

LIMEY PASTOR

A call to the devout

I started the day with a gathering, a gathering of our Lutheran LCMC pastors who were seeking to act as fishers of men. We had a candidate who had been through the mill of seminary, had faced the fire of the internship, and also was gifted in other degrees besides that of churchman. He had graduated in nuclear engineering in his years before, and had a deep academic grounding and teaching skills. It was our job to review his “worthiness,” or more appropriately “fit,” for the business of ministry in the tangled thicket of other ministers and congregation members from different churches.

Of course, besides measuring capabilities there is a subtle discernment seeking out the skeins of a life to detect God’s work in a human being. Is there a working “call” — the call of the divine bringing a human into service and setting them on a path of love and a radical reeducation in God’s mercy?

We spent all morning discussing and exploring his experience of call. I remember my own experience of my this divine grilling years before. The views of other souls revealing ambiguities in points of view, possible weaknesses that could break a congregation if unleashed thoughtlessly. Being on the other side of the fence was just as hard as being on the receiving end of the examination.

I noticed that our onslaught of exploration



COLIN BROWN
Faith

had a kind of arc. A stripping of surface motives, seeing possible issues, but then finding a kind of tender mercy at work. What looked initially like a critique turned into a sweetness, when the guarded parts of the soul were peeled back revealing delicate possibilities and calling forth the most useful advice for the pastor-to-be.

Our review and examination lasted several hours and allowed us to see what we perceived to be strengths, allowed us to see risks, ways in which a kindness or a recommendation could shatter a congregation member’s hopes or relationship with God. Ways in which he could clash with a church council. I could tell by his emotions that he thought he was in a losing battle, but then it turned and a gigantic warmth poured forth from the team — and we asked him to step out of the room.

All of us then gave him our unconditional approval for his ministry, as well as some recommendations for some significant options for his pastoral skills that would also use his skills and knowledge.

It was like seeing a baby bird being born, if that baby bird was an older bird with a beard.

We gave thanks and then broke bread together for lunch.

May all of you become members of the priesthood of all believers and be supported in your own divine work.

Amen.

BRIEFLY

Kids Klub party celebrates spring

MILTON-FREEWATER — Games, prizes, movies and crafts are featured during a Kids Klub Spring Party in Milton-Freewater. Youths up to fifth grade are invited to attend Sunday, March 25 from 2-4 p.m. at the First Christian Church, 518 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. Snacks will be served.

The regular Kids Klub meets weekly on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Activities include arts, crafts, music and more. For more information, call 541-938-3854.

Faith-based program offers help with life

PENDLETON — A Christ-centered program to help promote healing and recovery to life’s hurts, habits and hang-ups is available at Pendleton First Assembly of God Church.

Celebrate Recovery invites people who are suffering with abuse, trauma or other compulsions

The groups meet each Thursday at 1911 S.E. Court Ave., beginning at 6 p.m.

For more information call 541-276-6417 or visit www.pendletonfirst.com.

Ten things to know about the real St. Patrick

On Saturday, people around the world will celebrate St. Patrick’s Day by parading in green hats, sporting images of shamrocks and leprechauns — tiny, grinning, fairy men — pinned to their lapels. Patrick’s picture will adorn greeting cards: an aged, bearded bishop in flowing robes, grasping a bishop’s staff and glaring at a coil of snakes.

The icon refers to one of Patrick’s legendary miracles in which he is said to have prayed to banish all snakes from Ireland. However, as a historian of medieval Ireland, I can assure you that the real St. Patrick, who lived and worked in the fifth century, never saw a snake or wore a shamrock.

Patrick’s own writings and early accounts of the saint’s career reveal many interesting details about the life of this patron saint of Ireland. Here are 10 things you may not know about St. Patrick.

1. Patrick was not Irish

Patrick was born around 450 A.D., just when Roman troops withdrew from Britain. His father was a gentleman and a Christian deacon who owned a small estate in a place called Bannavem Taburniae.

Scholars aren’t sure where this place was — it was probably on the west coast around Bristol, near the southern border of modern Wales and England.

2. Patrick was a slave

Irish slave traders sailed the waters off that same coast, and one day they came ashore to capture the teenage Patrick and his neighbors, to sell back in Ireland. Patrick spent six years tending sheep in the west of Ireland.

3. Patrick heard voices

While chasing sheep on the hills, Patrick prayed a hundred times a day, in all kinds of weather. It paid off. One night a mysterious voice called to him, saying, “Look, your ship is ready!” Patrick knew he wasn’t hearing sheep. The time was right for his escape.

4. Patrick refused to ‘suck a man’s breasts’

Patrick made his way to Ireland’s east coast and sought passage on a ship bound for Britain. The captain, a pagan, didn’t like the look of him and demanded that Patrick “suck his breasts,” a ritual gesture symbolizing acceptance of the captain’s authority. Patrick refused — instead he tried to convert the crew.

For some reason, the captain still took him aboard.

5. Patrick had visions

One night Patrick dreamed that Satan tested his faith by dropping an enormous rock on him. He lay crushed by its weight until dawn broke, when he called out, “Helias! Helias!” — the



A stained glass photo of St. Patrick at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Port Clinton, Ohio.

name of the Greek sun god. The rock disappeared. Patrick took it as a kind of epiphany. He later wrote:

“I believe that I was helped by Christ the Lord.”

Patrick had other peculiar visions, too. Back home at Bannavem Taburniae, he was visited by an angel with a message from the Irish: “We beg you, Holy Boy, to come and walk again among us.” He trained as a bishop and went back to Ireland.

6. Patrick did something unmentionable

Years into his mission, someone, it seems, told a dirty secret about Patrick to his fellow bishops. “They brought up against me after thirty years something I had already confessed . . . some things I had done one day — rather, in one hour, when I was young,” he wrote.

Patrick did not tell us what he did — worship idols? Engage in a forbidden sexual practice? Take gifts from converts?

Whatever it was, Patrick retrospectively understood his zealous Irish mission to be penance for his youthful sins. While he spread Christianity around Ireland, he was often beaten, put in chains or extorted. “Every day there is the chance that I will be killed, or surrounded, or taken into slavery,” he complained.

7. Patrick dueled with druids

Two centuries after his death, Irish believers wanted more exciting stories of Patrick’s life than the saint’s own account.

One legend (written 700 A.D.) described Patrick’s contest with native religious leaders, the druids. The druids insulted Patrick, tried to poison him and engaged him in magical duels — much like students of Harry Potter’s Hogwarts — in which they competed

to manipulate the weather, destroy each other’s sacred books and survive raging fires.

When one druid dared to blaspheme the Christian God, however, Patrick sent the druid flying into air — the man dropped to the ground and broke his skull.

8. Patrick made God promise

Another legend from around the same time tells how Patrick fasted for 40 days atop a mountain, weeping, throwing things, and refusing to descend until an angel came on God’s behalf to grant the saint’s outrageous demands. These included the following: Patrick would redeem more souls from hell than any other saint; Patrick, rather than God, would judge Irish sinners at the end of time; and the English would never rule Ireland.

We know how that last one worked out. Perhaps God will keep the other two promises.

9. Patrick never mentioned a shamrock

None of the early Patrician stories featured the shamrock — or Irish seamróg — which is a word for common clover, a small plant with three leaves. Yet children in Catholic schools still learn that Patrick used a shamrock as a symbol of the Christian Trinity when he preached to the heathen Irish.

The shamrock connection was first mentioned in print by an English visitor to Ireland in 1684, who wrote that on Saint Patrick’s feast day, “the vulgar superstitiously wear shamroges, 3 leav’d grass, which they likewise eat (they say) to cause a sweet breath.” The Englishman also noted that “very few of the zealous are found sober at night.”

10. Patrick did not drive the snakes out of Ireland

As for the miraculous snake-charming attributed to Patrick, it could not have happened because there were no snakes in pre-modern Ireland. Reptiles never made it across the land bridge that prehistorically linked the island to the European continent.

Most likely, the miracle was plagiarized from some other saint’s life and eventually added to Patrick’s repertoire.

Party-goers on March 17 need not worry about ancient historical details, though. Whatever the truth of Patrick’s mission, he became one of the three patrons of Ireland, along with Sts. Brigit and Columba — the latter two were born in Ireland.

Wishing you “Lá fheile Pádraig sona dhiaibh” — Happy Saint Patrick’s Day.

Lisa Bitel is a professor of History & Religion, University of Southern California – Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

WORSHIP COMMUNITY

Peace Lutheran Church

210 NW 9th, Pendleton
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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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201 SW Dorion Ave.
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Service of Worship - 10:00 am
Children's Sunday School - 10:20 am
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www.pendletonpresbyterian.com
Open Hearted... Open Minded

Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Saturday Services
Pendleton
1401 SW Goodwin Place
276-0882
Sabbath School 9:20 am
Worship Service 10:45 am

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church LCMC

Sunday worship at 11:00 AM
420 Locust St. • Boardman, OR
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
pendletonfaithcenter.org

The Salvation Army

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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

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401 Northgate, Pendleton
CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP
Sundays 10:00 am
Youth: 0-6th grade
MIDWEEK SEVICE
Wednesdays 6:00 pm
Youth: 0-6th grade
Pastor Sharon Miller
541-278-8082
www.livingwordcc.com

Grace Baptist Church

555 SW 11th, Hermiston
567-9497
Nursery provided for all services
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Worship - 10:45 AM
6:00 pm
Wed Prayer & Worship - 7:00 PM
“Proclaiming God’s word, growing in God’s grace”

Redeemer Episcopal Church

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(541)276-3809
www.pendletonepiscopal.org
Sunday Holy Communion 9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Holy Communion Noon
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All Are Welcome

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Morning Kids Place - 10am
Evening - 6pm
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Celebration Place - Kids - 6pm
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922-3250
Worship: 10 AM
Sunday School at 11:30

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Sunday Service: 10am & 6pm
Tuesday Kingdom Seekers: 7pm
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Fellowship to follow
Office 541-276-5358 M-F, 8:30-12:30
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First United Methodist Church Pendleton

352 SE 2nd Street, Pendleton OR
Sunday Worship 9am • 541-276-2616
Worship Broadcast on KUMA 1290 @ 11am
Worship Livestream at
www.facebook.com/FUMCPendleton/ Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors
Rev. Dr. Jim Pierce, pastor

To share your worship times call 541-278-2678

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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
Red Lion Hotel
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St. Johns Episcopal Church

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