

New Lutheran minister has famous connections

Patrick Hall is helping Hermiston church discover itself

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald



Renee Johannesen/Contributed Photo
Patrick Hall, new pastor at Hermiston's Trinity Lutheran Church, is planning a short stay in Hermiston. During his time here, he will find a permanent replacement.

Patrick Hall, new pastor at Hermiston's Trinity Lutheran Church, made a long journey to get to the area. Now here, he regales people with his interesting history, while he helps the church find a long-term replacement for himself.

Hall was serving as pastor in Ohio, before driving to his home in Minnesota. That was a 12-hour drive. The next step of this trip, going from Minnesota to Hermiston, was 24 hours, driving with his wife.

As a happy father and grandfather, he misses his family. Still, the 67-year-old interim pastor is enjoying Hermiston; his early impressions are positive. And he is glad to have stories to share with local residents.

Hall tells people of his past experiences, including his past career as a banker, an educator and a salesman. He did not have a calling for the ministry until he was in his 30s. So he got around, and he learned a lot, he said.

He said he witnessed a man drop a load of hot dogs. The story of this accident was spread and retold by Garrison Keeler, radio personality and host of "A Prairie Home Companion."

Celebrity encounters include run-ins with Prince. When he was in high school, Hall was YMCA president. He welcomed a young Prince and other musicians to audition for a dance. Prince, playing several different instruments, performed at Hall's dances. Hall would later see Prince perform, still early in The Purple One's career.

"He was a really nice kid," Hall said of Prince.

Hall also met Jesse Ventura, former professional wrestler and former Minnesota governor. Ventura played football with Hall's brothers. At a class reunion, Hall ran into Ventura and confronted the wrestler on a comment he made in Playboy magazine.

Ventura had said disparaging comments about organized religion. Hall asked him about this comment, bringing up examples of strong Christians. Ventura, Hall said, backed away from his earlier comment.

Still, Hall said Ventura is "a nice guy."

While he has other celebrity-related stories, including ones involving hockey player Mike Ramsey, Hall has other stories about his faith. His experience getting "the call" in dreams is among those stories. Though a Christian, he was not the sort of person who might become a minister, he said. He was enjoying success in business after all. Changing careers, then, did not make much sense. He only accepted the call after he felt pressured by God.

As a minister, he said he is more "theological" than "political." He focuses on God, rather than political messages that may alienate one side or another, with few exceptions.

He said, these are tumultuous times. People need to know God is real and loving. He does not want this message lost in political discussions.

His stay in Hermiston is set to be no more than 18 months, he said. He will help the church find a new pastor, before leaving and returning to Minnesota.

"Life is too short to work all the time," he said.

He said he is not sure what he will be looking for in a replacement. He is working with the church, helping church members discover the church's true identity. Then, they can find the person to lead them going forward.

BRIEFS

Walk with Ease offers steps to healthy living

People looking for relief from arthritis pain or just wanting to be active can gain from the Arthritis Foundation's six-week Walk with Ease program. Participants can learn how to safely make physical activity part of their everyday life.

Good Shepherd Health Care System is offering the program for free. Open to everyone, pre-registration required.

Walk with Ease, which began Monday, Oct. 11, is offered Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10-11 a.m. at Good Shepherd, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Join the group to focus on low-inten-

sity walking, which is proven to reduce the pain and discomfort of arthritis, increase balance and strength, build confidence in your ability to be physically active and improve overall health.

To register, visit www.eventbrite.com. For questions, call 541-667-3509.

Drive Away Hunger accepts food donations

Oregon FFA and Les Schwab Tires Center again are teaming up for the Drive Away Hunger initiative.

With the need to help fight hunger greater than ever, the project partners urge people to drop off non-perishable food items at any Oregon Les

Schwab Tire Center, Wilco or Grange Co-op locations. Donations will be accepted through Oct. 31.

In a press release from Christa Carlon, Oregon FFA Foundation's stewardship officer, the special partnership allows FFA members to live out their motto of "learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live and living to serve." Over the past 8 years, Drive Away Hunger has raised nearly three million meals for those in need.

For more information about the initiative, email Carlon at christa@oregonffa.com, search www.facebook.com/OregonFFA or visit www.lesschwab.com/drive-away-hunger.

—Hermiston Herald

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