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of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

**Heppner**  
**GAZETTE-TIMES**  
U.S.P.S. 240-420

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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For Public/Legal Notices: public/legal notices deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Dates for publication must be specified. Affidavits must be requested at the time of submission. Affidavits require three weeks to process after last date of publication (a sooner return date must be specified if required).

For Obituaries: Obituaries are published in the Heppner GT at no charge and are edited to meet news guidelines. Families wishing to include information not included in the guidelines or who wish to have the obituary written in a certain way must purchase advertising space for the obituary.

For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

**Spiritually Speaking**  
Father Thankachan Joseph  
St. Mary's Catholic Church Wasco



## PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD!

In the season of Advent, the church extends the call of John the Baptist, the messenger/herald of the Savior, to repent and confess our sins in preparation for the One who is to come. We are familiar with announcements that inform us that something is going to happen, or something is expected to take place. For example, in airports and railway stations, we hear announcements of the arrival/departure of a plane or a train that we are waiting for. If the person for whom we are waiting is very dear to us, that announcement doubles our joy and excitement. This Sunday's readings bring tidings that God is coming soon. Do we believe it or not? Do we look forward to His arrival? Are we prepared to welcome Him?

The prophet Isaiah (40:1-5, 9-11) assures the people of Israel comfort and solace. Isaiah reminds the people of Jerusalem to prepare the way for the Savior/Messiah, urging them to cut down the mountains created of jealousy, envy, etc., to fill the valleys of broken relationships with love, affection, and concern for one another. The Israelites are asked to prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Therefore, they should not wait passively for things to happen but should be active and vigorous in preparing for the coming of the Lord. The preparation is not an external preparation but a preparation of the heart and a removal of all that does not fit in with God's coming. The message is to us: Make a freeway for the Lord to enter our hearts.

The Gospel of Mark (1:1-8) highlights the life and lifestyle of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the coming of the Lord. His role was to announce the coming of the Messiah, he was the voice crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight." The message was one of repentance, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He invited everyone to change and repent and experience a conversion of heart. John had a dynamic impact on the people. They came forth in large numbers to be baptized by him and they showed readiness to change and come back to the Lord. What does it mean to prepare a way for the coming of the Lord today? Where do we seek God and where will we find him?

John the Baptist's message was for all ages. What was John's message?

John preached condemnation. He preached the actual fact of that time, condemning the people as "vipers," poisonous because of their living situations: addictions, depression, anxiety, etc. They had allowed themselves to be poisoned and were poisonous to others. They were sick and disaster-prone, and they were biting others, making them sick and dooming them.

John preached repentance. Those who approached him for baptism he told to first repent and then produce fruit. And the fruit must be worthy, consistent with repentance – fruit that shows a changed heart and a turning away from sin.

John preached against pride. John urges us to get rid of our pride. The Pharisees felt that the righteousness of their forefathers saved them. How they lived mattered very little. Similarly, we can think "I have godly parents, I have been baptized, I am better than so many, I belong to the church and attend church activities regularly, etc."

John preached social justice. Do we reach out to the one who needs help and assistance? John told the people to share surplus food and clothes with the starving and the naked. To the class, he said not to rob the people, just collect what they are entitled to and no more. To the people in power, he said, "Do not abuse your power. Do not intimidate people or use violence against them."

John preached the Messiah's coming. "I baptize you with water, but he with the Holy Spirit."

We are all invited to make some sort of changes for the reception of the Lord during this Christmas time. We are urged to go straight, namely, to give up dishonest, crooked, and sinful ways and to walk the path of integrity, honesty, and truth. We don't have to do great things to walk the straight way, even in the simplest and most ordinary of tasks we can look for God, find Him, and serve Him. Don Bosco would say doing the little things in an extraordinary way.

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## Obituaries

### Sandra Marcene Blake

Sandra Marcene Blake, 80, of Heppner, died Monday, November 20, 2023, at her

home. A Memorial Mass will be held at 1 p.m., Thursday, December 14, 2023, at St. Patrick Catholic Church with refreshments following at the Parish Hall. She was born on December 23, 1942, at Heppner, the daughter of Paul Warren and Gladys Johnson Jones. Sandra was raised and attended school in Heppner, graduating from Heppner High School in 1961. She raised three sons: Shawn Blake, Shane Blake, and Nicholas Blake in Maple Valley, Washington. After her sons were grown Sandra moved to the Tri-Cities and lastly moved back to Heppner where many of her friends and classmates are still living. Sandra was a member of St. Patrick Catholic Church. Sandra was a

devout Catholic and prior to her fight with dementia she enjoyed volunteering at whatever church event was occurring at the time. She had a special affection for those struggling with addiction. Sandra made life-long friends wherever she went. Her friends note her kind heart and infectious laugh. Survivors include her 3 sons, Shawn, Shane, and Nicholas as well as 2 granddaughters and a cherished niece and nephew. Sandra was preceded in death by her parents, Paul and Gladys Jones as well as her brothers, Gary Jones and Ray Jones, and multiple beloved aunts and uncles. Memorial contributions may be made to Safe Project, 3118 Washington Blvd, Box #101734, Arlington, VA 22201-9998. <https://www.safeproject.us/donate/>

Sweeney Mortuary is in care of arrangements. You may sign the online condolence book at [www.sweeneymortuary.com](http://www.sweeneymortuary.com).

## Hermiston man dies in car accident near Boardman

A Hermiston man died early Tuesday morning in an accident on Interstate 84 in Morrow County. The Oregon State Police responded to a two-vehicle crash on I-84 near milepost 168 around 5 a.m. The preliminary investigation indicated a westbound Kia Sorrento, operated by Samuel Burgus, 33, of Umatilla, was slowed in traffic due to a detour related to another crash. As the Kia slowed and prepared to merge into the slow lane, a Dodge Ram 1500, operated by Miron Kosovan, 23, of Kennewick, Wash., failed to slow for traffic and struck the rear end of the Kia in the fast lane. A passenger in the Kia, Alexander James Pace, 36, of Hermiston, was

declared dead at the scene. Burgus, the operator of the Kia, and a passenger, Oscar Sanchez, 49, suffered minor injuries. A fourth occupant of the Kia, Liobaldo Villa Campos, 36, of Hermiston, suffered critical injuries. The operator of the Dodge, Kosovan, was assessed for injury on-scene. The highway was impacted for approximately three hours during the on-scene investigation. The investigation is ongoing. The OSP was assisted by Boardman Fire, the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, and the Oregon Department of Transportation.


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**Morrow County Compensation Board**  
**Morrow County has three vacancies to start on January 1, 2024**  
*Board's Purpose:*

The Compensation Board annually reviews the compensation of County Elected Officials and by majority vote, recommends a compensation schedule to the Board of Commissioners. The Board shall consist of members who are knowledgeable in personnel and compensation management. Members are appointed to four-year terms. If you are interested in serving, please visit <https://www.co.morrow.or.us/bc-cb> and send application to HR at [lgrogan@co.morrow.or.us](mailto:lgrogan@co.morrow.or.us)



## A VIEW FROM THE HILL

By Doris Brosnan

November at Willow Creek Terrace ended on Floss Watkins's birthday celebration at which she and her neighbors were joined by eight guests. Everyone viewed her choice of ribs and twice-baked potatoes as an excellent one. And they enjoyed her German chocolate birthday cake for dessert.

Then, it was time to start focusing on Thanksgiving dinner, which was going to present some challenges this year, since the Terrace was (and still is) without kitchen staff. Administrator Leann Lankford credits many kind hearts and capable hands for the excellent traditional turkey dinner that was served: Joyce Ward's daughters, Joey Munkers (who took charge of the turkey), Steve Lankford, Makayla Silvia, Angelina Hammons, Stacie Osmin, and Dean Gillette from the hospital team that had come earlier to work on the Terrace's boiler and learned of the short-handed situation, who volunteered his wife's great rolls for the dinner, and she came through! Administrator Lankford is hugely appreciative. This is true also of her reaction to the several residents' families who have continued to donate menu items to the Terrace to help with the stressful situation. In fact, Lankford calls the staff and families stepping up to help "with this crisis" truly a "team effort" appreciated beyond words. Lankford also offers a "hats off" to neighbor Danny Sharp, who was recently called by a staff member one evening when smoke seemed to be emanating from one of the ovens. Sharp rushed up, discovered the problem, and took control of the situation. (Maybe it is "Murphy's Law" controlling the staff shortage, the now-unusable oven, and a washing machine that apparently needs to be replaced? One silver lining is the new refrigerator that was to be delivered yesterday.) Lankford is searching for a kitchen coordinator and is also holding the door open for new residents for the three available apartments. Interested persons should stop by or call 541-676-0004. December will feature several activities in addition to the weekly routine events. Tonight is the evening for decorating the Terrace common area and halls and putting up the tree. Christmas carols, soup, rolls, cookies, and hot chocolate will add to the festive evening. Someone rediscovered a favorite game that has now been brought out, so this Friday, participants will be enjoying the Horseracing Game. A new activity that has several residents and staff working on their reflexes is the batting about in a circle a balloon, - to keep it from touching the floor, short pieces of water floats called "noodles."

On the 10th, Jerry Conklin, chaplain at Morrow County Hospice, will lead those in attendance in a church service. On the 13th, they will be creating Mason-jar centerpieces for the tables, in time for a cheery touch at the Christmas-sweater cocktail party on the 15th. And just two days later, Kathy Turner will return with her students who will perform piano and vocal selections, much to the joy of the residents. Another birthday celebration on the 20th will surely mean something special on the menu as Ginger O'Brien, the youngster among the residents, will be welcoming her 76th birthday. The next day, residents will be invited to help decorate Christmas cookies for everyone to enjoy. And the 22nd will be a laid-back day, recognized as "PJ Day." So, everyone can remain in jammies all day if they so choose. Christmas will be celebrated according to the traditions long-established at the Terrace, so everyone will surely be on best behavior through December in order to make Santa's "good list." The last scheduled activity for December will be on the 27th when residents will be working on a tea-light project, and the results to be taken to their apartments. As they look ahead to December, residents and staff on the Hill view the variety of events and the opportunities for visitors with pleasure, always willing to try something new and to meet someone new!

Neighborhood Center of South Morrow County

## Giving Tree

Located at Heppner Market Fresh  
the day after Thanksgiving

-Wrapped gifts are due back by December 18th



- Tags will be available for infants and kids up to 18 years old who are still living at home.
- New gifts and monetary donations will also be accepted!

For more information contact the Neighborhood Center  
541-676-5024

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