



Messages of Easter hope from local pastors

Being in God's presence forever

Every time April 4 comes around, I remember Margaret. On that day back in 1926 Doc McMurdo made sure she'd be born in time for an Easter birthday . . . doubling the gift of new life. You'd think the pairing up of these two celebrations—birthday and Easter--would occur with some regularity over a lifetime. But much to Margaret's disappointment, it didn't. Easter coincided with her birthday only twice in 88 years. This Easter would have been the next one, but for the fact that she's been celebrating a perpetual Easter since 2014 when she was born into God's presence forever.

What being in "God's presence forever" looks like, sounds like, or feels like exactly is a mystery on this side of the grave. We're given glimpses in scripture. We can speculate. We can be hopeful or fearful or skeptical. But it will take a death before we know what life in God's eternal presence is really like. I expect it will be an even bigger surprise than the day we pushed our way out of a cramped and watery womb into a world of light and air and color and room to stretch. But Margaret knows. God knows.

ATV instructor course offered

The Morrow County 4-H program is hosting an ATV Instructor Training Course to support new ATV/4-wheeler 4-H clubs. The course is \$50 and in-person training will be held on Saturday, May 22 at Blown Away Ranch in Ione from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.. Participants will also be responsible for completing a set of

And we do know this one essential thing: because Jesus died and rose again, death no longer has the last word; God does. And God is in love with this whole creation--the beautiful and the faithful right alongside the parts God surely finds objectionable. God loves it all, and God longs for all of it to know about that love and love God back. For God's love has set us free, free to put down the burden of guilt or remorse we've been dragging around behind us; free to give up the illusion that we have to earn God's love by being good enough; free to embrace the gift of unmerited forgiveness, unconditional love, and the promise that an abundant life in God's presence is possible already, in this life, when we follow Jesus and learn to do what he did: love God, love neighbor, pray for our enemies, share what we have, tell what we know.

Because Jesus lives, love wins, and a perpetual Easter awaits those who respond to God's love with a yes.

Rev. Katy Anderson
Hopeful Saints Ministry
A Lutheran & Episcopal partnership

online e-modules prior to the in-person training.

For more information and to register go to <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/program/4h/morrow/events> or contact Morrow County 4-H Educator, Erin Heideman, at 541-676-9642 or erin.heideman@oregonstate.edu.

Bag sale to be held

The Neighborhood Center will be holding a bag sale on Wednesday, April 7 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed 12:30 to 1:30 for lunch). Stop in to purchase a brown bag for \$15 and fill it up with clothing, shoes, books, games, music and movies for the whole family. Second bag purchased will be at a discounted rate of \$5. Household items will be 50 percent off that day also. Proceeds from the sale

help purchase food for the pantry.

Donations of paper and plastic bags and new unopened toiletries (such as deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, soap, razors, etc.) are needed and appreciated. Donations can be dropped off Monday through Friday at 441 N Main St., Heppner. For questions regarding emergency services, contact Executive Director Lisa Patton at 541-676-5024.

New life at last

Thinking back to last Easter, I pondered the thought that we have crossed the one-year mark since life was swallowed by Covid. I never could have imagined that an estimate of weeks before things returned to normal would turn into just a month or two to now a year gone by. I'm certain this is not an original observation as we all have been collectively subjected to this rather arduous experience.

I'm certain you share my dismay over restrictions imposed upon us with the speed of wild mustangs streaking across prairie grass. But alas, it appears we are on the cusp of normal life again. My heart rejoices and my spirit sails.

Before I get carried away, I must hold those horses because I'm showing my cards by exposing an all too human frailty, which is our proclivity to put our faith, hope and trust in things which never last and never really satisfy.

What I'm getting at is that perhaps the greatest lesson this last year has taught us is that it is truly grasping at straws to count on careers or health/long-life or even friends and family to bring us everlasting joy. No doubt these can be good, even great things, but they subject to the erosion of time. Our vision is near sighted and often we only see the present. That which we believe will last forever is really only a vapor.

What a tragedy it would be to waste the opportunity to open your eyes and see laid bare before you the existential truth of the way things really are. Simply put, that which we believe to be permanent is just a mi-

rage. Financial security can evaporate when bull markets become bears. Good health can deteriorate in an instant or in the best of cases last only a few decades.

The truth I pray you could see is that there is only one permanent source of joy. Would you be willing to allow the Covid crisis and just the general disappointment of last year's protests and chaos turn you around to gaze upon something more substantial? Let the bankruptcy of last year put you on to something better, more permanent, more enduring?

That of course is the everlasting life promised to all who by faith believe a man named Jesus of Nazareth gave up his life for us on a dirty, rugged, wooden cross. By dying he gave us life. God became a mortal that we might experience immortality. A divine transaction that only God himself could come up with.

But death by execution on a cross was not the end of the Jesus' story. He shocked the world by doing what no human being had ever done before or has ever done since, coming back from the dead.

This Easter as you celebrate the emergence of fresh flowers from the earth, as you exit the home that has entombed you for over a year, and as you think of all the deprivation of dinners, events or gatherings, I pray that you will ponder this even greater bursting forth...the resurrection of Jesus...a promise of liberation for us from the claws of death forever.

Tripp Finch
Willow Creek Baptist Church

Churches schedule Easter services

-Willow Creek Baptist Church is having an Easter Church Service at 10 a.m. on Sunday, April 4 at 560 Minor Street, Heppner.

-South Morrow County Ministerial Association will be holding a Sunrise Service at 7 a.m. at the Mustang Stadium in Heppner on Sunday, April 4.

-Hopeful Saints Ministry will hold Maundy Thursday on April 1 at 6 p.m. on Zoom (link to be posted on Facebook); Good Friday Stations of the Cross April 2 at 6 p.m. (outdoors if weather permits) and Easter Sunday festival worship with communion at 10 a.m. The church is now open for in-person worship (masks and other pandemic restrictions remain in place) and will continue to be broadcast on Facebook Live.

-Heppner Christian Church Easter events include a potluck Easter breakfast at 9:30 a.m. in the church basement and Easter Service at 10:45 a.m., 293 N. Gale St., Heppner

-The Saint Patrick Holy Week schedule will be Thursday-Holy Mass at Ione at 5 p.m., Holy Mass at Heppner at 7 p.m.; Good Friday, The Way of the Cross in Ione at 5 p.m., Stations of the Cross in Heppner at 6:30, The Way of The Cross at 7 p.m.; Holy Saturday Mass at 7:30 p.m. in Heppner; and Easter Sunday Mass at 8:30 a.m. in Ione and Mass in Heppner at 11 a.m.

Victory through the Resurrection

The Apostle Paul once declared in 1 Corinthians 15:50-56 "50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (NASB)

I bring this scripture to your attention because April 4, 2021 is the day in which Christians all over the world will celebrate the day that Jesus Christ victo-

riously rose from the grave giving us the validation of each and every word Paul spoke in these verses. Without the victory of Christ's resurrection, none of these amazing promises would be available for us to embrace today. It's because of the resurrection of Christ that each and every person, regardless of the sins one has committed, all now have the opportunity to choose to place your faith in Jesus. All have the option to embrace His forgiveness and grace by joining in His victory over sin and death.

What a wonderful Savior we have. A Savior who willingly took on all our sins upon Himself in order to free us from such a state of slavery. I encourage you to take the time to truly reflect on the implications of Paul's words for your own life. Do you truly realize just how much you need Jesus? He is the hope of the world, He is the Lord our God, and He is the only way to true Salvation. So, I encourage you to let go of the perishable things and accept eternity through Christ Jesus our Risen King.

Pastor Quentin Byers
Heppner Christian Church

A View from the Green

WCCC men hold first activity of year

Twenty men participated in men's play on Sunday, March 28 at Willow Creek Country Club in the first activity of the year.

In special events, Duane Disque got KP on number 4/13 with 14' 8" and Dennis Peck got KP with 12' 8" on number 16.

In the two-man blind ball scramble, Rod Wilson and Greg Greenup took first in net with 44. Gene Orwick and Rick Johnston came in second with a score of 47.

The first-place winners in gross were the team of Jim Swanson and Steve Marlatt. Second was Kelly Fox and John Edmundson.

There will be no Sunday play on Easter, with the next scheduled event to take place on April 11. Rod Wilson, Tim Wright and

Bill Canady will be hosting. Wednesday night play will begin on April 14, with the deadline for signing up on April 11.

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Valby Lutheran Church
Valby Road, Ione Oregon. 97843

Easter Service
Sunday, April 4th
10:00 AM

Easter Breakfast to Follow

541-422-7300

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