



Church of Jesus Christ

Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER

2320 State Highway 2 Mount Ayr, IA 50854 www.gospelrestored.org
High Priest Alan Smith, Presiding Elder Mount Ayr, Iowa Phone 641-464-2949

*The heavens declare the glory of God; and
the firmament showeth his handiwork.*

Psalms 19:1

News & Notes

What's inside?

News and Notes	Page 1
“What Are You Willing To Give Up For Your Sins”	
Ed Anderson	Page 2
“Called To Be Witnesses”	
Rob Rolfe	Page 5
Help Open the Windows of Heaven	Page 8
“Atonement -- Becoming One With Christ”	
Steve Smith	Page 9
“Remembering”	
Jim Barber	Page 12
Scriptures to Study	Page 16
Schedules	Page 17-19

Retreat planned

We will have an archeological dig retreat at Nauvoo, IL on the weekend of June 6-8.

We will meet Friday night at the Nauvoo House, take part in an archeological dig on Saturday and share the Sunday service with the Nauvoo branch.

We will be staying in the Nauvoo House and food will be provided.

Let Steven Smith know if you plan to attend. T-shirts will be provided but we need sizes.

We will be having a service of sharing music and testimonies, so prepare to take part in this Sunday service.

There will be no Sunday service in Mount Ayr.

Missionary Family Reunion

The Missionary Family Reunion will be held at Graceland University Sunday, June 22 through Saturday, June 28.

We hope you will register and come

Continued on back page



WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP FOR YOUR SINS?

Priest Ed Anderson
Lamoni, IA
May 4, 2014

As a Call to Worship Brother Rob Rolfe read Matthew 7:34-35: *Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock, and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it.*

Brother Rolfe shared: Most of you here have heard about Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr. They both recorded the song, "I Did It My Way." Probably one of the biggest problems we have is we want to do things our way rather than God's way. If nothing else we do it that way because we've always done it that way. We need to make a conscious effort that we're going to be doing it the way the Lord would want us to do it rather than doing it our own way and then wondering why things turned out so bad.

Good morning. It's great to be here this morning to see happy smiling faces with everybody enjoying the spring. I've selected a scripture that's from Luke 18:10-13. *Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself; God,*

I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. What we have done is put forth our hands and partaken of the sacrament. It's a culmination of each individual's existence. A lot of things have gone on in the past to get us to this point.

I was raised in the church and taught by my mom and dad to study, to pray, to fast, and to be good. You have an innate goodness in you given from God but you have to be helped a long a little bit and taught to be good, to do the right things, to make the right choices. I remember in first grade the classroom had long tables with three or four chairs at each one. There was a nickel on one of the tables.

I thought that someone had lost a nickel so I picked it up and took it to the nearest place where I could spend it, which was the snack bar that they had at the time before you got on the bus to go home. I bought a Slowpoke. They last forever. Well it lasted too long because I got home and my mom asked me where I got the money to buy the candy. I told her that I had found it on the table at school, and she said that it probably belonged to another kid who really hadn't lost it. He had just laid it there until maybe he got back from the restroom. It was my parents who straightened me out and told me that I really shouldn't have done that because it was somebody else's money.

As I've gone along there have been

many people that have helped me and taught me in the church. I remember our Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Wilcoxsin, who got me to read the Book of Mormon. She was the one who inspired me to read the Book of Mormon. Out of the class that I attended at the time there was probably five people. Four of them are no longer associated with the church. I credit her for giving me the desire to read and to study.

When I was just a little kid our congregation didn't have a lot of kids so they put me and my friend in with a junior worship downstairs. They would get all of the kids together and sing and tell Bible stories. I didn't know any of the Bible stories. The other kids just seemed to know the stories. I didn't want to be the only one who didn't know them so that also inspired me to study, read, fast and pray to find out what God wanted out of me.

I am thankful for certain people like Bill Ballantyne who was the pastor of Bloomington where we attended. I think he confirmed me and called me to the office of Priest. He, as well as all of the members of the congregation, fed me, guided me and gave me wisdom and knowledge. They showed that they cared and loved me and were concerned that I might respond and become a child of Christ.

When you wrestle what happens? You stick two people in a ring that has a circle around it and they can't leave that circle. If you are the coach on the outside you can't reach in and help your wrestler. That's kind of where we all are as far as our personal relationship with Christ. We can stand on the sidelines and we can yell instructions at the play-



ers but we can't touch them or help them in any way. It's up to the wrestler that's in there to wrestle the other person.

That's kind of the way our relationship with Christ is. I am thankful for all the help and all of the guidance from others, but when it comes right down to it, it is my responsibility to take care of myself, to establish my relationship with Christ. It's my responsibility to make sure that I'm prepared to partake of the sacrament. The scriptures tell us that we shouldn't partake of the sacrament unless we're prepared.

In football you have sidelines. The coaches and players on the sidelines aren't supposed to step out and help. There's been an occasion where other players that weren't playing stepped out and helped the individual or the coach himself ran out on the field. There's a penalty involved if you do that. It's kind of frowned upon if we do things and get out of line. It's when satan enters into us and interrupts the way things are supposed to be.

I am going to read Luke 18:18-23, *And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments; Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor thy father, and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. (He kind of considered himself to be righteous). Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet thou lackest one thing; sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.*

Saying and believing things is a lot different than doing. I can make a lot of commitments that say that I believe a lot of things. There are certain individuals in this world that will only say things that they feel are going to be accepted by the people who they are telling. They just can't take the heat or say no. If you can say no then there's not a problem. If you say yes and don't show up then that becomes a problem because somebody has been counting

on you. Christ is counting on us if we say yes. When we reached forth our hands today we basically said yes we're going to do this. We're going to participate. We're going to do the things that we should do. We're going to help those people who stand in need. We're going to follow His direction and listen to His still small voice.

Does everyone remember the story of the sons of Mosiah where Ammon, Aaron, Omner and Himni all demanded of their father that he would let them go up to the Land of Nephi to preach to the Lamanites. Mosiah went to God and He said, 'Yes they can go and I'll protect them.' The first part of the story is when Ammon went into the land of Ishmael, and there he ran into problems. He became a servant and saved the king's sheep. The king was a little bit astounded. He didn't know how to approach Ammon or what to say to him. He thought Ammon was the Great Spirit but he really didn't want to ask him that. They worked it out. King Lamoni told Ammon that he would give Ammon whatever he desired. Ammon told him that he really didn't want his money that he just wanted King Lamoni to believe what he told him.

In the story King Lamoni was supposed to have gone to a party that his father was throwing in honor of his sons. King Lamoni had been detained because he was under the influence of the Spirit for three days and was not able to move so the day of the party passed. King Lamoni and Ammon went to free Ammon's brothers because God had told Ammon that they were in prison in the Land of Middoni and he should go and free them. On the way to Middoni they met Lamoni's father who was king over all the land.

His father wasn't happy that King Lamoni missed the party. Lamoni's father was going to slay Ammon and was even going to slay his son because he was cavorting with a Nephite. Ammon being a younger man than the king of the Lamanites got the advantage over him, and the King of the Lamanites then asked Ammon what he wanted of him. He more or less said spare my life

and I will give you anything. Ammon told him that all he wanted was for the king to let King Lamoni retain his kingdom and grant that his brethren would be cast out of prison. The King of the Lamanites asked Ammon to come to him after his brethren had been released from prison because he wanted to hear what Ammon was saying.

It didn't come to pass that Ammon went to the King of the Lamanites but it was Aaron and his brethren who had been freed in Middoni. When Aaron and his brethren came to the king Aaron told him that they would be the king's servants. If you remember, Ammon when he first attended King Lamoni told him that he would be his servant. The king wanted to know why Ammon didn't come and Aaron told him that the Spirit had called Ammon a different way.

Then they got into the meat of the conversation. The king was concerned with what Ammon had told him that if he repented he would be saved and if didn't he would not be saved. *Aaron answered him, Believest thou that there is a God? (Alma 13:38)* The king basically



Ed Anderson



said that if Aaron said there was a God he would believe. It's kind of an unusual statement. To be used, to be molded by God you have a tendency to believe what you are told. Part of the problem with some of the people in the world today is they want to challenge everything that's said rather than just accepting it. Especially in the religious world all you have to do is say yes I believe there is a God. You don't have to have proof. That proof comes later but they want the proof first.

Basically the king said, *Is God that Great Spirit that brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem? And Aaron said unto him, Yea, he is that Great Spirit. . .* (Alma 13:41-42)

Aaron is kind of giving him a little leeway there. Aaron told the king that the Great Spirit that he believed in was that God. The king then understood. *And it came to pass that when Aaron saw that the king would believe his words, he began from the creation of Adam, reading the scriptures unto the king; how God created man after his own image, and that God gave him commandments, and that because of transgression, man had fallen. And Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures, from the creation of Adam, laying the fall of man before him, and their carnal state, and also the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, through Christ, for all whosoever would believe on his name. And since man had fallen, he could not merit anything of himself;*

but the sufferings and death of Christ atoneth for their sins, through faith and repentance, etc.: And that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory: and Aaron did expound all these things unto the king.

Now in contrast I want you to remember back to the rich person who was told that he had to give up all of his riches and follow Jesus. The king of the Lamanites had a different response. He said, *What shall I do, that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken? Yea, what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day?* (Alma 13:48-49) Then he puts his money where his mouth is. *Behold, said he, I will give up all that I possess; yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy. But Aaron said unto him, If thou desirest this thing, if thou wilt bow down before God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest.* (50-51)

Then the king prayed unto God, . . . *O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; And if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee. . .* (52-53) So he's going to

give up all that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day. (53)

It's a difference of approach, the rich man versus the king of the Lamanites. The king didn't even know that there was a God when he prayed to Him but he believed and was willing to give up his kingdom and his sins. Now what did that mean? That meant to repent of them, to change his ways and change his heart. That's not an easy thing to do.

I thought maybe as an exercise type thing this might help us to understand a little bit. (Sheets of paper were passed out which had an enlarged check on them.) Now if we as individuals were to fill this check out for ourselves the "Pay to the Order of" would be Christ. What amount are we going to put in before we sign it?

The king of the Lamanites was willing to give up his kingdom and his sins. What are we going to write down? We've partaken of the sacrament. We have a new start. Our sins have been forgiven. This is something to think about. I don't expect you to do it now but it's something to take home with you and to contemplate what you would put down. It's easy to say that you are going to do something but when you put a signature on it, put it in writing, it's more official isn't it? Maybe some time in the future you can share testimonies about what you have written down.



New website

The Mount Ayr Restoration Branch has a new website. We missed renewing the old one domain name -- angel_message.org -- and so have a new site to visit.

Come to:

www.gospelrestored.org
for back copies of the newsletter and other information

about what is going on in the branch.

You can share the site with friends who may want to be able to read the current newsletter and past newsletters on line as well.

We are sorry for any confusion for people who have been to the old website location and not found us.



CALLED TO BE WITNESSES

**High Priest Rob Rolfe
Lamoni, Iowa
May 11, 2014**

As a scripture reading Brother Michael Jordison read Romans 10:13-16. **For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

Brother Rob Rolfe used Mark 13:1-10 as his scripture reading. *And as Jesus went out of the temple, his disciples came to him for to hear him, saying, Master, show us concerning the buildings of the Temple. And he said unto them, Behold ye these stones of the temple, and all this great work, and buildings of the temple? Verily I say unto you, they shall be thrown down and left unto the Jews desolate. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things, and do ye not understand them? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here upon this temple, one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And Jesus left them and went upon the mount of Olives. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be which thou hast said, concerning the destruction of the temple, and the Jews? And what is the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world, (or the destruction of the wicked, which is the end of the world?) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.*

The apostles of Jesus were with him every day for about three years. During that time he taught them many things

they didn't understand. In the scripture I read, they asked questions about what he had said about certain "end of the world things." Wouldn't we be interested in asking Jesus questions about some things, if we had the chance? What would you ask? What is most important to you? A better question is what is the thing that Jesus would most like you to know?

In more than one gospel, the conversation is recorded concerning three questions: When is the destruction of temple? What is the sign of your coming? When is the end of the wicked or in other words, the end of the world? Jesus gave them a list of what they could expect (without dates). Most of you are familiar with the list. The desolation of abomination spoken of by Daniel; persecution of Christians; tribulations on the Jews; false Christs; wars and rumors of wars; nations against nations, kingdoms against kingdoms; famines; pestilences; earthquakes; that it would be like it was in the days of Noah.

Important to me is the statement that the gospel would be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, before the end came. In addition, the sun would be darkened, the moon would not give its light and the stars would fall from heaven. Joel 2:31 says the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great day of the Lord comes. That is partly why there is such a public discussion about the four blood moons in the next two years, starting in April 2014. The interesting thing to me about these "blood moons", is they all occur on a Jewish feast day.

During the past 2000 years, many "christs" have appeared and predicted the end of the world. They have set dates, and reset dates, always to fail. Many of these people died before the date they had set. Others were present on the mountain when the date came and nothing happened. Why does mankind want to try to figure out the date? Didn't Jesus tell us that no one knows

the day nor the hour, not even the angels in heaven?

How important is it that we work out all the dates and happenings in the prophets regarding end times stuff? In big words, this is the study of eschatology. Some people have spent their entire life trying to work all of this out. So far, I have not found anyone who has arrived at the correct answer. I've tried to do it, but there simply are too many unanswered questions. Perhaps I should say unanswerable questions. Is it important to Jesus that we figure all of this out? Perhaps, it is important, but not as important as other things.

When I was younger and lived with my parents, my parents would leave all of us at home and go "to town". On many occasions, they gave us specific instructions before they left. Usually these instructions had to do with work that was to be done. When they returned, how often do you think that they asked about those instructions and whether those things had been done? You already know. Every time!

Did our Lord give His disciples (which includes us) any final instructions when He left the earth after His resurrection? Yes He did! What do you think the possibility is that He expected them, in those days, and us, in the latter days, to follow those instructions? If we don't do what He told us to do, what will be our answer when He asks why we didn't do as we were told? (I don't want to even take part in that conversation)

In any case, what were the final instructions? In the book of Matthew, He told them, *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world. Amen.* (Matthew 28:17-19) These were His last words, as recorded



by Matthew. Did you hear anything about keeping rules, being pure, being nice, etc. etc.? No, He told us to go into all the world and witness to all nations. Do you have to achieve perfection to be a witness? Of course not! And if you can't go, you are not off the hook. If you can't go, you're supposed to send someone in your place. If you don't have money for this work, and you live in this country, it is likely because you are spending it for other nonessential items. Does Jesus agree with this point of view? Yes He does!

I would direct your attention to Acts 1:5-8. *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* I'm going to read these verses. This is Luke's final words as spoken by our Lord Jesus. Do you think He might remember His final words and what He told us to do about witnessing?

Brother Bob Giertz sent an email a few weeks ago with the following statement: "Our calling is not primarily to be holy men and women, but to be proclaimers of the gospel of God." The key word in this sentence is primarily. In other words, He wants us to be witnesses. By the way, that is not only what He wants, it was a commandment.

One of my concerns is that the restoration, and Christianity in general, is failing at being good witnesses. The Mount Ayr Branch isn't doing a good job of witnessing either. I say that because our membership is declining. When was the last baptismal service we have had for someone other than our family members? If we are not increasing our membership, our branch is slowing dying. I hope you are making this a matter of prayer. We should be witnessing more. Why do we not witness?

Some of us don't witness because we are afraid. Some don't witness because they fear someone might be offended. In that respect, should we fear God more, or the person who might be offended more. There are three common objections to why some don't try to witness. They are:

"I think a person's religion is so personal we shouldn't discuss it."

"I don't like people who are dogmatic and fanatical about religion. They try to force their views on everybody they meet."

"Well, I have my own religion, and I'm happy with it."

I don't know of any scripture that permits us not to witness to someone that has expressed one of these reasons. Most commonly, I believe the reason we are not witnessing is because we just don't do it. We don't think about it. We don't prepare a testimony that we could use.

Remember the two-minute rule for our testimony that Brother George Thomas taught us about. Let me ask you a few rhetorical questions. Can only old people witness? Do you have to know the scriptures to witness? Do you have to be without sin to witness? No, no and no! To me, the great thing about witnessing is you are talking about something you already know. Jesus did something for you. He changed you. He blessed you. Have you ever thought about whether you have a testimony? Have you ever tried to write it so you could read your thoughts? Can young people do such a thing? Of course they can. I'm going to read you a short testimony prepared by a 12 year old. Could you do the same? Most likely you could, if you tried.

"Hello fellow middle school and high school students. I'm here just to express a couple things that may be happening to many of us today. I know that I'm only twelve, but I really hope that I can help some of you know and come closer to Christ. I first met Jesus when I was five years old. At that time, I just thought, 'Oh yeah! If I go to church every Sunday, and believe that He's real, I'll go to heaven!'" But that's not how it works. God

did not put us on this earth to do "stuff" and be "perfect," no, instead, we're here to make a choice, and learn to love our Creator and Father in heaven through the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. We don't have to work at anything or worry about anything - we just need to receive Jesus and rest in what He has planned for our lives.

As a Christian, I still have many problems in my life, but I try to get through them the best I can. I know nothing I do will be perfect, or the best-in-the-world, but God's not worried about that - He just wants me to love Him. Sometimes I'll pray to God, and it doesn't seem like I get an answer. At this point, many of us think that God has left us to wither away for the rest of our lives...but really, He's just testing us and building our character. He gives us many tests in life... for me, as a teenage Christian, one of my tests is loneliness.

But really, would God have put me on this earth to be lonely? Did he just put me here so every day He could laugh at my "mistakes"? Of course not. He put me here - like all of you -- so we can bring Him pleasure. We're His children, and He wants us to grow up in His plan and purpose for our lives."

Do you like the testimony? Could you do as well in writing your testimony? Remember, Jesus' last command was to go make disciples.

At the last branch retreat, we were called to be ambassadors. *And receiveth all the things of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* (II Corinthians 5:18-20.) Do you still remember the retreat? If we are an ambassador, whom are we representing? Should we not plan what we are going to say as an ambassador? Do you have to do this on your own? The great news is we do not. The Holy Spirit came to provide the power for you to do so.



But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8). Skeptics may debate the validity of Scripture or argue the existence of God, but no one can deny your personal experiences with Him. When you tell your story of how God has worked a miracle in your life, or how He has blessed you, transformed you, lifted and encouraged you, perhaps even broken and healed you, no one can argue or debate it. You go beyond the realm of knowledge into the realm of relationship with God.

Wouldn't you like to share with someone else the most valuable thing you have? And what is that? What is the most valuable thing you have? I hope you would answer like this. What is the most important experience of your life? "Knowing Christ as my Savior." What is the most important thing you can do for another person? "Help him or her to know Christ." We all need to be able to clearly express the benefits of someone having a relationship with Jesus Christ. Some of those benefits are:

They become children of God.

Their bodies become temples of God.

All of their sins are forgiven.

They begin to experience the peace and love of God.

They receive God's direction and purpose for their lives.

They experience the power of God to change their lives.

They have assurance of eternal life.

God also wants you to witness because of the benefits you will receive. Witnessing will stimulate your spiritual growth, lead you to pray and study God's Word, and encourage you to depend on Christ. You will experience the tremendous privilege and honor of representing Jesus to the world. *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Do you want to try to write your own testimony. Here are a few suggestions before you start. Using a three-

point outline is effective. The outline should focus on before you trusted Christ, how you started your relationship with Christ, and the difference since you've been walking with him.

BEFORE -- Simply tell what your life was like before you started your relationship with Christ. What were you searching for before coming to know Christ? What was the key problem, emotion, situation or attitude you were dealing with? What motivated you? What were your actions? How did you try to satisfy your inner needs? (Examples of inner needs are loneliness, fear of death, insecurity. Possible ways to fill those needs include work, money, drugs, relationships, sports, sex.)

HOW -- How were you converted? Simply tell the events and circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your searching. Take time to identify the steps that brought you to the point of trusting Christ. Where were you? What was happening at the time? What people or problems influenced your decision?

SINCE -- How has your life in Christ made a difference? How has His forgiveness impacted you? How have your thoughts, attitudes and emotions changed? Share how Christ is meeting your needs and what a relationship with him means to you now.

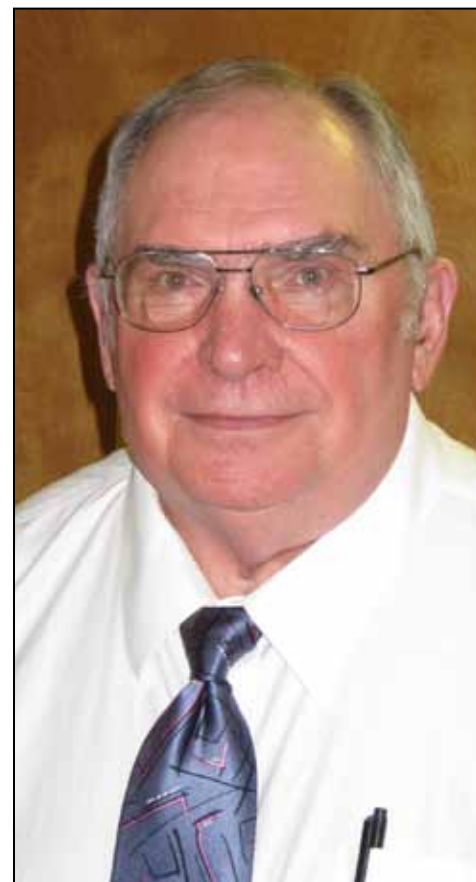
One more thing. There is a story I like about Jesus talking to His disciples in Mt. 16:14... *Who do men say that I am? The disciples answered, John, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He then asked, who do you say I am?* Peter answered and said, you are the eschatological manifestation of the divine charisma. And Jesus said, Huh? The point I am making is that you are supposed to be communicating. You can't communicate if you are using words that the other person doesn't understand or can not relate to. As Agrippa said to Paul (Acts 26:28), *"almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian"*. That is what we are about. Persuading people to come to the truth, and that truth being Jesus Christ.

I found a list of do's and don't of witnessing by a person named Matt Slick. It

is a pretty good list. You may find they are not all applicable to you, but they are worth considering. I am not going to read them to you this morning as there are too many. I will include them in the newsletter. Here is the list.

Do's

- Do Pray.
- Do speak to please God.
- Do read your Scriptures.
- Do start with a positive witness for Christ.
- Do keep things simple.
- Do share your spiritual experience with them.
- Do know what you believe.
- Do have a genuine love.
- Do be simple and define your terms.
- Do memorize appropriate Scriptures if possible.
- Do be ready to learn from the people you witness to.
- Do be patient and gentle.
- Do listen attentively.
- Do answer their questions.
- Do ask questions.
- Do let him/her save face.



Rob Rolfe



Do bring him/her, if possible, to a decision about Jesus.

Do encourage him/her to study the Scriptures by themselves.

Do use Scripture in context.

Do remember that "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world"(1 John 4:4).

Don'ts

Don't attack directly or make fun of someone.

Don't jump from one subject to another.

Don't expect too much from him/her.

Don't have a spiritual chip on your shoulder.

Don't lose patience.

Don't come on too strong.

Don't debate peripheral issues or doctrines.

Don't get sidetracked defending the group with whom you worship.

Don't be uptight.

Don't assume.

Don't argue.

Don't speak too fast or unclearly.

To communicate effectively with

someone with no experience with Jesus, you should think about other words to consider instead of phrases we use in church!

Stay away from "Christianese" phrases. These "foreign" or "churchy" words can alienate listeners and readers and keep them from identifying with your life. I have talked to people that had no concept of what the words Jesus Christ meant. In the restoration, we have lots of churchese that may not translate well to others. Here are some examples:

"born again" -- Instead consider using: spiritual birth; spiritual renewal; to come alive spiritually; given a new life

"saved" -- Instead consider using: rescued; delivered from despair; found hope for life

"lost" --Instead consider using: heading in the wrong direction; separated from God; had no hope

"Gospel" Instead consider using: God's message to man; the good news about Christ's purpose on earth

"sin" -- Instead consider using: rejecting God; missing the mark; falling away from the right path; a crime

against God's law; disobedience to God "repent" -- Instead consider using: admit a wrong; change one's mind, heart or attitude; make a decision to turn away; turn around; a 180 degree turn from what you were doing

The context of not using the above words has to do with the introduction of Jesus and your testimony. All of these words can be used, once you are sure that the person understands what the words mean. Too often though, we like the comfort of quoting scriptural catch phrases, but those phrases may not mean anything to someone who hasn't had any experience with God.

Your testimony is very important. When Jesus healed the man possessed with a devil, the man wanted to go with Jesus. Jesus wouldn't allow it, and instead said to him, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for you, and hath had compassion on thee." Mark 5:15 And in Rev 12:11, it tells us how we conquer the adversary. One way listed is by the "word of our testimony." Are you ready today to battle the adversary with your testimonies?



Help open the windows of heaven

Have you made your financial accounting to the Lord this year yet?

Here is the promise of Malachi for the blessings that will result.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightful-land, saith the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:10-12

Would be like these physical and spiritual blessings? I think so.

What would happen if our branch had 50 percent of our members at accounting stewards? What would happen if we had 100 percent accounting stewards?

Won't you help us open the windows of heaven?





ATONEMENT – BECOMING ONE WITH CHRIST

Elder Steven Smith
Lamoni, Iowa
May 18, 2014

I wish to talk today about atonement this morning, as an overview, and not just how it is accomplished. There are many topics covered here which could make a sermon in themselves, so some specifics will be abbreviated. This approach is like observing the forest, rather than the individual trees.

Atonement is an English word coined about the time of the translation of the King James Version of the Bible. It comes from atone, which was a compound word made of the words “at” and “one”. The dictionary of etymology explains that the old English pronunciation of “one” was pronounced as “own” rather than “won”...thus atonement is the act of becoming one with God.

In the Old Testament, atonement dealt with covering up or sealing off or recompensing for a trespass or sin. It was often associated with sacrifice. In the new testament, it was associated with Christ’s sacrifice and was only mentioned once. The Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants clarify the concept.

The Hebrew concept of atonement was a command from God that covered or sealed off the sins of the people so they would not die without God. Various sacrifices were commanded to be done to purify the people.

In one, a red bullock was killed and burnt to ashes, so the ashes could have water run over them, forming lye, which then was kept in large jugs so hyssop could be dipped in them and it was

sprinkled on people coming into camp that had touched a dead person. The people were kept isolated for a week and bathed in lye again. This lye would kill various microorganisms, including the demodex mange mite that often spread leprosy.

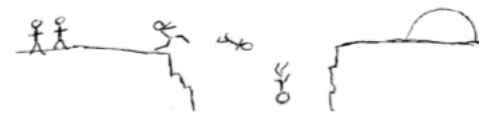
In one a lamb was eaten after a woman had a baby, primarily to replenish the protein loss of childbirth. If you were poor, you could offer two turtle doves. Mary offered two turtle doves after the birth of Jesus.

In some ritual sacrifices, a bird or a goat took the sin and was released into the wild.

In a daily sacrifice, a bullock, or lamb or goat was sacrificed for sin, and eaten by the people. People who could not afford to bring an animal could bring 1/10 deal of flour (about two dry quarts) and one log of oil (about 2/3 of a pint), which would be combined and placed on the alter to form an unleavened bread, that was eaten. Others could bring one shekel, the weight of silver equal to 180 grains of barley, 11-19 grams, and could participate in the feast. To make the sacrifice sacred, you ate the sacrifice. You did not eat the sacrifice to other Gods. Today in special meat processing plants, animals are sacrificed with special prayers and killing techniques by Rabbis or Imams to make Kosher or Halal meat.

The Romans introduces the concept that Jesus is the sacrifice that atones for our sin. Our sin creates a separation or gap that is too far to cross on our own. Those who try fail and end up as red spots at the bottom of the chasm we have created by our sins. Jesus laid

down his life to bridge that gap, so that by Christ, we approach God.



becomes



To recognize the sacrifice and make it sacred, we eat the “poor man’s” sacrifice or the “bread and wine” monthly.

God made us. God knows exactly how we work, and knows that joy results when we are working properly. God gave us commands, and promises to help us. If we keep these commands, we start to think, and feel, and speak, and act in the same way that God does... at one ment. In the meantime, he has created an example of how this works. God made the laws, Christ sacrifice allows us to approach God, and the Holy Spirit blesses us when we repent. Each has a distinct identity and job. All are one.... at-one-ment. We are commanded to follow that example.

John 17:22 *We do that by keeping the Holy Spirit with us always (becoming one with the Spirit), which is one with Christ and God, therefore become one with Christ and God as well.*

God created the earth, and all that is in it including plants, animals, and us. People can learn of God and choose to come to him (agency). Some people will repent and be baptized. God call these people his Church.



Mosiah 11:129 *For behold, this is my church: whosoever is baptized, shall be baptized unto repentance.*

DC 3:16a *Behold, this is my doctrine: Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church;*

Not all of God's creation is the Church. When we are baptized, we make a covenant to have his Spirit with us always, which is indispensable to our remembering him and keeping his commandments. We reiterate this agreement, every month in the communion prayer when we make Jesus sacrifice sacred.

DC 17:22d *O God, the eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.*

Among those in the church are those who believe that Christ died for their neighbor, or enemies as well as themselves. They take on God's love for others, and keep the commands that have effect beyond themselves, in the meantime, advancing to the status of children of God. Not every one in the Church, chooses to be a child of God.

Matthew 5:46-50 *But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love only them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans the same? Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.*

We approach perfection and being one with God when we take this big step to include others in our love.

From among the children of God, there are some who choose to keep special promises including,

- the Word of Wisdom,
- the law of stewardship and tithing,
- keeping their covenants, and
- gathering. (Once seen as clouds over Zion).

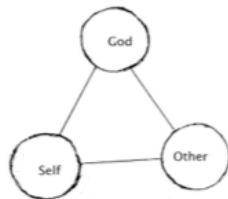
These are perfected as Saints. Not all children of God, are Saints.

Mosiah 1:120 *But if he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man, and becometh a saint, through the atonement of Christ, the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.*

Saints develop to the point that their judgment is one with God's judgment. A Saint is at-one-ment, or in King James English, atonement.

1 Corinthians 6:2 *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*

Sometimes we take the label of Saints, more like a high school mascot, and less as a goal of development.



God gave us marriage so we could select and learn to live with and love one other...at one ment. The concept is that atonement should be at least a goal of two people who find the other special in their eyes. The world will belittle God's idea, and distort the meaning of marriage. You have heard of Math, and new Math. I give you God's Math...God +1+1= 1.

You can only come closer to each other as you come closer to God. Two can only become one as you become one with God. There are no other terms available.

Family expands the concept of identifying as one, and loving as one while children are added to the God formula,

and then their spouses and family are added.

The Church is commissioned with becoming one. As we become one, we progress thru the designation of Children of God, to Saints who are "at one" with God. This goes beyond the family to include others as if they are family.

DC 38:6a *Behold, ..., Be one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine.*

Again, as we keep the commands, loving God, and loving others, we grow with the help of the Holy Spirit to become one with the Spirit, and thus with God. As saints who are one with God, living with God everyday, we attain the label of being in "Celestial Glory"

DC 85:4c *Therefore, it must needs be sanctified from all unrighteousness, that it may be prepared for the celestial glory; for after it hath filled the measure of its creation, it shall be crowned with glory, even with the presence of God the Father;*

The rest of creation, including the earth is in celestial glory.

DC 85:6a *And again, verily I say unto you, The earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation, and transgresseth not the law.*

When you attain at one ment, living with God, you are in "celestial glory". If we as a group of Saints attain atonement, living with God, whether in heaven or earth, we call this "Zion".

I have held that when we accept the sacrifice of Christ and repent, we must integrate our Thoughts, Emotions, Words, and Actions (with the acronym of TEWA), or we fall short. Wouldn't it be neat if there was a word or phrase to describe your thoughts being one with God to the point that you know God?

In fact there is a phrase to describe knowing God and it is eternal life.

John 17:3 *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

To claim eternal life you need to ask, receive revelation which you turn into knowledge using faith and repentance, and being blessed by the Holy Spirit.

If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know



the mysteries, and peaceable things; that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal.

You must also endure in the process of proving the promises or keeping the commands for you mind to be one with God.

2 Nephi 15:5 *And the words which I have written in weakness, will he make strong unto them; for it persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal.*

Eternal life is the state of atonement with God in our emotions.

And look at this, there is a phrase for having the emotional or spiritual side one with the Spirit. Melding with the Spirit to become one in your spiritual or emotional life is referred to as the kingdom.

Romans 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

The Holy Ghost that comes with baptism and fire, shows and teaches us.

DC 39:2b *And this is my gospel: repentance and baptism by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which showeth all things, and teacheth the peaceable things of the kingdom.*

This same Holy Ghost comes to bless you as you keep the commandments.

Matthew 5:21 *Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so to do, he shall in no wise be saved in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach these commandments of the law until it be fulfilled, the same shall be called great, and shall be saved in the kingdom of heaven.*

Having your spirit one with the Holy Spirit is called the kingdom. When the realization of the kingdom comes, it is called the endowment.

DC 102:3e *for, behold, I have prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them, inasmuch as they are faithful, and continue in humility before me;*

What do we call it when we are one with Christ so much that we confess him and talk to him?... Why it is salvation.

Romans 10:9 & 13 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.... 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*

Some seeing the desirability of salvation, leave its purchase at just words. The scriptures indicate that you must repent, and become obedient to God's commands to be able to communicate with him, or even have confidence in his commands. Mouthing the words without is the action of a hypocrite.

2 Corinthians 7:10 *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death*

Hebrews 5:9 *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

When our words are influenced by our being one with God, we have salvation.

Eternal, the Kingdom, and Salvation ... their relationship

D&C 17:5f -6a *.....the holy prophets, who spake as they were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who truly testified of him in all things, should have eternal life, as well as those who should come after, who should believe in the gifts and callings of God by the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father, and of the Son, which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, infinite and eternal, without end. Amen. And we know that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ and worship the Father in his name, and endure in faith on his name to the end, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.*

Eternal life, the kingdom, and being saved are all developed by having faith in God until we repent and keep his commands, and endure to the end. This allows us to learn the nature of God, while confessing Christ, and being blessed by the Holy Spirit as we keep the promises.

With so much to do, what do we do first?

3 Nephi 6:11 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Salvation, through Christ, is only found in the kingdom through the Holy Spirit. We covenant for this Spirit through baptism, then keeping the commands. Eternal life comes from learning about God as we keep his commandments. Some seek salvation only through words. Our thoughts, emotions, words, and actions must all be integrated for us to become one with God...in the atonement. Christ would die to see this happen.

Becoming one (the intent of the atonement with God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit) will affect

-- our judgment so we become Saints

-- our outcome so we exist with God in celestial glory, or corporately in Zion

-- our thoughts so they are one with God and we have eternal life

-- our emotions so they are one with the Spirit and we live in the kingdom and have the endowment

our words, so we have Salvation through Jesus Christ

-- Our actions as we have faith in his promises, to the point that we repent and keep his commands, then endure.



Steven Smith



REMEMBERING

Priest
Jim Barber
 Bethany, MO
 May 25, 2014

Brother Sherman Phipps shared: I wanted to read the Call to Worship this morning from a couple of different scriptures. I picked these somewhat because it's Memorial Day which causes me anyhow to think about our country and the promises that we have as a country as well as a people. *Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.* (Ether 1:35) *This is the other side. And he said, Thus saith the Lord God: Cursed shall be the land, yea, this land, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, unto destruction, which do wickedly, when they are fully ripe; And as I have said, so shall it be: for this is the cursing and the blessing of God upon the land. . .* (Alma 21:17-18)

The scripture this morning is taken from Proverbs 4:1-5. *Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words; keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.*

As all of you know this weekend is Memorial Day. To a lot of people that just means it's the beginning of summer and they get a three-day weekend but it means a little bit more than that. Actually it was called Decoration Day to begin with back in the 1800s not long after the Civil War. The African Americans who were called slaves were freed after

the Civil War and they went and decorated some of the graves of the soldiers that had given their lives so that the slaves could be free. It was actually established as a holiday or an annual event on May 5, 1868 when General John A. Logan declared Decoration Day to be an annual and nationwide observance.

At that time they set aside May 30th because that would be the time when the flowers were most abundant. Then in 1967 or 1968 Congress passed a law that Decoration Day now called Memorial Day would be celebrated on the last Monday of May so that we could have a three-day weekend. I guess it's kind of special to Linda and I because we were married on Memorial Day, May 30th in 1965 so if you do your math that's 49 years ago.

Memorial Day is a time of remembering those who have gone on before us and those that have changed the world and changed our lives. We talked some this morning in our adult class about Enoch. Enoch was a great man that walked and talked with God every day. We can find this in the 7th chapter of Genesis verses 22 through 28. *And the Lord blessed the land, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish. And the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them. And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the city of Holiness, even Zion. And it came to pass, that Enoch talked with the Lord, and he said unto the Lord, Surely, Zion shall dwell in safety forever. But the Lord said unto Enoch, Zion have I blessed, but the residue of the people have I cursed. And it came to pass, that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth, and he beheld, and lo! Zion in process of time was taken up into heaven. And the Lord said unto Enoch, Behold mine abode forever.*

It's hard to imagine in the world

that we live in today and evidently it was like that then that there was one man who followed God and walked and talked with Him every day. Because of that he was able to build a city. It doesn't say how many there were in that city but there was probably a lot of them. God said that they wouldn't always be there, that He would take them up into His home because they were perfect and He wanted to keep them that way.

We were also given the promise that in the last days if we embraced the truth and if we looked upward and looked towards God then Zion would look down. That's the everlasting covenant that He made with us that we need to remember so that we can become like the city of Enoch.

I also remember the story of Noah. We find his story in Genesis 8th chapter. I'm just going to start beginning with verse 4. *And it came to pass, that Noah prophesied, and taught the things of God, even as it was in the beginning. And the Lord said unto Noah, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he shall know that all flesh shall die, yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years; and if men do not repent, I will send in the floods upon them. And in those days there were giants on the earth, and they sought Noah to take away his life; But the Lord was with Noah, and the power of the Lord was upon him; and the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch. And it came to pass that Noah called upon the children of men, that they should repent, but they hearkened not unto his words. And also, after that they had heard him, they came up before him, saying, Behold, we are the sons of God, have we not taken unto ourselves the daughters of men? and are we not eating and drinking, and marrying and given in marriage? and our wives bear unto us children, and the same are mighty men, which are like unto them of old, men of great renown. And they*



hearkened not unto the words of Noah. And God saw that the wickedness of man had become great in the earth; and every man was lifted up in the imagination of the thoughts of his heart; being only evil continually. (4-10)

I've often thought about what it would be like to be Noah. Even though he walked and talked with God I think that his life on earth probably was not very pleasant. He lived in fear all of the time. It said that the giants sought to take his life. How would you like to live like that? Not only that while he was building the ark he was commanded also to go out and preach that hopefully he might be able to get someone to repent but they wouldn't. Yet Noah didn't turn away.

I'm the kind of man that whenever I start a project I don't want it to last very long. It took quite a few years to build the ark. If I have a project that lasts a year I get pretty tired of it but yet he spent many years building the ark. Really I'd like for my projects to not last more than two or three days or a week at most because I get tired and grumpy if it takes longer than that. Noah had great faith and he tried his very best to convert more people but he was not able to because of the wickedness.

I also remember the story of Abraham. He also had great faith. I'm going to read Genesis 22:1-17. *And it came to pass after these things, that God did try Abraham and said unto him, Abraham; and Abraham said, Behold, here am I. And the Lord said, Take now thy son, thine only Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering, upon one of the mountains of which I will tell thee. And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, And clave the wood for the burnt offering; and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide you here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come to you again. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon his back; and he took the*

fire in his hand, and a knife, and Isaac his son; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father! And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together; and they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham! Abraham! And Abraham said, Here am I. And the angel said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only Isaac from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind a thicket, there was a ram caught in it by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering, in the stead of his son. You would have to have tremendous faith in order to do that but yet when you look at what God did, He gave His only Son to be a sacrifice so that we could live and have eternal life.

There are a lot of things about Abraham that I can remember that tested his faith. God kept telling him that he would have a son by Sariah but he never did. He kept promising that Sariah would have a son but she didn't believe either. In fact when the angels came and told Abraham that when they came back in a year he would have a son, Sariah overheard this and laughed. Evidently their faith was kind of weak in that situation but yet God was merciful unto them.

We all know that she had a son Isaac who was actually Abraham's only son from Sariah. There are a lot of different stories about Abraham that increases my faith and taught me that I needed to follow God's commands no matter what they are. If God commands you to do something then you need to do that.

I also remember Joseph who was sold into Egypt. His brothers were very,

very jealous of him. His mother had made him a coat of many colors which he wore. Actually if you read the stories Joseph was a little bit boastful about his coat. I don't think he meant to be that way but he was which increased the jealousy of the other sons. We all know that there was a good reason that these things happened.

Actually Joseph helped in saving his family because he was sold into Egypt and became the Pharaoh's number one person. He interpreted the Pharaoh's dreams and told him that he needed to store up grain because there would be seven years of famine. When his brothers came to Egypt to get grain, they were finally reunited with Joseph and brought into Egypt. Otherwise they might not have survived.

Then again after they were brought into Egypt it wasn't long before they were in bondage and God had to send Moses to get them out of bondage. Moses was a great man also because he listened to God. He went into the mountains and saw the burning bush and his life was changed because of that. He knew that he had to do what God wanted him to do. He was very instrumental in leading the Israelites out of bondage. There were many miracles



Jim Barber



that happened during this time such as the parting of the Red Sea so that they could escape and all of the plagues that were brought upon the Israelites.

These are all stories that I remember as I grew up in the Methodist Church. Those people had a part in my life in bringing me to the point where I am now. Our Sunday School teacher was also my teacher in the old country school that I went to for years so she was my teacher for six days out of the week. Saturday was the only day I didn't see her. She was a good person and taught us these stories in Sunday School class.

Another one of my favorite stories in the Old Testament is the story of Elijah. You can find this in the 18th chapter of 1st Kings:22-38. *Elijah was a man of God who challenged the prophets of Baal. I'd like to read part of that. It's a very interesting story. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.*

And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the

time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name; And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and thou mayest turn their heart back again.

Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. That to me is a marvelous story. When you can pour that much water on the wood on an altar and get it wet yet God has the power to burn it up in a matter of minutes. Elijah knew that God would do this. He had great faith in his God and he knew that He was the one and only God and that we didn't need to be worshipping idols.

In the New Testament we know that Christ chose His disciples. He didn't go to the most prominent people to choose them. He chose people because of what was in their hearts not because of the things that they had accomplished or the things that they were doing.

I'd like to share with you the story of Saul of Tarsus later named Paul. This is in Acts 22:1-16. *Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence; and he saith,) I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaleil, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders; from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.*

And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed of thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the



Lord.

It's hard to believe that a man that was out persecuting the believers of Jesus could be turned around that quickly. Yet I think that he actually knew who Christ was and he knew about God because when he said, Who art thou, Lord? I think he knew then who was addressing him. This experience completely changed his life. If you read all of the writings of Paul you can see what a great man he was and what he did for Christ's gospel.

There are also a lot of people in the Book of Mormon that I remember that have changed the course of history or the way God works in our lives. Lehi and Nephi both had visions. One of those visions was about the Tree of Life. It says that he was walking along and came to this tree, the Tree of Life, and it shone above everything else. The fruit was exceeding sweet and he partook of that fruit and beckoned for his family to come also. Sam, Nephi and his wife came but then he saw Laman and Lemuel and beckoned for them to come but they would not. As a parent I think about how that would make you feel to know that your children had rejected the word of God and would not follow and be part of God's kingdom. Those are some of the stories that have affected my life and encouraged me to follow Christ.

Another one of my favorite parts of the Book of Mormon is the story of Samuel the Lamanite. He was a man had great faith. At that particular time the Nephites became more wicked than the Lamanites. Samuel the Lamanite went to prophesy to those at Zarahemla to try to convert them back to Christianity. The first time that he went he was cast out so he started walking away, but God told him to go back so he did. He stood upon the wall and proclaimed the gospel of Christ and told them that within five years that the signs of the coming of the Son of Man would appear. They shot arrows at him but he was never hit. It would be tough to stand there and let people shoot at you and hope that they missed but again he had great faith.

I remember also young Joseph Smith, Jr. and the things that he had to

go through. He had a dream where a personage told him where these golden plates were and the things that he was supposed to do. This personage came not once but three times in the night. If that would have been me would I have answered the call? Would I have been strong enough to do those things but there again I think that God knows the people before He even asks them. I think He knew within His heart that Joseph Smith, Jr. would do this and He made it possible for it to happen.

Joseph was persecuted but brought forth the Book of Mormon through the power of God. It wasn't anything that he did. He was simply an instrument in God's hands who had great faith. He knew that God was with him and that he would be able to do the things that God set for him to do. He wasn't a perfect man and neither was Moses, nor Abraham but yet they were willing to follow God.

I mentioned where I went to church and that my country school teacher was my Sunday School teacher and how I think that affected my life. I remember my parents. They were good parents. They were very strict and I was one of those that got lashes because I wasn't always the most obedient person. Through that I learned what was right and what was wrong.

I think one of the greatest things that my parents taught me was first of all to know right from wrong but they also taught me to work. There are a lot of youth today that I see sitting around playing video games on TV or playing with their Ipods and they really don't know what work is but I learned at a very young age that you had to work if you wanted to eat. You had to be responsible for the chores that you had to do.

I remember one instance that I was supposed to carry some water to the hogs and for some reason I got busy and didn't do that and the hogs went thirsty that day. When my dad found out he told me that tomorrow when I went out I wasn't supposed to take any water with me to drink so that I would know how the hogs suffered when I forgot to water them. Immediately when those words

went out of his mouth I got very, very thirsty but I was a lot thirstier before the day was over. I learned from that to be responsible.

I remember my grandparents too. My Grandfather Barber died when I was pretty young. I think it was in 1951 that he died so I was only six years old. I remember one particular instance where the foundation on the house that we rented was falling apart. My grandfather was a carpenter and I can remember him coming over and bringing his jacks and everything. They tore the floor off the front porch and put the jacks in there and started jacking by turning the screw jacks to make them go out. We just thought that was amazing that he was moving the house. There was a crack in there that was an inch or so wide but when he got through it was back together.

We only lived about six miles from where my Grandpa Barber lived. He had an old Model A and would drive his Model A out once in a while. One day when he was there my brother and I were running around in the yard and I stepped on a bee. Oh, it stung and started swelling up but Grandpa took some tobacco out of his mouth and put it on the bottom of my foot. The sting and swelling went away and it just disappeared so I guess in a sense my grandpa knew the Word of Wisdom because in the Word of Wisdom it says that tobacco is not for the belly but for bruises and sick cattle. It's not used to chew or smoke. It's used for medicinal purposes.

Through that it helped me when I learned about the church and the Word of Wisdom and I thought of that experience. All things are made for a purpose even though sometimes we don't use them for the right purpose.

Most importantly the thing that I have learned through life is to follow Christ. All of these people had an influence to get me where I am today. I just thank all of you for being a part of my family. I guess I need to thank Pat (Bolingbroke) because several years ago she told Linda about the church here and we started coming. It's been a very wonderful experience.





Day	Thoughts	Scripture	Day	Thoughts	Scripture
1	This is a very important scripture today as well as in the past. We face a choice each day—who will we serve today? It is often easier to choose the broad path than the narrow gate on a day to day basis. Even if we chose the narrow path, we seem to trip, slip, or fall off the path. These hurt but do not have to be permanent in our lives.	Joshua 24:15	20	The true Christian brings forth only good fruit. The fruit is not only good but pure. The fruit is only for others and the Lord for only then will the unexpected rewards come. If the fruit is brought expecting rewards in this world, the fruit is not pure.	Matthew 7:21-29 3 Nephi 6:25-32
2	It is a privilege to serve the Master in any way. There is always more work to be performed. When you enter into the service of the Lord, it is not about what the service is - but being able to serve in any capacity. Let the Lord choose how we are to serve and work to accomplish the task with joy.	Alma 16:9-10 1 Corinthians 1:26-29	21	I have believed for many years that God speaks to me personally through the scriptures. Turning to the scriptures at a time of crisis in your life is a choice. The scriptures are not only comforting but provide clear insight to the problems of today.	2 Nephi 14:1-4
3	How often have we waited in spiritual poverty before we cried unto the Lord? Many of the problems we face in the church today are a result of accepting spiritual poverty. This is in part due to our desire to be accepted in this world by others.	Helaman 5:40-43 John 15:18	22	Have you done all that you can do for the Lord? Have you taught your children about the Lord in your home? These are important steps to take for each of us. Take a moment to think, how often volunteers are turned away because there are too many wanting to work for the Lord? How often has the teaching of the scriptures in the home been given low priority?	Sec 68:4
4	Have we chosen other Gods? Some have chosen power over others, personal wealth, and education as their gods. Knowing of these gods, some have chosen the opposites as their gods. We need to be humble stewards of authority, finances, and talents.	Judges 10:13-14	23	We are faced with many challenges when we choose to be faithful to the Lord. Many well meaning people fall for the old wives' tales. We often fail at being the good example for the youth. If we avoid the pitfalls around us, we can save ourselves and the youth.	1 Timothy 4
5	In world that looks for a return on the investment in 3-5 years, we are asked for a lifetime investment before the return. How great is your investment in the Kingdom?	2 Nephi 7:40-44	24	Preparation for an event takes many kinds of labor. Preparation for the entry into the kingdom takes labor also. We also need many types of labor to build Zion. How many times are we told to thrust in the sickle?	Alma 16:227-236
6	The knowledge of good and evil has become blurred in today's world. We need to be listening at every turn for the voice of the Lord. This blurriness causes us to error too frequently if we do not know the voice of the Lord.	2 Nephi 1:116-121	25	Each of us are given gifts but they are for one purpose. Some have a gift for missionary work and others for support of that work. Each gift is given for one purpose, which is the work of the Lord. Are you using your gifts to move forward the work of the Lord?	Sec 119:8
7	As I have grown older, I've realized I invested more in the renewing of my mind than the body. Although I'm not sure that all my physical limitation would have been prevented, they may have been lessened or delayed. We need to be renewed both in mind and body.	Romans 12:1-2	26	Service is a choice we make each day. We choose our activities each day based on the impact that choice is perceived to have on us. Is the impact on your relationship with God considered in all of these choices?	John 12:25-26 Matthew 6:24 Luke 16:13
8	How do we learn to distinguish the voice of the Lord? I have been surprised by the number of saints that either don't know His voice or fail to hear His voice. Preparation is the key to knowing the Lord's voice and hearing His voice.	John 10:1-6 John 10:25-29	27	We often hear at the offertory that the Lord loves a cheerful giver. Are we cheerfully serving the Lord? The reward is tremendous as stated in this passage.	Sec 76:2
9	Paul was blessed with the ability to hear the voice of God. It is awesome when you realize the Lord will speak to you as an individual. If you seek his guidance and listen, the Lord will provide the answer.	Acts 22:12-15	28	Both Martha and Mary were serving Christ but in different ways. Each of us must serve but in the way we best serve. We must not be critical of those who serve in different ways and bear in mind the Lord also directs many in the ways of service.	Luke 10:39-43
10	Are you able to testify of the words the Lord has given? We accept the scriptures as the words of God. Can we provide a similar testimony when a message is given in a service? If we know his voice, we should be able to testify of the words provided.	Sec 16:5f-g	29	Have you noticed how easy it is to boast when you help your fellow man? There is a necessity of pride when we help and give to others. A pride to give our best to others but not to glorify ourselves. The glory goes to God because we were able to serve Him by giving our best.	Mosiah 1:46-56
11	We seem to be hard of hearing when it comes to the voice of the Lord. There are many ways for the Lord to speak to us. I find I am spoken to most often in the scriptures as I read. As I read, I see the answer I was looking for as clear as clear can be. Sometime I have gone back to the passage and realized the answer was not there except with the interpretation of the Lord.	Sec 43:6	30	It is sometimes hard to be obedient to our worldly employers but in many ways that obedience is a type and shadow. If we cannot serve our employer with a high degree of honor, how can we serve the Lord with honor?	Ephesians 6:5-8
12	We need to grow and prepare for the knowledge the Lord can provide. The Aaronic priesthood is tasked with this preparation so we can come to a greater knowledge of God by his voice and being.	Sec 50:8d-g			
13	We must be able to hear the voice of God to obey his voice. Think of the impact if John did not hear the voice of God. Where would we be if any of the prophets in the scriptures failed to hear the voice of God?	Sec 90:1			
14	The Lord's desire is for us to come together as a people. If we follow his leadings, we become one people. Often our actions push people away from the flock and scatter the flock. Do your actions speak of Christ? Do others see Christ in your actions?	Ezekiel 34:1-12 Luke 11:53]			
15	When we chose to serve, who do you serve? Unfortunately, many people feel showing up for a church service fulfills their service to the Lord. They are the ones who outwardly serve the Lord while really only serving themselves. They don't see service as cleaning, helping their neighbor, or other actions not seen.	Luke 13:23-30 Matthew 6:1-8			
16	What is your commitment to the Lord? Have you heard the phrase "all in"? It is what Christ asked the ruler. Christ ask for total commitment, not only on Sunday morning but each day. We cannot chose eternal life and be a Sunday morning Christian.	Luke 18:15-25			
17	If you chose to serve the Lord, there are things you must do. You must always be on your guard because you don't know when the Lord will come. I was once told that we must be prepared to receive the Lord today but prepare as if the Lord will not come for years.	Sec 61:6c-e Proverbs 4:11-15			
18	To enter the kingdom, you must have living works. What are living works? They are the works accomplished by the leading of the Spirit and faith. One cannot enter the kingdom without stepping out in faith for the journey starts with the first step.	Sec 20:1 James 2:14-25			
19	We make choices each day on what we believe. Most true Christians make more good choices than bad. When we make bad choices, we need to make corrections in this world and with God. Do not delay your repentance.	Jacob 4:10-17			

Daily Scripture Study Calendar for June

Study to show thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.



JUNE 2014

Sunday Schedule

Date	JUNE 1	JUNE 8	JUNE 15	JUNE 22	JUNE 29	JULY 5
Speaking	Steve Cuningham	NAUVOO RETREAT	Michael Jordison	Service at Graceland	Sharing/ Ordination	Alan Smith
Presiding	Rob Rolfe	Rob Rolfe	Jim Barber	Alan Smith	Ron Smith	Sherm Phipps
Pianist	Pat Bolingroke		Cheryl Phipps	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingroke
Special Music	Lynda Rolfe		Alan Smith			Steve Smith
Family Devotions	Bob Rowlands		Sherman Phipps		Rob Rolfes	Ron Smiths
Greeters	Bob Rowlands		Rob Rolfes		Rodney Bastows	Sue Beck
Custodians	Sherman Phipps		Michael Jordisons		Ed Andersons	Jim Barbers
Sunday Evening	Bob Rowlands	No Meeting	Ron Smiths	No Meeting	Steve Smiths	Rob Rolfes

Wednesday Night Prayer Service Schedule

Date	JUNE 4	JUNE 11	JUNE 18	JUNE 25	JULY 2	
Location	Steve Smiths	Alan Smiths	Bob Rowlands	REUNION	Ron Smiths	
Presiding	Alan Smith	Michael Jordison	Sherm Phipps		Gordon Winkler	

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday, JUNE 1 -- Priesthood Meeting at 8:30 a.m., Communion Service and Potluck

Friday, JUNE 6 -- Sunday, JUNE 8 -- NAUVOO ARCHEOLOGY RETREAT

Sunday, JUNE 22 to SATURDAY, JUNE 28 -- MISSIONARY FAMILY REUNION at Graceland University. We will host service Sunday, June 22, at Graceland University at 10:45 A.M. Come join services at the reunion during the week.

Sunday, JUNE 29 -- Ordination Service for Matt Anderson and Music Service.

Happy Birthday: Any birthdays we missed.

Happy Anniversary: Alan and Valle Smith (2), Sherman and Cheryl Phipps (16), and any others we missed.

JULY 2014

Sunday Schedule

Date	JULY 6	JULY 13	JULY 20	JULY 27	AUGUST 3	
Speaking	Alan Smith	Rob Rolfe	Matt Anderson	Ed Anderson	Ron Smith	
Presiding	Sherm Phipps	Rodney Bastow	Alan Smith	Ron Smith	Steve Smith	
Pianist	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Cheryl Phipps	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	
Special Music	Steve Smith	Rob Rolfe	Jim Barber	Beth Knotts	Michael Jordison	
Family Devotions	Ron Smiths	Michael Jordisons	Gordon Winklers	Steve Cunninghams	Steve Smiths	
Greeters	Sue Beck	Steve Smiths	Michael Jordisons	George Knottses	Sherman Phippses	
Custodians	Jim Barbers	Rod Bastows	Rob Rolfes	Alan Smiths	Ron Smiths	
Sunday Evening	Rob Rolfes	Bob Rowlands	Ron Smiths	Steve Smiths	Rob Rolfes	

Wednesday Night Prayer Service Schedule

Date	JULY 9	JULY 16	JULY 23	JULY 30	AUG. 6	
Location	Ron Smiths	Gordon Winklers	Rob Rolfes	Steve Smiths	Bob Rowlands	
Presiding	Gordon Winkler	Steve Smith	Rod Bastow	Jim Barber	Rob Rolfe	

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday, JULY 6 - - Priesthood Meeting at 8:30 a.m., Communion Service and Potluck

Happy Birthday: Sherman Phipps (16), Elaina Smith (19), Steve Smith (24) and any others we missed

Happy Anniversary: Alan and Denise Elefson (7) and any others we missed

AUGUST 2014

Sunday Schedule

Date	AUGUST 3	AUGUST 10	AUGUST 17	AUGUST 24	AUGUST 31	SEPT. 7
Speaking	Ron Smith	Gordon Winkler	Joel Loving	Steve Smith	SHARING SERVICE	Sherman Phipps
Presiding	Steve Smith	Ed Anderson	Steve Cunningham	Gordon Winkler	Michael Jordison	Rob Rolfe
Pianist	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke
Special Music	Michael Jordison	Sue Beck	Lynda Rolfe	Alan Smith		Sue Beck
Family Devotions	Steve Smiths	Jim Barbers	Ed Andersons	Sue Beck	Steve Cunninghams	Bob Rowlands
Greeters	Sherman Phippses	Bob Rowlands	Rob Rolfes	Ron Smiths	Alan Smiths	Gordon Winklers
Custodians	Ron Smiths	Sherman Phippses	Jim Barbers	Michael Jordisons	Rob Rolfes	Steven Smiths
Sunday Evening	Rob Rolfes	Bob Rowlands	Ron Smiths	Steve Smiths	Rob Rolfes	Bob Rowlands

Wednesday Night Prayer Service Schedule

Date	AUG. 6	AUG. 13	AUG. 20	AUG. 27	SEPT. 3	
Location	Ron Smiths	Steve Smiths	Alan Smiths	Bob Rowlands	Rob Rolfes	
Presiding	Ron Smith	George Knotts	Michael Jordison	Alan Smith	Ed Anderson	

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday, AUGUST 3 -- Priesthood Meeting at 8:30 a.m., Communion Service and Potluck

Sunday, AUGUST 24 -- Branch business meeting to elect new officers

Happy Birthday: Sue Beck (19), Michael Akers (19), Adrian Rolfe (20), Norman Nelson (20), Ryder Rowland (27) Denise Elefsen (29) and any others we missed.

Happy Anniversary: Rob and Linda Rolfe (22) and any others we missed.

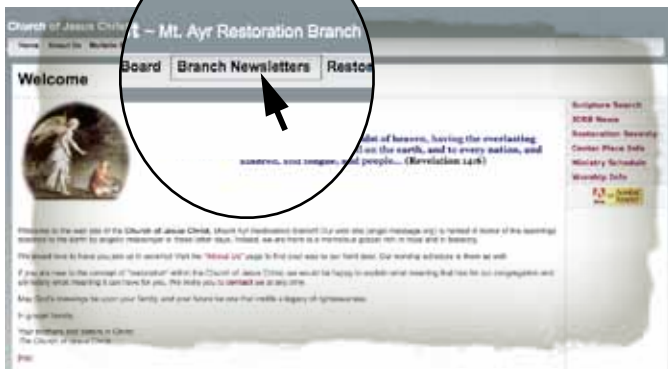


Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

c/o Cheryl Phipps
15581 270th St
Lamoni, IA 50140

Have you misplaced your MARB Newsletter?
Want to read it online or search past issues?
Visit the Mount Ayr Restoration Branch website at:

www.gospelrestored.org



CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST - MT AYR RESTORATION BRANCH

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6-7)

MORE NEWS AND NOTES

spend the entire week with us at the Graceland University campus.

If you can't come for the week, please plan to attend services during the week.

We will host the Sunday morning service on Sunday, June 22 in the Memorial Student Service Center. This service will begin with a song service at 10:45 a.m.

We will not have services in Mount Ayr that Sunday and there will be no classes or family worship.

We will not have a Sunday evening gathering on June 22 and we will share with the evening service at the campus on Wednesday, June 25 as well.

Check with Cheryl Phipps to register for the reunion.

Ordination service

We will have an ordination service as part of a share service on Sunday, June 29.

Matt Anderson will be ordained to the office of teacher at that time. We look forward to sharing under his ministry in this important office

Branch business meeting

We will have a branch business meeting on Sunday, Aug. 24 to elect officers for the new church year, which begins September 1.

Please be thinking about who you would like to lead the various activities for the branch. Visit with them so you know you can nominate them when the service is held.

Newsletter vacation

Because of vacations and other disruptions during the summer months, there will not be a newsletter until the September issue.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and will miss it this summer.

Schedules for the next three months are included in this newsletter.