

Eastern Oregon Tour: September 17-20, 2015

Lostine – It is always good to see Steve Kliever. Phyllis has known him for about 35 years when he was the pastor in LaGrande. Steve’s son was a little younger than Phyllis’s two boys so he enjoyed some used clothes, especially the cute suits from Easter. The church is a welcoming presence on the corner with electric candles in the windows that are always on. There was a great crowd with about 40 in attendance; about half were from the community. The first question was, “When are you coming back?” One person took a video of a song and posted it on Facebook. As people shared, it was seen by many.

Milton-Freewater – It was a gorgeous day and the drive from Lostine was beautiful. What an incredible drive through God’s creation! It is always fun for Sean to play their grand piano since it is a special Steinway that is made with 3 fewer keys on the top. Since he uses about every key on the piano, this is noticeable to him.☺ For the sand blocks with *Glory Bound*, there was one youth so she had the task of selecting 5 adults to join her! This concert went a little longer since there was about 15 minutes of questions. As always, there was a wide assortment of cookies, punch and coffee plus wonderful conversation. Since we were heading to LaGrande, we were able to give Ginger Johnston a ride to Pendleton the next morning for a Presbytery meeting.

LaGrande – Phyllis used to be a member of this church and this is where her whole journey with handbells began. She started directing their handbell choir (ecumenical with a couple of other churches) in 1993, organized a youth handbell choir, and began soloing in 1997. The church has a beautiful pipe organ so Sean used it to accompany Phyllis on *The Lord’s Prayer*. They also had yummy treats which gives us more opportunity to visit with everyone. One person Phyllis has known in LaGrande for a long time was unable to come to the concert because of mobility issues. They brought the concert to her! They set everything up in her living room in the afternoon and Sean played her gorgeous grand piano. For a special song, he did a medley of some of her favorite hymns. It was such a joy to be able to share with her.

Baker City – At the February 2015 Presbytery meeting where Phyllis shared about our ministry and the worship service we had led in Hermiston, the pastor asked if it would be possible to do a worship service at her church. Of course! It was communion Sunday so we also played as the bread and wine were served. Our regular concerts are like worship services, but it is always special for us to be able to design a “concert” following the order of a particular church’s worship service. During refreshments afterward, one gentleman told us that his sister was at the LaGrande concert the night before, called him, and told him to come to the worship service at the Presbyterian Church. He was glad he did. We couldn’t linger too long since we were driving to Burns for a concert in the evening.

Burns – The drive was quite interesting as we drove through an area of severe forest fires. We even saw a few homes that has been demolished by the fire and all that was left was a chimney and foundation. There were still some smoke plumes on the mountains. As we arrived in Burns, we were greeted by deer! It was good to see Jean Hurst and get to visit with her. There were about 50 people and all enjoyed cookies and punch afterward. During questions, one little girl asked if she could keep the chime she used in the Ring-Along. Phyllis had to explain that they were needed at future concerts. Sean was able to utilize all their instruments on various accompaniments – piano, digital piano, and organ. We do like to showcase all the instruments at a church if possible. Since we weren’t in a hurry to leave, we had the luxury of packing up in the morning rather than after the concert. We were both pretty tired after the long day that began driving from LaGrande to Baker City. Weather again cooperated and we had a beautiful drive home reminiscing about the joy we had sharing the gospel with all the churches and their communities.

Snake River Correctional Institution – November 1, 2015

Snake River Correctional Institution – It had been a few years since our last concerts here, so we were glad to find a date that worked. Between the afternoon and evening concerts, we had about 185 guys in attendance. They are so helpful and do a great job with sound, setting up the room, passing out programs,

and anything else that is needed. We ask for no applause at all our concerts and “suggest” hearty Amens and Hallelujahs. Well, most of the churches are not very energetic with this, but the guys sure are