

High court's cross case could affect monuments nationally

By JESSICA GRESKO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A 40-foot-tall, concrete cross on public land in a Maryland suburb of Washington is at the center of a case before the Supreme Court. But similar monuments elsewhere in the country could be affected by the high court ruling, states have told the justices.

The District of Columbia-based American Humanist Association, which is behind the challenge to the Maryland cross, acknowledges that at least a handful of other monuments around the country could be affected if the court sides with them, though they disagree with those supporting the cross that the number is vast.

The monuments most likely to be affected are large crosses on public, not private, lands and where there's a prominent cross that isn't part of a larger memorial or setting such as a cemetery, said Monica Miller, an American Humanist Association attorney.

By the same token, those monuments could be insulated from challenges if the other side prevails, as many observers think is likely given the court's conservative makeup.

A look at the cross at the center of the case and cross memorials in other states:

MARYLAND

If the justices wanted to take a field trip to see the cross at the center of the case, it wouldn't be hard. The cross is located on a large, grassy traffic median in Bladensburg, about 5 miles from the Supreme Court.

Sometimes called the "Peace Cross," it was completed in 1925. A plaque on the base of the cross lists the names of 49 soldiers from the area who died in World War I.

While a trial court judge ruled the memorial was constitutional, an appeals court disagreed. Those challenging the cross are telling the Supreme Court that it should be moved to private property or modified into a slab or obelisk. They also note that the nearly 100-year-old monument has been deteriorating. Chunks have fallen off and restoration work planned years ago has been put off while the case has moved forward.

FLORIDA

A 34-foot-tall concrete cross in Pensacola's Bayview Park has been the site of a sunrise Easter service for decades.

The first Easter service was organized at the site in 1941. A wooden cross was put up for the gathering, which was organized



AP Photo/Kevin Wolf, File

Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association, speaks near the 40-foot Maryland Peace Cross dedicated to World War I soldiers on Feb. 13 in Bladensburg, Md.

by the local Junior Chamber of Commerce. In 1969, however, the group installed the concrete cross that stands today. Lighting and maintaining the cross costs Pensacola around \$200 a year.

Four people sued over the cross in 2016. They have the backing of the American Humanist Association, the same group behind the cross lawsuit now before the Supreme Court, and the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation. Two lower courts have ruled against the cross.

KANSAS

A cross near Lyons, Kansas, honors Father Juan de Padilla, a 16th century Franciscan missionary. Installed in 1950, the cross was a gift to the state by the Knights of Columbus.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter in 2018 objecting to the cross, asking that it be removed or moved to private property.

NEW MEXICO

A bronze cross on a concrete pedestal stands in the town plaza in the center of Taos. Paid for by private donations and dedicated in 1960, the cross is part of a memorial honoring young men from the area who fought and died in World War II. Beside the cross are flagpoles flying the flags of the United States and New Mexico, and in front of the cross is a sculpture of three soldiers.

The town says it has been threatened with lawsuits similar to the one currently before

the Supreme Court. If the high court doesn't side with supporters of the Maryland cross, Taos told the justices, it would "virtually guarantee Taos would be drawn into costly and unjust litigation to remove its memorial."

TEXAS

The Seaman's Memorial Tower in Aransas Pass used to be topped by a cross, but it's been removed because of wear. The 80-foot-tall tower still has a crucifix on its front, however. Lu Arcemont, 82, who chairs a commission that oversees the tower's maintenance, says she hopes to see a cross topping the tower again.

Arcemont is the keeper of the tower's history. It was dedicated in 1970 as a memorial to area fisherman who died at sea, their names on plaques on the tower. At first the tower was topped by a 22-foot wooden cross. A smaller, metal cross later replaced it. As for the crucifix on the tower's front, Arcemont says her husband carved it out of a telephone pole.

Arcemont hadn't heard of the Maryland lawsuit, but she was quick to distinguish her town's memorial. She called it a "living memorial" because names continue to be added to it. People also sometimes scatter family members' ashes at the site. "The reason we have a crucifix and a cross on our tower is so it represents both religions — Protestant and Catholic," she said.

Aransas Pass is about 20 miles northeast of Corpus Christi.

Lent's bright shadow

My grandson was born yesterday, in the Good Samaritan Birthing Center, in Silverton. Nine pounds of boy, 21 inches long. Another in the long line of descendants from Adam, another soul in the image of the father.

I pray for his health, his ambition, for his possibilities. I pray that he becomes a lover of God and a brave child who tests himself in this world against all the challenges that strengthen us.

I've been absent these pages a little bit, please forgive me.

I am going to be preaching on five types of prayer in our Lenten services in Newberg, and have been spending much time in prayer and delving into the writings about these approaches. I reflected on how so much of my head is either busy with trivia, with the burning refuse of anxiety, with all the permutations of thought that does not result in much. Jesus told us to consider the sparrow, how the father serves this little fellow by providing the berries and nuts of the wild woods and what is needed is provided.

In the same way, my new grandson has arrived, and food is showered at him from all over. The economy of God is abundant for him. He is loved!

In the stories of our tradition there was a time when one language was available for us when God's word emerged from his heart. The prophets prophesied and those who asked God for his aid received it. I believe that this is still so.

When we ask for our anxiety to be quieted, we feel life surge through us, and hope is raised up in our breasts. I felt that this week, when I was praying, and all of a sudden a bright confidence rose up in me. The daylight outside my window seemed to flare up, and I felt a solid certainty rise up in me. I reflected on my life, and all the difficult moments, and how each of them had been washed away by what I remember as God's certain presence and openness showing up like a sunrise.

I pray for you, my dear friends. I pray for my congregation at my Eastern Oregon church. I pray that the rock of God's love may anchor you in peace and that his word sings in your hearts with joy. May God shine for you all the days of your lives.

Amen.

Colin Brown is the former pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Boardman. He can be reached at colin.brown@usa.net



COLIN BROWN
COMMENT

FAITH BRIEFLY

Ladies hymn sing introduces Impact Pendleton

PENDLETON — A faith-based sing-along will serve as an introduction to Impact Pendleton.

The Women's Benefit Hymn Sing is Sunday at 6 p.m. at the Pendleton Church of God, 712 S.W. 27th St. Light refreshments will be served. There is no nursery service, but children may attend.

Ladies are encouraged to bring their friends to worship God with classic hymns and learn about Impact Pendleton, a mentoring program. After recruiting, training, and vetting its first group of mentors in the fall of 2018, Impact Pendleton is excited about matching students with volunteers. A love offering will be taken to benefit the program.

For more information, contact Danae Stack at danae.stack@gmail.com or visit www.impactpendleton.com.

First Christian Church offers parental support

HERMISTON — A six-week campaign designed to address the most important things all children need is being offered in Hermiston.

"50 Days of Parenting" will help parents find hope, solutions and support. A faith-based approach, the program is offered through the Hermiston First Christian Church. It includes small groups and worship services.

The program begins Sunday, March 10 at 9:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. at the church, 775 W. Highland Ave., Hermiston.

While not everyone is a parent at the present time, everyone has/had a parent and can contribute. With people of all ages interfacing together, it provides an opportunity to make new friends with people of different generations.

Participants will receive a free daily journal to help guide them through a time of personal growth. There will be suggested readings from helpful books.

For more information, contact 541-567-3013 or hermistonfcc@eot-net.net.



Worship Community

<p>PENDLETON LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH Sunday Service: 10am & 6pm Tuesday Kingdom Seekers: 7pm Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm</p> <p>We offer: Sunday School • Sign Language Interpreters • Nursery • Transportation • & more!</p> <p>Pastor Dan Satterwhite 541.377.4252 417 NW 21st St. • Pendleton, OR 97801 www.facebook.com/PendletonLighthouseChurch</p>	<p>GRACE AND MERCY LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA OPEN HEARTS - OPEN DOOR www.graceandmercy.lutheran.org Sunday Worship 8:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. (Nursery Provided) Fellowship, Refreshments & Sunday School Check Out our Facebook Page or Website for More Information</p> <p>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</p>	<p>CALVARY CHAPEL OF PENDLETON 1909 SW Athens Ave., Pendleton Come join us for Worship at 10:45am on Sunday 541-966-8912</p>	<p>Faith Center Church Worshipping God Loving People 108 S. Main • 541-276-9569 Pastor Jeff Geesey Worship Service: 10:30am pendletonfaithcenter.church</p>	<p>Community Presbyterian Church 14 Martin Drive, Umatilla, OR 922-3250 Worship: 10 AM Sunday School at 11:30</p> <p>To share your worship times call 541-278-2678</p>	
<p>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</p>	<p>Redeemer Episcopal Church 241 SE Second St. Pendleton (541)276-3809 www.pendtonepiscopal.org Sunday Holy Communion 9:00 a.m. Wednesday Holy Communion Noon Weekly Adults Spiritual Life Group All Are Welcome</p>	<p>FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH in Mission for Christ LCMC Sunday Worship.....9:00 AM Bible Study.....10:00 AM Red Lion Hotel (Oregon Trail Room) www.faithpendleton.org</p>	<p>St. Johns Episcopal Church Join Us On Our Journey With Jesus. Scripture, Tradition and Reason Family service 9am Sunday N.E. Gladys Ave & 7th, Hermiston PH: 567-6672 We are an all inclusive Church who welcomes all.</p>	<p>Peace Lutheran Church 210 NW 9th, Pendleton ELCA Join us Sundays 10:00 am Sunday Worship 11am Fellowship & Adult Class 9am Sunday School ~Come and be at Peace~ on 1290 KUMA noon each Sunday</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>Belong to Began PENDLETON FIRST SUNDAYS Morning Celebration - 10am Morning Kids Place - 10am Evening - 6pm Adult - Study Youth - Small Group Kids - Rangers & Girl's Ministries</p> <p>THURSDAYS Celebrate Recovery - 6pm Celebration Place - Kids - 6pm The Landing - Teens - 6pm</p> <p>WEEKLY Groups For All Ages AN ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH 1911 SE Court Ave. 541.276.6417 • pendletonfirst.com</p>	<p>Living Word Christian Center 401 Northgate, Pendleton Celebration of Worship Sundays 10:00 am Youth: 0-6th grade</p> <p>Midweek Service Wednesdays 6:00 pm Youth: 0-6th grade Jr./Sr. High Pastor Sharon Miller 541-278-8082 www.livingwordcc.com</p>	<p>Seventh-Day Adventist Church Saturday Services Pendleton 1401 SW Goodwin Place 276-0882 Sabbath School 9:20 am Worship Service 10:45 am</p>	<p>Good Shepherd Lutheran Church LCMC Sunday worship at 11:00 AM Pastor Michael Smith 420 Locust St. • Boardman, OR 541-481-6132</p>	<p>Pendleton FREE METHODIST CHURCH Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m. Mid-Week Children & Youth Weekly Adult Life Groups 1711 SW 44th St. 541-276-6015 www.pendfmc.org</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ) 215 N Main • Pendleton, OR 97801 Behind These Stone Walls Beat the Hearts of Some of the Warmest Most Sincere, Most Caring People in Pendleton. We Invite You to Come Get Acquainted! Sunday School: 9:30am Worship: 10:40am Office 541-276-5358 M-Thr, 8:30-12:30 www.fcpendleton.org</p>					