

PENDLETON

Faith Center minister to ride down the road

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

Rev. Ray O’Grady will share about God’s love during his final worship service at Pendleton Faith Center.

Referring to Paul’s writing in 1 Corinthians, O’Grady shares that faith, hope and love are enduring, “But the greatest of these is love,” he quoted from the Bible.

That, he said, is going to be his final message after 25 years at the church.

“And, that’s God’s message to the people,” he said.

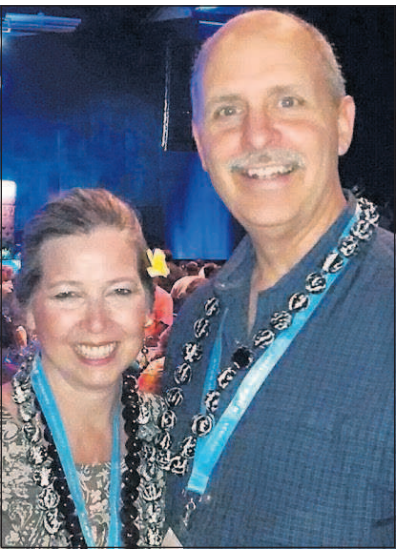
Ray and Julie O’Grady, who have been married for 37 years, have worked side-by-side in the ministry. Both were ordained in 1991. In addition, they raised seven children.

The public is invited to attend Sunday at 10:30 a.m. at 108 S. Main St., Pendleton. A cake and reception for the O’Gradys will follow the service.

Born and raised in Pendleton, Julie (née Comrie) headed to the Willamette Valley to attend school to pursue a nursing degree. Ray, who graduated from South Eugene High School, was attending the University of Oregon.

Riding his bike home from church one day, Ray felt he was being led to go into the ministry. While initially focused on a career in education, he eventually heeded the call to shepherd people after studying the Gospel of John where Jesus commanded Peter to “feed my sheep.”

Julie, who was raised Catholic, had no concept of what it meant to be a pastor’s wife. However, she determined it couldn’t be much



Contributed photo
Rev. Ray O’Grady and his wife, Julie, are retiring after a 25-year ministry at Pendleton Faith Center.

different than being married to a doctor or a teacher.

“I didn’t feel at first I was called to the ministry,” she said. “My calling is to be my husband’s helpmate ... not subservient, I am his equal.”

The O’Gradys hopped around a few places before an opportunity came to pastor the church in the Round-Up City. Julie was excited about coming home and Ray was thrilled to be on the dry side of the state.

Ray said pastoring a church is a huge responsibility. Adding to the mix was a handful of kids and then came the adoption of two more. Always making family a priority, the couple sought the blessing of their congregation.

“We stood in front of the church and asked, ‘Will you still have us?’

Because we had a huge responsibility with the kids,” Ray said. “They supported us. They have been fantastic.”

Over the years, the church has participated in many outreach ministries. The most visible, Julie said, is the yearly Living Nativity presented each Christmas season at Roy Raley Park. Other notable projects, Ray said, include Thanksgiving food baskets and Hams for the Hungry, which provide holiday meal fixings for needy families. Also, the church has supported Pregnancy Care Services in their life-affirming ministry and the Angel Tree project that helps in meeting the emotional, physical and spiritual needs of families of incarcerated individuals.

In addition, Ray has fond memories of Christmas caroling in Pendleton’s Sergeant City neighborhood and various outreach efforts to help the homeless.

“Julie and I partnered together and God helped us,” Ray said.

As for the future, Ray hopes to ride his bicycle more and Julie wants to further dive into hobbies. While the O’Gradys’ home base will remain in Pendleton for the time being, the couple plans to hit the road to visit their children and grandchildren.

“We have an opportunity to let God lead us,” Julie said.

As for the Faith Center, an interim pastor will initially shepherd the church until a new minister is identified. For more information, call 541-276-9569 or visit www.facebook.com/pendletonfaithcenter.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

LIMEY PASTOR

Preparing for Zion

I made my second visit over to Newberg Sunday, to Zion Lutheran Church. Headed by Pastor Chuck Sabin, I had once participated in a Lenten Service there some years ago, preaching a sermon. Pastor Chuck had called me this year to stand in for him on March 4, when he would be away, so I was going to his services in the month of February so that I could watch and conform to the pattern of the worship service conducted there. All churches do things at least slightly differently.

Zion is a nice church centrally located and well attended. Last year apparently 16 members of the congregation had passed away, some ten percent of the church’s population. I gather — a momentous loss for the people. So last week I attended the first occurrence of a grief workshop where members gathered an hour before the start of the church service, using several texts on grief as ways to center dialog and discussion. Pastor Chuck had told us a devastating personal story from his early childhood about a death close to him to illustrate for us how we might dialog between us to explore our own reactions, pain and response to these events. He used a religious text from the writer Henri Nouwen to provide most of our “homework.”

I remembered that when I was still in the lay community of my former church, Christ Lutheran in Aurora on Second Street, and was in the early days of my pastoral training, we had a similar flurry of death among the congregation. I suggested to my pastor at the time, Pr. Craig Johnson, that I start a regular meeting to deal with those grieving at the church. It was assented to — and a regular meeting began to process out of church where people wanted to share these very intimate stories.

I was surprised that in these first meetings, our grief group actually began very strongly — and of course there were a great many tears and memories that came.

The meeting grew in strength, like a snowball in midwinter. In fact our meeting went on for in excess of a year, until it was noticed that the participants were no longer talking of their loved ones, but had moved on and discussion was now located more in the present and about new issues. There was even occasional

laughter and rejoicing. God was in this, I had no doubt.

I have found it refreshing to be on the receiving end of Pastor Chuck’s sermons in Newberg, particularly because of his combination service including the grief workshop. Also, because I received a

blessing from hearing his own exposition of the word. I had really not realized that each of us are such different musical instruments for God’s word, and we must listen well to each other’s own music of faith.

I must admit that I have resisted grieving my own loss of my health last year when I nearly died during my heart surgery. Two people under two surgeries had taken place that day, and I made it out again and back into a renewed life. I will write more about those reflections this year when I have my surgical anniversary in March. There are some additional stories to tell that are a little unusual.

I do long to get back into the full rhythm of church life again. I have two more cardio rehab appointments scheduled for this month (and, of course, I must keep exercising to keep the system working). I have not yet applied for another full church role again. I am just doing the usual activities of my craft as an information technologist, which I have been doing since I have been 21 years of age and have worked all over the world. I have also been a journalist for Knight-Ridder and wrote for them for some while. In the high desert I covered a landing of a space shuttle for ValleyWide Newspapers in Victorville and took photos of the astronauts when they got out. I was also the editor of a magazine called Technical Consultant. But I think 40 years is a biblically significant number to end on for that worldly activity.

I have not yet submitted my application to the North Dakota church I wrote about recently as I do not yet feel fully called to serve there yet and something else is brewing in me that is still unspoken. I feel that I am being called strongly to serve John’s mission in the Church, for the church, and am praying pretty hard about that right now.

God bless you my friends! Amen.

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



COLIN BROWN
Faith

Women’s Bible study meets at new time

BOARDMAN — A women’s Bible study will focus on “Knowing What You Believe.”

The group will meet at a new time, each Thursday at 1:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 200 S.W. Willow Fork Drive, Boardman. Ladies in the community are invited to attend and learn more about God’s plan for their lives.

For more information, call 541-481-9437.

Episcopal church sets Shrove Tuesday meal

HERMISTON — The public is invited to celebrate the beginning of the season of Lent during a Shrove Tuesday meal at St. John’s Episcopal Church.

A tradition held on the day before Ash Wednesday, the tradition is to use up high calorie, high fat foods, eggs, and milk, to prepare for the season of Lent. A pancake supper will be served Tuesday, Feb. 13 from 5-6:30 p.m. at the church, 953 E.

BRIEFLY

Gladys Ave., Hermiston. A donation of \$5 per person is requested.

“This meal is the tradition of getting all of the “fat” out of the house prior to Ash Wednesday, thus the term Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras,” said Rev. Chuck Barnes.

Also, the service of Imposition of Ashes and Eucharist is Wednesday, Feb. 14 at 7 p.m. The service, Barnes said, begins the reflective season of Lent, which lasts 40 days — ending on Palm Sunday (March 25).

For more information, contact Barnes at 541-567-6672 or chuckb@eotnet.net.

“I can only say,” Benedict wrote, “that in the slow waning of my physical forces, inwardly I am on a pilgrimage toward Home.”

“It is a great grace for me to be surrounded on this last part of the road, sometimes a bit tiring, by such love and goodness that I never could have imagined,” he wrote.

The 90-year-old former Pontiff has been living quietly at the Vatican since his surprise resignation as Pope in 2013.

The letter also said “it is a great grace for me to be surrounded ... by such love and goodness that I never could have imagined.”

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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“See ye no strangers, rather see all men as friends, for love and unity come hard when ye fix your gaze on otherness.”
— Abdul’l Baha

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Sunday worship at 11:00 AM
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541-481-6132
Colin Brown, Pastor

Faith Center Church
Worshiping God Loving People
108 S. Main • 276-9569
Worship Service: 10:30am
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sr. Pastor,
Ray O’Grady
pendletonfaithcenter.org

The Salvation Army
Center for Worship & Service
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9:30 - Sunday School
10:30 - Worship Service
Wednesday Bible Study
5:30 Family Fellowship Meal • 6:00 Bible Study
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150 SE Emigrant
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Worship - 10:45 AM
6:00 pm
Wed Prayer & Worship - 7:00 PM
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(541)276-3809
www.pendletonepiscopal.org
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Community Presbyterian Church
14 Martin Drive,
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Tuesday Kingdom Seekers: 7pm
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Worship Service 10:45 am

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541-276-7590
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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

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Bible Study.....10:00 AM
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www.faithpendleton.org

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Check Out our Facebook Page or Website for More Information
541-289-4535
Tom Inch, Pastor
Grace and Mercy Lutheran Church, ELCA
(First United Methodist Church)
191 E. Gladys Ave. / P.O. Box 1108
Hermiston, Oregon 97838

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352 SE 2nd Street, Pendleton OR
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