

# How Seniors Matter started

By Jerry Conklin

On any given Tuesday, if you visit the dining room at the St. Patrick's Apartments, you'll find a room full of about seventy older adults, heartily engaged in conversation, and enjoying a delicious lunch. You will also notice plenty of volunteers working hard in helping. And you'll hear from a speaker sharing something of relevance to the older adults who have come.

How did all of this come about? It is a story worth telling, as it bears an encouraging message, of how our community came together to better support our seniors.

My co-worker, Jackie Alleman (the Volunteer Coordinator for Pioneer Home Health and Hospice), and I (the Hospice Chaplain) visit hospice families. Sometimes we'd deliver a senior meal to a hospice family and sometimes we would go with them to a senior meal site. It was the fall of 2022. Noticing that nearby communities had senior meal sites, but not Heppner, we discussed how we could rectify the matter. Together, we decided that a great senior meal site must involve "more than a meal." We even came up with a name, "South Morrow County *Seniors Matter*," because our seniors do.

Neither of us knew how to get a meal site started, but we found others who could help. The board managing the St. Patrick's Apartments agreed to rent their room and kitchen to us. It soon became apparent that we would need to form a non-profit corporation to secure funding. So, we paid the fees and completed all the State of Oregon and IRS paperwork. Molly Rhea, Dennis Wiser, Sheryll Bates, and Linda Kenny joined Jackie and me to form a board of directors. You couldn't ask for a finer group of folks to lead in the effort! The gist of our agreed-to vision statement was to connect older adults to one another around a meal and work to connect them to helpful resources.

We approached Kim Cutsforth about our plan. She immediately worked to secure funding for us from a Willow Creek Valley Economic Development grant. Kevin Ince, the County Finance Director, worked hard to help us access some COVID relief funds from the county.

With funds secured, we needed to hire a cook. Jodi Segraves answered that call and has done an outstanding job ever since: purchasing food, preparing meals, supervising the kitchen, and managing our volunteers. Her brother, Todd, has done an excellent job as her assistant.

Speaking of volunteers. We knew we needed them and went to the churches to find them. I don't think anyone would have imagined the response. Every church in Heppner (nine in total) takes turns sending volunteers—always more than enough! We also have National Honor Society students from Heppner High School who come to assist once a month. Besides all that, we have two volunteers, Penni Waite and Rick Reed, who help every week. You hear these days about how hard it is to recruit volunteers, but that is not the case in Heppner! Something that is dif-

ferent about our meal site, as opposed to many, is that we regularly invite speakers to share. Our first senior meal was on July 11, 2023. Since then, we've hosted over two dozen speakers from many agencies and occupations who've spoken on a host of instructive and helpful topics. We've had no difficulty in recruiting them, as they've all been glad to lend their support!

It would be impossible to thank every person who has had a hand in this project, as there have been too many to recall. But here are some who have played an instrumental role: Sabrina Wagenaar, of Gilliam County Senior and Family Services, provided us with much advice and help. Emily Roberts, Chief Executive Officer of Morrow County Health District, has been wonderfully supportive of our efforts. Robin Canaday, Morrow County Public Health Director, has provided much support, and worked along with her staff, and Murray's Drug, to facilitate a flu vaccination clinic. The board of the Heppner Housing Authority has encouraged each step of the way. Andrea Fletcher, Community Improvement Partnership Director, has been a big ally. Madison Rosenbalm (Heppner Chamber of Commerce) and Katie Murray (Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group) have been an immense help in connecting us to grants and other helpful resources. Rebeckah Berry, Grant Program Director of the Roundhouse Foundation, generously provided us with a strategic grant. Julia Brown of AGE+ has lent much advice and has been a big cheerleader of our efforts. Folks from Lamb Weston and Amazon and AGE+ also provided some grants. Many Heppner businesses helped to provide gifts for our seniors at Christmas.

I regularly converse with outside agencies about our senior meal site. They've applauded the efforts of our community in this project. Next month, I'll be sharing with leaders of senior meal sites from around our region about "engaging the community in a meal site." One key towards that end is having a community like ours!

Here's my take aways from what has transpired via our program over these past eight months. To the question, "Do the seniors of South Morrow County matter?" our community has responded with a resounding "Yes!" And, proven again, is the fact that it is not difficult to rally folks in this community around a worthwhile cause.

We are so very thankful to all our seniors and our cook and assistant and all our volunteers and our speakers and all the many folks who have encouraged and helped each step of the way. When we all work together towards a common goal, it is amazing what can be accomplished! Good job Heppner in supporting your older adults in this project! It's proven to be a tremendous encouragement to many! Visit on any given Tuesday at 11:30am and you'll see what I mean. Lunch is free for those 60 and over and \$5 for others.

Jerry Conklin, Chairman, South Morrow County Seniors Matter

## ~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. 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 \$15 Email to editor@rapidsolve.net or upload to Heppner.net.

### My Brush with Death

One never knows how close they may have come to breathing their last until they have a scare like I had the other morning. I was innocently eating the toast I had made from my 17-grain bread, when I looked at the label on the package and read "MAY CONTAIN GLUTEN".

Oh my GOSH!! I quickly ran to the sink and washed out my mouth. Then I scrubbed my tongue with my Tom's All-Natural Gluten/Dairy/Soy Free toothpaste.

I considered calling 911, but I know how much fuel those big gas-guzzler ambulances use, and I just couldn't contribute to Catastrophic Climate Change that way...so I stayed home.

A friend suggested I take Benadryl but there's no way I'm going to support those big pharmaceutical companies and I certainly am NOT going to defile my body with a bunch of chemicals. So, I finished my vegan kale shake and felt a little better.

I made it to my clinic appointment to get my 9<sup>th</sup> booster, then I decided to go to the store to buy some non-GMO local wine, and as I was telling the lady at the store about it (I can't believe this) she offered to "pray" for me. Can you imagine? Why do people feel the need to push their religion on you? I'm just so

sick of the hatred.

So, I walk out the door and I see this little kid stomping on a cricket...guts everywhere...the violence was horrible! So, I grabbed that kid, shook him, and yelled ...."That cricket is just as important as you are and deserves a place on this earth to!!" Didn't this little brat's parents ever teach him that KILLING IS WRONG?!? I mean where is the love?

Anyway, I decided to drop off my donation to Planned Parenthood, make it back home in time for the Free Palestine zoom meeting, and hope for the best. Thankfully, after some gluten-free weed and some time in my Safe Place, I'm feeling more centered and have found my Zen.

The whole experience has been harrowing, but hopefully I can still make my flight to New York tomorrow to attend the LGBTQ Biden for Senate rally. I am so excited! Taylor Swift is supposed to make an appearance and sing two of her hits...."Blank Space" and "Should of Said No", which I heard she is dedicating to our candidate! I just hope my welfare check gets here before then.

So, remember folks...be careful and READ THE LABELS!!

By Susie Crosby  
Prineville, OR

## Heppner Daycare to kick off St. Pat's with Trivia Night

The Heppner Daycare will host their annual Trivia Night Fundraiser on Thursday, March 14th at the Gilliam Bisbee Event Center. This fun and entertaining event starts at 6:00pm with a \$5 Baked Potato Bar with generous donations from Tillamook, Taste of the South, Market Fresh, Dollar General, and Lamb Weston. Trivia hosts, Two Dads Topsy Trivia from Hermiston will have a local Heppner category and some St. Pat's related questions for participants. Additionally, Heppner Daycare will be raffling some great gift baskets filled with all kinds of goodies from local sponsors. There will be a full

no-host bar by Bucknum's Bar & Grill.

Entry forms are available at Heppner Daycare and online. Though teams may enter on the evening of the show, early entries are strongly encouraged. A table will be reserved with the team's name for every early entry. The entry fee for each team is \$150 with a maximum of 6 members. Though individual team members often pay their own entry fees, another suggestion is to recruit a sponsor.

The members of the two top-scoring teams will receive cash prizes, as well as bragging rights.

## Spiritually Speaking

Father Thankachan Joseph



## YOU ARE THE TEMPLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

All three scripture passages this Sunday reflect the Trinitarian Aspect of God. The first reading from Exodus 20:1 states, "God spoke all these words," and we hear the Words of God the Father. In the Second Reading, from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (1:18, 22-25), we will hear the Words of the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul. And, the Gospel reading from John, (2:13-25) relates the marvelous and inspiring words of Christ, who took the incarnation and lived among us and showed the way to the Heavenly Father.

The theme that runs through the third week of Lent is "destroy and rebuild," an invitation to destroy the worldly and bodily passions through Lenten practices of mortification, sacrifices, prayer, and fasting to rebuild oneself as the model of Christ, who overcame the Passion and death and was resurrected. The scripture asks us, "Do you not realize that you are a temple of God with the Spirit of God living in you?" Again, it says, "Do you not realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you and whom you received from God?" (1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19). The Lenten observances should help us all to get rid of our bodily passions and be reborn in Christ as a new creation. Paul teaches us: "You have stripped off your old behavior with your old self, and you have put on a new self which will progress towards true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its creator" (Cor. 3:10). Through the three readings of the day, the church invites us all to re-dedicate ourselves to Christ, the fulfilment of God's Commandment, and by following His teachings, we will be able to relive in Him.

In the book of Exodus (20: 1-17), God gives the Ten Commandments to Moses for the people of Israel to help them become wiser and holier. The Law was also given to them in order to strengthen their relationship with God and to help them organize their social and religious lives. Hence, the Commandments of God are meant to form us into a sacred community. The Ten Commandments portray the relationship with God and among one another. The first three deal with the supreme God and how He should be honored: seven deal with the need for justice and peace among fellow beings. While the old Law was given through Moses, the new Law (Covenant) given through and in Christ fulfills it. Hence, as the fullness of God's Commandments, Christ is the channel through which God receives and loves us.

The Gospel from John (2: 13-22) narrates Jesus's encounter with those profaning God's Sanctuary. Jesus gets upset with the people who made the sanctuary of God a den of businesspeople and a marketplace. He makes a whip out of cords and drives them away from the temple. Before the Lord takes a whip against each one of us for our atrocities, covetousness, avarice, lust, fornication, sexual vices, etc., this is a time to destroy all our bodily passions with their inclinations and decide to relive in Christ.

What do we learn from the episode mentioned in today's Gospel? First, we are not supposed to keep quiet or remain indifferent while things go wrong in the house of God, our homes, offices, or any place at all. Also, we must not destroy the sanctity of the house of God, family, state, or country. Also, it reminds us that our bodies and the body of Christ are the Temple of God, so we must not defile them in any way.

Christ prophesied about his own death and resurrection: "Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days." This prophecy will be fulfilled during the paschal mystery. Therefore, today's Gospel reminds us of where we are heading this season: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God promised to rebuild what had been destroyed and to replant what had been plucked up. He proved Himself to be righteous, powerful, and just. And He promised to prove Himself to be an equally patient, compassionate, and merciful builder. So, as we march forward this season, let us continue to abide by the Commandments of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Perfect Wisdom. Let us follow the Lenten practices of fasting, sacrifices, and mortifications, to die to our bodily passions and relive as a new creation with help of the Spirit of the Lord.

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## It's time to face facts!!!

**No group, including the MCHD, BOC, and BRFD, is going to get exactly what they want.**

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**All parties must sign a 5 year renewable contract with the BOC conforming to the new ASA which all parties have already seen.**

**MCHD DOES NOT NEED to end ambulance service at all and there is no reason or need to have interim service.**

Paid for by Katherine Melby Turner

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