

**Good News Only**

**By Doris Brosnan**

Good to see that good news continues. For instance:

Although 14 new cases of Covid-19 were reported for Morrow County by the Sheriff's Emergency Management for the week of February 14-20, on Saturday, the 20<sup>th</sup>, not one case was reported..

Greg Sweek hopes to soon welcome a visit from his grandson, Archer, from Boise, since Greg will soon be receiving his second C-19 vaccination – now available for his age group.

The weather that has created some havoc and complicated some plans has been a welcome relief for area farmers who so badly needed, and continue to need, the moisture for their fields.

Also encouraging are the SNOTEL figures for Arbuckle Mt. on February 22, which put the amount of precipitation at 117 percent of the median amount and 104 percent of the average.

A March memorial mass is being planned for Fr. Gerry Condon, priest to many and friend to many more. Details will soon be announced. On March 6, his parish in Ireland will be celebrating a memorial mass, also.

Jessie Scott has provided the Gazette Times details of a Widows Group she and others have planned for Wednesdays at 6 p.m. at the Elks. An opportunity to relax and visit.

Jeanne Daly is pleased to be back in Heppner and able to have one visitor at a time (room 209) in Pioneer Memorial Hospital. A week ago last Monday, Jeanne fell and broke her femur. After surgery by Dr. Adams, she now carries some hardware in that leg and expects several weeks of therapy before being able to return to her apartment.

The Ione Library is trying to identify children in its district who could be enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL). Children from birth to age five are eligible to be enrolled. The DPIL mails an age-appropriate book to enrolled children every month. There is no charge, and a library card is not necessary, though the child must live in the Ione Library District. More information is available at 541-561-9828 or ionelibrary@gmail.com.

More than one reader has contributed the "good news" that Randall Peterson continues to offer his jeweler's services – gifts, jewelry (one grateful person recently pointed out her new earrings, for example), batteries and repairs.

Readers are encouraged to share their good news. Anyone who has a tidbit is invited to email it to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or to call 541-676-5382.

Hoping some good news comes to everyone reading this.

**Business Speak**

**PPP deadline draws near**

**By Greg Smith**

Those businesses which have not yet applied for the first or second draw of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) need to do so before March 31, 2021. The purpose of the PPP is to allow business owners to keep their workforce in place during the pandemic and the loan can be forgivable (in whole or in part) if the funds are spent in accordance with the requirements of the program.

Please note that beginning February 24-March 10, the PPP is open exclusively to those businesses which employ less than 20 people. This will still allow larger employers to apply after March 10 so as not to miss March 31 deadline.

According to the Small Business Administration, a minimum of 60 percent of PPP funds must be spent on payroll costs (which included benefits). Additionally, funds may be used to pay mortgage interest, rent, utilities, worker protection costs related to Covid-19, uninsured property damage costs resulting from looting or vandalism during 2020, and certain supplier costs and expenses for operations.

In addition:

-PPP loans have an interest rate of 1 percent.

-Loans issued prior to June 5, 2020 have a maturity of two years. Loans issued after June 5, 2020 have a maturity of five years.

-Loan payments will be deferred for employers who apply for loan forgiveness until SBA remits the borrower's loan forgiveness amounts to the lender. If a borrower does not apply for loan forgiveness, payments are deferred 10 months after the end of the covered period for the borrower's loan forgiveness (either eight or 24 weeks).

-No collateral or personal guarantees are required.

-Neither the government nor lenders will charge small businesses any fees.

Certain businesses may qualify for a second draw of the PPP loan program. A business will likely be eligible if it:

-Previously received a First Draw PPP and either will or have used the full amount for authorized purposes.

-Does not have more than 300 employees, AND

-Can demonstrate a minimum of a 25 percent reduction in gross receipts between comparable quarters in 2019 and 2020.

To apply, contact your lending institution or visit sba.gov for more details including locating a lender near you.

PPP loans have been an important lifeline for many businesses and have helped to ensure employees' jobs will remain in place. Fortunately, the IRS reversed its decision regarding expenses paid with PPP loan proceeds not being deductible expenses if the loan was forgiven or if the recipient had a reasonable expectation it would be. That guidance was rescinded with the issuance of Revenue Ruling 2021-02. In short, those expenses are now deductible business expenses.

There are some indicators the economy is recovering but it is advisable that businesses take advantage of the opportunity to apply for the PPP while the program is still available. Make note of that March 31 deadline.

Greg Smith is the director of the Eastern Oregon University Small Business Development Center located at 1607 Gekeler Lane, Room 148 in La Grande, OR. If you are seeking free, confidential business advising, please call 541-962-1532 or email eousbdc@gmail.com.



Greg Smith

**Spiritually Speaking**

**Listen and be transformed**

**By Fr. Thankachan Joseph SDB, St. Patrick Church**

As we enter the second week of Lent, the scripture readings of the day take us to the mountains to have communion with the Father. Abraham, the father of faith, is tested on Mount Moriah and proves his unconditional love for his heavenly father.



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

Similarly, in the transfiguration scene on Mount Tabor the heavenly father reveals the Son Jesus as His beloved. The season of Lent is an invitation for all of us to move from our old nature to a new way of living – to have that wonderful experience like the disciples.

In Genesis (22: 1-2, 9-18, 26), Abraham was tested, and he remained faithful to God. Abraham was willing to observe God's plan in his life, even when God asked for something very dear to him, his only son to be sacrificed on Mount Moriah. The command to Abraham to offer his only son prefigures how God would later offer His own son for our salvation. Abraham was willing to give everything for God. Is it true with you and me? Are we willing to give up anything for the Lord? Abraham's faith was firm. From the sacrifice of Abraham, we learn that he was attentive to the word of God and obeyed God's command and that he trusted God. There is no place for selfishness in one's life with God. This is a season to pause and to ask God, "Please Lord, what must I do to make You happy?" The answer is simple: We must be ready to listen to God and to do what He asks us to do, as Abraham did.

Our second reading is very encouraging because it is full of hope, especially during this season of Lent. St. Paul in his letter to the Roman (8: 31-34), offers us three assurances, "The first promise is that when God is with us who can be against us; tell us that there is no opposition; there is no condemnation; and there is no separation." Through the second reading, St. Paul urges us to die for our sins through our Lenten observances and practices of mortification, almsgiving, prayer, fasting, etc.

The gospel for the second Sunday of Lent is always one of the accounts of the transfiguration of the Lord (Mk 9: 2-10). The transfiguration scene begins with Jesus climbing the mountain with the selected apostles Peter, James, and John, and He is somehow miraculously changed. His clothes become white and His face radiant. Christ is revealed through His transfiguration as the Son of God. The only thing that God demands from us is to "Listen to him!" If we listen to Christ, we shall be successful in our journey with Him this season.

Recently I had a pleasure trip to Penland Lake along with our friends the Tom Wolfe and Murray families. It is very nice to witness all those areas in the intense winter season. The first thought that came to my mind was the scene of transfiguration, Jesus with his three apostles who had the wonderful experience on Mount Tabor. It is surely good for us to have this mountain experience; to draw close to one another and to Christ. Once we spend that time in communion with the Heavenly Father, when we listen to Christ and experience Him up there on the mountain, it will be like that of Peter, who forgets himself and thinks of others only. Though Peter tells the Lord it is nice to be there up on the mountain, He brings them down the mountain to live a life of heavenly call, like Abraham.

Once when we listen to Him, the transfiguration should give us inspiration and hope. In our daily life we encounter problems, difficulties, tribulations and trials of various things. But in the midst of all these, we are reminded that the Lord we are following is a victorious Lord, the beloved Son of the Father. All our troubles in this world are momentary. Our final destiny is glory, victory, and eternal happiness. It is like reading a novel in which the happy ending is already known to us. No matter how difficult the problems that the main characters in the novel encounter, we are not discouraged because we know the story will have a happy ending. We know that with Jesus, our happy ending is certain. So, St. Paul said, "The sufferings of the present times are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed in us" (Rom 8:18). Sufferings are part of our life, especially as we closely follow the Crucified Lord. The zeal with which we have begun these Lenten observances will take us forward to achieve our victory.

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