

Hear ‘Tales from the Trail’ at New Life Lutheran Sunday

New Life Lutheran hosts “Tales from the Trail” on Sunday, July 26, at 11:45 a.m. Former Florence couple David and Gretchen Brauer-Rieke will share the story of their wild summer trek across Oregon. David is the Lutheran Bishop of Oregon and Gretchen is a nurse-midwife and grew up in Florence. David and Gretchen will share the story of their journey on the Pacific Crest Trail. They walked almost 425 miles in nearly 40 days — all the way from the California border to the Bridge of Gods. The couple will discuss their preparations and show some of the gear and food-stuff they used on the trip. They will share slides and stories about the adventure. They often suffered through misery and fatigue, but discovered inner strength and learned a great deal about themselves and the world along the way. The talk is open to all and will start just prior to noon. New Life Lutheran holds a Sunday worship service at 10:30 a.m. This Sunday, coffee time and a light lunch are provided to enjoy while listening to David and Gretchen. New Life Lutheran is located on 21st and Spruce streets, next to the Florence Food Share. Please contact New Life Lutheran Church at 541-997-8113 with questions.



In Acts 27 (AMP), there’s a great story about the apostle Paul. He was travelling by ship with some people when “a violent wind ... came bursting down from the island” (v. 14). For days they were caught in the storm, and at one point it was so fierce, they were “dangerously tossed about by the violence of the storm” (v. 18) and had to throw the ship’s equipment overboard. They ended up without food, hungry, stranded — seemingly without hope. In that moment, Paul stood in the midst of the survivors and said to them, “I beg you to be in good spirits and take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you ...” (v. 22).

Overcome storms of life with faith

He then shared that an angel of God told him this, and said in verse 25, “So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as it was told me.” How could Paul, in the middle of a horrible storm, ask the people to “be in good spirits” and have a good attitude? Because he believed in his heart — without a doubt — “that it will be exactly as it was told me.” I love that. It’s a great picture of the power of faith in God when all hope seems lost. And we can have the very same faith that Paul had if we will overcome doubt. We all face storms in life. Some are more difficult than others, but we all go through trials and tribulation. That’s why we have the gift of faith. Ephesians 6:16 (NIV) calls

it “the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” Doubt is a type of “flaming arrow” that the enemy uses to attack our faith. We usually experience doubt after we’ve made a decision. In James 1:6, the Bible says having doubt is like being tossed about like the wind, which feels like you’re trying to go in two different directions at the same time. And it’s miserable to be torn between two places, not able to decide what you really believe. It’s in those moments we have to choose whether we are going to believe God or the enemy. God or our feelings. God or what people tell us. God or our circumstances. When doubt comes against us, we have to lift up the shield of faith. We do this when we open our mouth and say what God’s Word says, rather than grumbling and complaining about the problem. Our faith is released as we say, pray and do the Word. So in those times, open your mouth and say, “I believe that everything God has told me will come to pass.” Maybe you’re doubting whether you can hear God’s voice or not. This happens because we usually doubt ourselves more than we doubt God. Now I’m not talking about actually hearing a voice; I’m talking about that knowing we have inside our hearts about what is right or wrong. That’s the still, small voice of God. Believers in Jesus Christ all have it, but many don’t have the confidence to trust it. The Bible says in James 1:5

that when we need wisdom, we can go to God, ask Him for it, and He will give it to us “liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or fault-finding” (AMP). What this means is that even with our imperfections, God will be faithful to us and give us what we need if we will ask Him for help. He loves us, blesses us and uses us in spite of us, because He is faithful. And we never have to doubt that. I’ve learned through my own relationship with God that He’s not expecting me to be perfect; He wants me to do my best to be in His will and take steps of faith as He leads me, through His Word and the promptings He speaks to my heart. Remember, He wants us to put our confidence in Him. God really does want to speak to you personally and lead you in His great plan for your life. So don’t be afraid to step out and do what’s in your heart. If you make a mistake, you’ll learn from it and go on. That’s how we “step out and find out.” And we all have to do it. I want to encourage you to begin making confessions every day that will help you grow in your faith and confidence in God. We need to make declarations like, “God loves me. He wants to speak to my heart. I can hear from God. He is faithful to me and will lead me in His will for my life. And I believe it will be exactly as God has told me.” By God’s grace, we can be bold in faith and overcome every attack of doubt during the storms of life.

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www.churchofchristflorence.org

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Sunday School (for all ages) 9:50 a.m.

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Florence Universalists discuss Marie la Madeleine tomorrow

Sunday, July 26, from 10 to 11 a.m., at the Florence Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, the Rev. Ruth Miller’s message will be titled: “Marie la Madeleine: A Symbol of a Path Not Taken.” “Marie la Madeleine has been celebrated in France for almost 2,000 years with cathedrals and holy days,” said Miller. “What can we learn from her story? Is she a model for us today?”

All are welcome to attend each worship service. The UU Fellowship is at 87738 Highway 101 at Heceta Beach Road, and is wheelchair accessible. Each Sunday service concludes with refreshments and a dialogue circle to explore questions that come up during each service. For more information visit www.florenceuuf.org or call 541-997-2840.

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