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of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

Heppner

GAZETTE-TIMES
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Spiritually Speaking
Father Thankachan Joseph



Rejoice in the Lord Always

Usually, the third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday. The idea of rejoicing is reflected in the first words of the entrance song. In Latin, *Gaudete* means "Rejoice," because our salvation is very close at hand.

On this third Sunday of Advent, we continue again with the preaching of John the Baptist as he extends to us the call to repent and confess our sins in preparation for the One who is to come. The Church presents him as the messenger/herald of the savior.

We are familiar with announcements that inform us that something is going to happen or something is expected to take place, etc. For example, in the airports and railway stations, we hear announcements of the arrival/departure of a train or a plane 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. We become enthusiastic and thrilled because we will soon see the one whom we were waiting for.

Advent readings bring these tidings to all of us that God is coming soon. Do we believe it or not? Do we look forward to His arrival? Are we prepared to welcome Him?

This Sunday's Gospel reading is taken from the Gospel of Luke (3:10-18), which highlights the life and lifestyle of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the coming of the Lord. His role was to be the messenger announcing the coming of the Messiah. He would be the voice crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight."

John's preaching was one of a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He invited everyone to change and repent and experience a conversion of heart. John's preaching and personal witness had a dynamic impact on the people. They came forth in large numbers to be baptized by him and they showed readiness to change their lifestyle 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?

In today's Gospel we have the plain, yet powerful, message of John the Baptist, a message for all ages. What was John's message? The preachings of John the Baptist are the following:

John preached condemnation. He preached the fact of that time, what the people had become; he condemned them as "vipers," poisonous because of their living situations. They had become poisonous due to 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. All those who approached him for baptism he told first to 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. The teaching of 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 that we have godly parents, we have been baptized, we are better than so many, we belong to the church and attend church activities regularly, etc.

John preached social justice. John stirred people. We are still faced with the situation of pandemic. Do we reach out to the one who needs help and assistance? John told the people to share their surplus food and clothes with the starving and the naked. To the business class he said, do not 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. The Messiah was more worthy and more powerful than he. "I baptize you with water, but he with the Holy Spirit."

To conclude our reflections of the day, 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.

John the Baptist preached to the people of his time the coming of the Messiah, and it continues to be a message to us.

Good News Only by Doris Brosnan

Oops! Allen Anderson's daughter-in-law's name is Shari. She does not have the same first name as her husband! Apologies to the Andersons and Shari for the error.

The Tony and Tiffany Clement family has wonderful news and a renewed reason to travel to Panama: to see the newest members of the family, Ava Gabriella and Aria Gabriella, born on Nov. 22 to Shelayna Marie and Angel Cortes of Panama. The twins join sisters Claire Marie and Adah Marie. The Clements report, "We are so excited to welcome them into our family. What a wonderful way to start the holiday season!"

Only 10 more days until the longest night of the year has passed and we will begin to notice our daylight lasting longer and longer, at a rate of about 15 additional minutes a week! Did someone say "Hoorah!"?

In the meantime, we have long evenings that serve to enhance the cheerful brightness of our decorated trees and light posts!

Everyone is invited to share tidbits of positive moments. One idea is to share stories of children's antics and/or words of wisdom as they react to this holiday season. Send to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or call 541-223-1490!

Here's hoping that good news comes to everyone reading this.

MURRAY'S DECEMBER SUNDAY HOURS:

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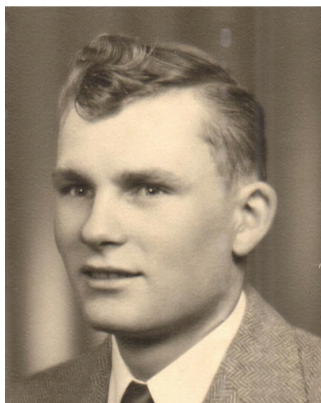
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Obituaries

Robert C. Buschke



Robert C. Buschke

Dec. 9, 1934 – Dec. 1, 2024

Robert Claude Buschke passed away on Sunday, Dec. 1, at his home in Hardman, surrounded by loved ones. He was a week shy of his 90th birthday.

Bob was born Dec. 9, 1934, in Heppner, OR to Claude and Margaret (Beckett) Buschke. He was baptized at a young age at the local Episcopal Church. Bob grew up in Heppner and attended school there until graduating.

In 1960, Bob married the love of his life, Bonnie June Hannan. They were married for 64 years, and she was with him right up until the end.

The first job Bob had (besides helping his dad on the ranch) was logging for Kinzua Logging Company. Later, he went on to work as a heavy equipment operator for the 701. The family also moved to Maupin and

ran cattle down by the Deschutes River for Shirley Rugg for 10 years.

After that, the family moved back to Heppner, where Bob worked as a mechanic for Finley Buttes Landfill. As much as Bob loved working with cattle and his heavy construction work, he and Bonnie eventually decided it was time for retirement. They moved to Hardman, where he lived until his passing.

Robert is survived by his loving wife, Bonnie; numerous nieces and nephews; godchildren Amber, Larissa, Kacie and Haven; and his dog, Elsa.

He was preceded in death by his brother, Jerry, and his two sons, Bryon and Marty.

A graveside service took place on Monday, Dec. 9, at the Heppner Masonic Cemetery in Heppner. To honor Bob's commitments to his country and community, military honors were conducted by an Army funeral honors team, and Elks rites were conducted by Elks Lodge #358 of Heppner.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St Jude Children's Research Hospital or the Oregon Humane Society.

Sweeney Payton Mortuary has been entrusted with the arrangements. Please leave your condolence messages for the family at sweeneypaytonmortuary.com.

Irrigon woman pleads guilty to manslaughter in death of 10-year-old



Raileen Cook

Irrigon woman Raileen Erin Cook pleaded guilty Dec. 2 in Umatilla County Circuit Court to several charges stemming from a Christmas Day accident last year, including a charge of manslaughter. The accident resulted in the death of a 10-year-old Hermiston boy.

Anthony Giovanni Guizar, 10, of Hermiston,

died due to injuries sustained in a multiple-vehicle crash that occurred on Dec. 25 along Umatilla River Road outside of Hermiston.

The preliminary investigation revealed that a 2008 Honda Accord operated by Cook was traveling southbound and collided with a 1998 Honda Civic driven by Brittini Mendoza, 24, of Hermiston, which was heading northbound.

The impact was substantial and subsequently led to a 2005 Pontiac driven by Misti Whitebeck, 47, of Hermiston, striking the Honda Civic while attempting to avoid the Accord.

Guizar, despite receiving medical care at Legacy Randall's Hospital for Children in Portland, suc-

cumbed to his injuries on Dec. 30, 2023. Cook was arrested on multiple charges on March 20, 2024.

Cook, 24, pleaded guilty to second-degree manslaughter, two counts of third-degree assault and driving under the influence of intoxicants. She received a total of 15 years in prison with credit for time served. She also was sentenced to 30 days in county jail and had her drivers license suspended for life.

Additional charges of reckless endangering, assault III and reckless driving were dismissed.

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Mark your calendar for the following events:

New Year' Eve – December 31st
Prime Rib Dinner at 5pm with music by Joe & Andrew Lindsay

Elk's Annual - February 15th Annual
hosted by ER Shane and Regi Lazinka

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