

## INTERFAITH VOICES

## Life can be like a tightrope

The Book of Proverbs is found in both the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Bible, and contains concise, wise statements about how to live a good life.

One of my favorite verses is Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."



**ALICE RAMPTON**

My daughter-in-law recently told me the story of Charles Blondin, the famous tightrope walker and the first person to cross over Niagara Falls in 1859.

As described in Smithsonian Magazine, "A cable made entirely of hemp, 1,300 feet long, two inches in diameter, was wound around an oak tree on the American side, while the other end was ferried across the Niagara River and secured to a

### ABOUT INTERFAITH VOICES

The weekly "Interfaith Voices" column includes a regular rotation of writers representing the broad spectrum of spiritual voices throughout the mid-valley. The column is coordinated by the Reverend Barbara Nixon, who can be emailed at [revbabs2000@gmail.com](mailto:revbabs2000@gmail.com).

Canadian rock. To limit swaying, stabilizing guy ropes were affixed at 20-foot intervals to anchors on both banks — except for 50 unreachable feet in the center, which sagged and swayed dangerously."

Over several months, Blondin repeatedly made this crossing — sometimes running, taking photos, walking backwards, doing back flips, pushing a wheelbarrow and even blindfolded. In August 1859, he decided to

cross the falls while carrying his manager and friend, Harry Colcord, on his back. They did fine until they reached the middle section, which sagged and swayed.

To keep from falling, Blondin gave this advice to Colcord: "Look up, Harry ... you are no longer Colcord, you are Blondin ... be a part of me — mind, body and soul. If I sway, sway with me. Do not attempt to do any balancing yourself." Although a few of the guy ropes snapped, the duo made the journey safely across the falls.

Regarding Proverbs 3:5-6, Bonnie Cordon, an international leader of young women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said, "This scripture comes with two admonitions, a warning and a glorious promise."

The two admonitions — "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart" and "In all thy ways acknowledge him" — are followed by the warning of "Lean not unto thine own understanding."

The scripture ends with "He shall direct thy paths" and provides what Cordon calls a "glorious promise."

The warning to lean not unto our own understanding is harder for me to comprehend. For me, there are times when I choose to be guided by my own intuition, knowledge and past experiences, and through personal prayer. They are from God, and we all have been given these valuable gifts to help direct our decision-making.

But what about when we completely lose our focus and balance? Those times are often beset with broken ropes and relationships, deep chasms, churning waters, mists of darkness, unsteadiness and the unknown. Is that when we must do as Colcord did and lean on the Lord for balance, "sway" with Him — even when it does not fit with our own understanding? The one constant is the Lord.

An observer of the Niagara Falls feat said that the thousands of people in the crowds exhib-

ited faith that Blondin had the capacity to make this crossing, but that Harry Colcord exhibited trust when he climbed upon Blondin's back and obeyed his direction.

Life can be a tightrope, stretched across time. My skills are such that I cannot do this walk alone. I can gain strength from others and from a loving Heavenly Father and His son, Jesus Christ. Trusting in the Lord, even when it seems illogical, I can make the crossing on His shoulders as I acknowledge His strength and He directs my path. This is a "glorious promise" available to all.

Alice H. Rampton is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She co-directs a nonprofit agency for Ukrainian children through the Corvallis Sister Cities Association, volunteers for the Benton County Historical Museum, and has co-authored a book for grieving parents. She and her husband, Mark, are the parents of seven children.

## West Virginia 'religious freedom' bill goes to governor

**LEAH WILLINGHAM AND JOHN RABY**  
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — A West Virginia bill described by supporters as a tool to protect religious freedom and labeled a "license to discriminate" by LGBTQ rights advocates is headed to the desk of Republican Gov. Jim Justice.

The "Equal Protection for Religion Act" wasn't expected to receive a vote until later in the session, but the GOP supermajority Senate suspended legislative rules in order to vote on the bill Tuesday, just a day after it had passed in the House of Delegates.

The measure passed with support from every present Republican in the 34-member Senate. The only 'no' votes came from the Senate's three Democrats, two of whom questioned why the bill was moving through the Legislature at lightning speed — typically measures have to be read multiple times

on different days prior to getting a vote.

Before voting no, Democratic Sen. Mike Caputo of Marion County said he had "major, major, major concerns."

"Quite frankly, I think this is hogwash, and I think the way this has been spun is disingenuous and upsetting," he said.

The bill stipulates that the government would not be able to "substantially burden" someone's constitutional right to freedom of religion unless doing so "in a particular situation is essential to further a compelling governmental interest."

In cases where the government can prove to the courts there is a "compelling interest" to restrict that right, government officials must demonstrate that religious freedoms are being infringed upon in "the least restrictive means" possible.

At least 23 other states have reli-

gious freedom restoration acts like the one being proposed in West Virginia. The laws are modeled after the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act, signed in 1993 by then-President Bill Clinton, which allows federal regulations that interfere with religious beliefs to be challenged.

Supporters have asserted that the bill is meant to protect all people against religious discrimination and is not aimed at any particular group. They've described it as a "judicial test" for courts to apply when people challenge government regulations they believe interfere with their constitutional right to religious freedom.

Eli Baumwell, advocacy director and interim executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of West Virginia, said the 1993 federal law was designed to protect people, especially religious minorities, from laws that affected

their ability to engage in personal practices of their faith.

He said similar laws that have been passed by states in the years since have been pushed with different intents. Those laws have largely been promoted by organizations and people focused on "circumventing laws that require fair and equal treatment," he said.

Cabell County Democratic Sen. Mike Woelfel, a bill opponent, asserted that the bill's language would allow for discrimination against the LGBTQ community and religious minorities. He predicted it would not hold up in court.

"I'm going to respect the religions of other people," he said. "And I'm going to respect other people that aren't exactly like I am."

Caputo also expressed concern that the bill could put nondiscrimination laws or ordinances that protect LGBTQ groups "in jeopardy." "I think it's going to become the

forefront of embarrassment again and show backwoods mentality for the state of West Virginia, when I think we can simplify it all: Why don't we all just try to get along?" he said. "Why don't we all just let people be what they want to be, and let them love who they want to love and practice their religion the way they want to practice their religion?"

Caputo said he hears Republicans talk constantly about wanting to bring more people to West Virginia, which was one of only three states to lose population in the 2020 U.S. Census.

"The problem is, maybe we should be listening to the younger people of this state. They hate stuff like this," Caputo said. "They can't even believe we're talking about stuff like this. They want a more inclusive West Virginia. They don't want to be having these types of discussions."

MID-VALLEY

# WORSHIP DIRECTORY

<h2>ALBANY</h2> <h3>ASSEMBLY OF GOD</h3> <p><b>First Assembly of God—Lebanon</b> 726 W. Oak St. • 541-259-1265 Pastor Kevin Parker Sunday Worship: 10:45am <a href="http://www.lebanonfirstassembly.com">www.lebanonfirstassembly.com</a></p> <p><b>Hope Church</b> 2817 Santiam Hwy. SE • (541) 967-HOPE (4673) <a href="http://www.hope.church">www.hope.church</a> Pastor Mark Robinson Sunday Worship 9am, 10:45am &amp; 6pm Wednesday Classes 7:00pm</p> <p><b>Neighborhood Church</b> 2815 Pine St. SE • 541-926-7981 Dan Clements, Lead Pastor Sun. 9am &amp; 10:30am In person &amp; Online <a href="http://www.albanync.org">www.albanync.org</a></p> <h3>BAPTIST</h3> <p><b>Harvest Baptist</b> 2660 Marion • 541-967-0577 J.T. Lemus, Pastor Sunday School 10am, Worship 11am, 6pm</p> <p><b>Riverside Baptist Church</b> 1300 Springhill Dr., Albany • 541-928-2133 Blake Laberee, Pastor Sun. School 9:15am, Worship 10:30am, 6pm Wed. Bible Study, 7pm; Youth: 6pm</p> <h3>BIBLE CHURCH</h3> <p><b>Whitespires Berean Bible Fellowship</b> 510 5th Ave. SW, Albany Robb Tobey, Pastor Sunday School 9:45am Traditional Worship 11am Wednesday Bible Study 4pm</p> <h3>CONSERVATIVE BAPTIST</h3> <p><b>Willamette Community Church</b> 420 3rd Ave. SE • 541-926-8881 Scott Miller, Lead Pastor <a href="http://www.wccalbany.com">www.wccalbany.com</a> Sunday Worship 9am &amp; 10:30am</p>	<h3>CHRISTIAN</h3> <p><b>Crabtree Christian Church</b> 37650 Crabtree Dr., Crabtree Dave Nolte, Pastor • 541-619-8688 Sunday School, All Ages 9 am Sunday Worship Service: 10 am <a href="http://www.crabtreechurch.com">www.crabtreechurch.com</a></p> <p><b>Eastside Christian Church</b> 1910 Grand Prairie Rd SE (541) 928-9349 <a href="http://www.eastsidechristianchurch.com">www.eastsidechristianchurch.com</a> Sunday Service: 8:45am (in-person) and 10:30am (in-person and livestream) Preaching Pastor Ben Atchley</p> <p><b>First Christian (Disciples of Christ)</b> 432 Ferry St. SW • 541-926-8606 Rev. Gene Hill, Interim Pastor Sunday Worship Service, 10am Website: <a href="http://fccalbany.com">fccalbany.com</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/FCCAlbany">facebook.com/FCCAlbany</a> Celebrating 10 Years as Open and Affirming</p> <h3>CHRISTIAN SCIENCE</h3> <p><b>Christian Science Society</b> 537 7th Ave. SW • 541-926-7979 Sunday Service 10am Testimony Meeting 1st &amp; 3rd Wed. 6:30pm</p> <h3>CHURCH OF CHRIST</h3> <p><b>Hill Street Church of Christ</b> 1805 Hill St. SE, Albany • 541-926-0606 Jonathan Harless, Minister Sunday School for all ages: 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am &amp; 6pm <a href="http://hillstcoc.org">hillstcoc.org</a></p> <h3>COMMUNITY</h3> <p><b>Albany Community of Christ</b> 2526 SE 20th Ave (off Waverly Drive) • 541-220-7733 Sunday hours: 10:00 am Children's classes and Adult Bible Study 11:00 am Worship • All are welcome</p> <p><b>Tangent Community Church</b> 32114 Tangent Dr., Tangent 541-926-3803 David Carlson, Pastor Sunday School 9:30am Worship 10:45am</p>	<h3>EPISCOPAL</h3> <p><b>THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. ALBAN, ALBANY</b> 1730 Hill Street, SE, Albany 541-967-7051 Sunday mornings at 9:30 — Holy Eucharist In-person or via Facebook Live <a href="https://www.facebook.com/stalbans.albany.oregon">https://www.facebook.com/stalbans.albany.oregon</a></p> <p><b>St. Martin's Episcopal</b> 257 E. Milton, Lebanon • 541-451-1159 email: <a href="mailto:stmartinslebanon@gmail.com">stmartinslebanon@gmail.com</a> Sunday Worship Service 10 a.m. <a href="http://www.stmartinslebanon.org/">www.stmartinslebanon.org/</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/St.Martins.Lebanon">www.facebook.com/St.Martins.Lebanon</a></p> <h3>EVANGELICAL</h3> <p><b>Albany City Church</b> 2418 Geary St., S.E., Albany • 541-926-4762 Lead Pastor Josh Conn Sunday Worship: 9am &amp; 10:30am Duane Troyer, Youth Pastor <a href="http://albanycitychurch.org">albanycitychurch.org</a></p> <p><b>Albany Evangelical Church</b> 1332 SE First Ave, Albany • 541-926-2635 Jeremy Gange, Pastor Sunday Worship 10:45am <a href="http://www.albanyec.org">www.albanyec.org</a></p> <p><b>Sodaville Evangelical</b> 38200 Middle Ridge Dr., Lebanon • 541-259-2153 Pastor Winston Thurton Sunday School 9:30am, Fellowship 10:25am Worship 10:45am • Congregational Prayer 6pm <a href="http://www.sodavillechurch.org">www.sodavillechurch.org</a></p>	<p><b>Holy Cross Lutheran Church (LCMS)</b> 2515 Queen Ave. SE, Albany Phone: (541) 928-0214 Bible Study: 9:15am Sunday Divine Service: 10:30am Sunday Website: <a href="http://www.holycrosslutheranalbany.org/">http://www.holycrosslutheranalbany.org/</a></p> <p><b>Immanuel Lutheran (LCMS)</b> 154 Madison S.E. • 541-926-3495 Rev. Larry Oliver, Pastor Sunday Worship 10:30am, Sunday School 9am • Adult Bible Study 9am</p> <p><b>Our Saviour's Lutheran Church (ELCA)</b> 3111 S. Main Rd., Lebanon, 541-451-1065 Pastor Sarah Schaffner 9:30am Worship and Children's lesson Facebook &amp; Youtube <a href="http://www.oslclebanon.org">www.oslclebanon.org</a></p> <h3>MENNONITE</h3> <p><b>Albany Mennonite</b> Along I-5 on Century Drive • 541-926-1443 Peter Epp, Pastor Sunday School: 10am Sunday Worship 11am <a href="http://www.albanymennonite.org">www.albanymennonite.org</a></p> <p><b>Halsey Mennonite Church</b> 910 East First St., Halsey • 541-369-2540 Jason Schrock, Minister Sunday 10am &amp; 6pm, Wed. eves 7:30pm <a href="http://www.halseymennonite.org">www.halseymennonite.org</a></p> <h3>METHODIST</h3> <p><b>First United Methodist</b> 1115 28th Ave. SW, Albany (541) 928-3505 Rev. Lura Kidner-Miesen Online &amp; In-person Worship: 10:30am <a href="http://www.albanymethodist.org">www.albanymethodist.org</a></p> <h3>NON-DENOMINATIONAL</h3> <p><b>The Salvation Army</b> 345 Columbus St. SE • 541-928-4774 Capts. Charles &amp; Dawn DeJesus Sunday School: 9:30am, Sunday Worship: 11am</p> <p><b>Valley Life Church</b> Come see us at our new building at Park &amp; Vine St, Lebanon Sunday Service 8:30am &amp; 10:30am <a href="http://www.valleylifechurch.net">www.valleylifechurch.net</a></p>
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