse worked inside and on the roof. The staccato sound of nail guns rang out as he talked.

Among the things he's thankful for are the volunteers from Samaritan's Purse, not just for the labor they provided for free, but for offering to pray with her and asking about how her family was doing.

BRIEFLY

Ladies night offers chance to connect

PENDLETON — Women are invited to take the night off for food, fun and fellowship during a ministry group coordinated by the Pendleton First Assembly of God Church. Facilitated by Terri Hardcastle, Ladies Night Out meets the first Tuesday of each month from 6-8 p.m. at Abby's Legendary Pizza, 828

Southgate, Pendleton. Salad and pizza is provided. For more information about other available groups, contact 541-276-6417, groups@pendletonfirst.com or visit www.pendletonfirst.com/groups.

Boardman Baptist church decks the halls

BOARDMAN — Holiday music, Christmas treats and hot cocoa will

be shared during a special event at the Boardman First Baptist Church.

Deck the Church Halls is Monday at 6 p.m. at 200 S.W. Willow Fork Drive, Boardman. People are invited to get into the holiday spirit while decorating the building for the Christmas season. Those planning to attend are encouraged to bring their favorite cookies or treats to share with others. For more information, call 541-481-9437.

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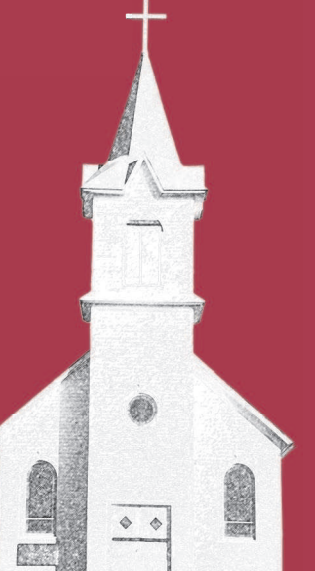
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