

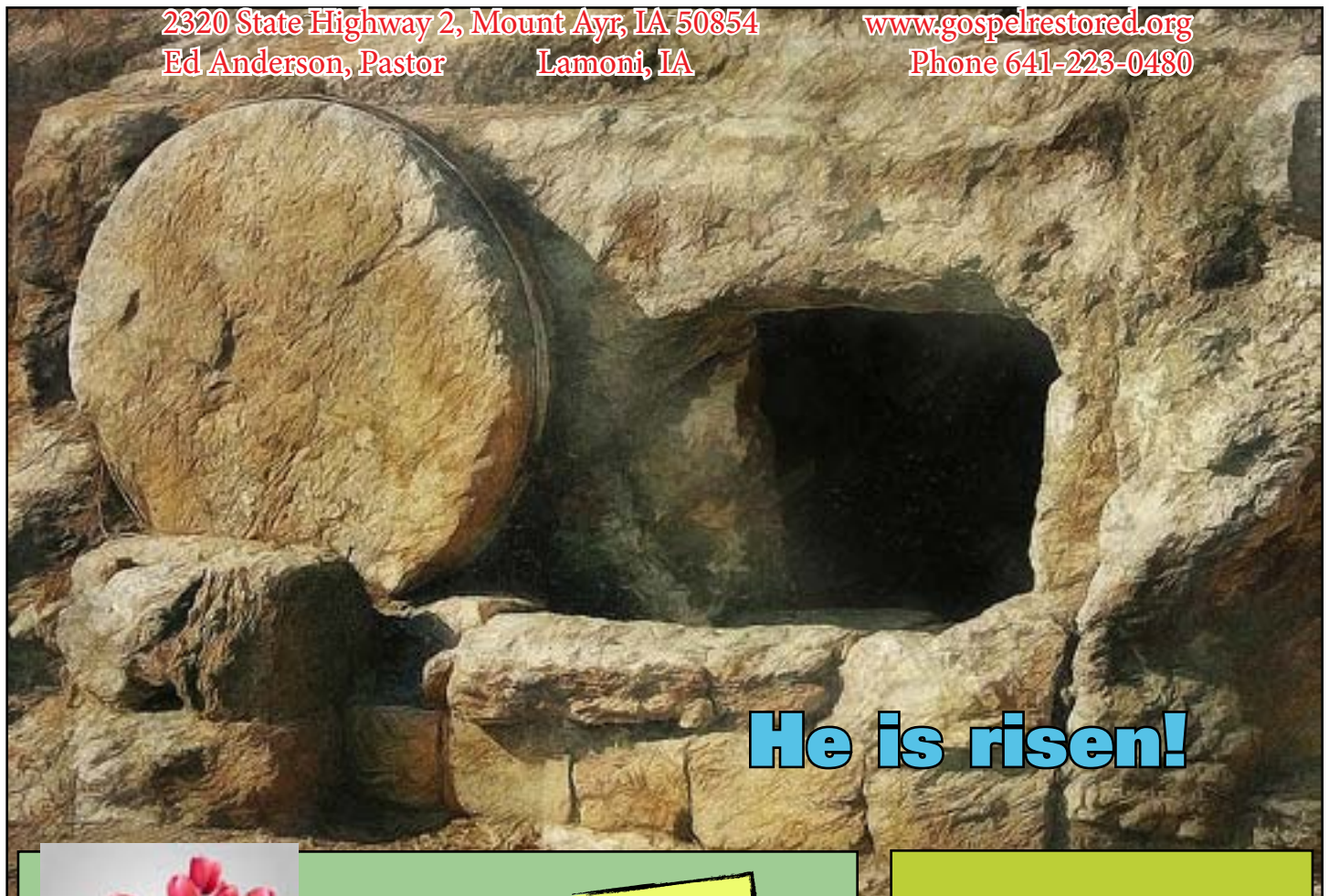
Church of Jesus Christ

Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER

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He is risen!



News & Notes

What's inside?

Baby Shower

A baby shower for Mia Schoff will be held Sunday, April 19 for our evening gathering at the Rowland home.

Mia is the daughter of Brandi and Josh Schoff of Cameron and the granddaughter of Ed and Diane Anderson.

Easter Activities

We had a busy week of activities leading up to and including Easter.

Several from the branch participated in the Breakfast With The Master services at the First Christian Church in

Mount Ayr.

On Thursday night we had Communion Service at the church in place of one on Easter Sunday morning.

Tony Crandall led the branch in services of scripture and remembrance as we learned about how the Last Supper really was held.

Good Friday was our church's special day as we shared responsibilities with the United Church of Diagonal. Bonnie Major played the piano, Alan

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JESUS LOVES US

Priest Rodney Bastow
Mount Ayr, IA
March 1, 2015

Sherman Phipps gave a word of introduction and shared the call to worship. We're here this morning for purposes of hearing Rod, of course, but we're also here for the purposes of participating in the Communion. This is certainly a time for us to come before the Lord humbly and with our hearts softened. For me it's a time for me to come pleading with Him to forgive me. When I look at my life I don't see that I've accomplished what the Lord has sent me to do. So to me participating in the Communion is another opportunity to come to Him and ask Him to please allow me to participate in His work. Please forgive me of my slothfulness and my slowness and let me still be a servant to His people. I hope you'll take seriously this opportunity and you'll think about what it is that you want to renew here with the Lord this morning. This is your opportunity to renew your covenant. He's always there fulfilling His covenant but it's our opportunity to renew our covenant and to open ourselves again to Him and His blessings.

I wanted to read as a Call to Worship this morning some words from Deuteronomy 30. If you go home and pull your Bible out and read this, you'll see that I have left out parts. It would be good for you to read the whole thing but for this morning I want you to hear these parts. *And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. (8) . . . for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers; If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not*

in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply. . . (9-16) . . . I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days. . . (19-20)

My scripture for this morning comes from John 15:7-15. *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

Sherman, this morning reminded me a little bit of what communion services used to be like when I was a little

one. We didn't have a preaching service with Communion we had a prayer and testimony service. (Before the communion several prayers were offered for specific needs and the needs of the congregation.) I can still see John Lane come down off the rostrum to the floor. It was a really special time.

I have to admit to you since I have to tell the truth (our adult class was about telling the truth), it was hard to prepare for today. I was scheduled to preach last month on Communion Sunday and you know a snow storm prevented that. When Gordon asked me if I would speak today, I thought that will fine. It surely can't snow two months in a row on the first Sunday of the month but as I started preparing to preach today, I kept checking the forecast. That said that the weather would be good except for the southern part of Iowa where we could expect 1-4 inches of snow. We kept looking at the forecast and I wondered if I should get ready for today or what?

When Gordon asked me to take his place he said that I could just use the sermon that I had prepared for last month. I'm thinking, 'Would that be appropriate for today? Are we the same people that we were a month ago? Am I the same person and is that message still appropriate for us today?' I looked at it and read it over. I changed a little bit but I kept the same theme. I pray that God will bless us here this morning and the Holy Spirit will guide me to say the right words to you. If we feel blessed this morning I pray that we give God all the praise and the glory for that blessing.

One morning this winter I was out haying the cows. I was really bouncing around in the tractor. It was kind of like the bouncing of a basketball. The ground had thawed out and I had cut ruts. Now I was driving back across those ruts and really bouncing up and down. It was so rough with all the ruts. You didn't need a chiropractor. All you needed to do was ride in that tractor for a little bit.

When I got to the barn and shut the tractor off, I noticed there was no fuel cap on the tractor. I hoped that I hadn't lost it out in the field but I had a spare one that I thought I could find. I looked around and couldn't find it. So I thought that I would just have to go to town and buy a new fuel cap but as I happened to walk up to the front of the tractor laying right there in the front, right on the weight bracket, was that fuel cap. It had not moved a bit.

I was thinking, 'Thank you, Jesus.' It was one of those moments when I knew that Jesus loves you. I have those moments all the time, and I know that some of the rest of you do too.

This past fall has been a good time for Debbie and me to know that Jesus loves us because we had bumper crops. I had yields on one farm that I couldn't believe. I uses to hear about yields like I had on test plots and think, 'How did they ever do that? How is that possible?' It just amazed me.

I sold calves back in December and I thank you for paying the price that you are for hamburger and steak right now because it was unreal what those calves sold for. To me it was an obvious sign that Jesus really does love me but it's the day-to-day things that really impress me of God's love for us.

A lot of times when these blessings happen I think, 'Thank you, Jesus' and then I forget about it. Debbie has this habit of righting down the highs and the lows of every day. She hasn't mentioned me as one of her highs yet. I should do this also because if I wrote down these 'Thank you, Jesus' days it would remind me of how often the Lord blesses me. I lose something all the time and I find it. I don't know how I find it but with the Lord's help I do or the cows get out and we happen to look out the window and see them out or Bob (Rowland) happens to show up and helps out when they are out. I think, 'Thank you, Jesus' because if Bob hadn't been there or if we hadn't been there at the right time who knows where the cows could have gone or what could have happened.

This past summer I had a major 'Thank you, Jesus' moment. I might have talked to some of you about this

but I think this experience is worth sharing again.

I was out baling hay. It was one of those days when you think, 'Boy, I'd better hurry up and get this done because it's going to rain and I need to get this hay baled right now.' I was down here about a mile baling hay and I could see the neighbor over the next hill from me baling hay too. I was having trouble with the baler. It just wasn't acting quite right. It would kick open before it should and that's not a good situation because then you don't get the bale wrapped and you have a mess. I was checking to see what the problem was. I was in a hurry and didn't want to take time to do much so I opened up the back end of the baler where the belts and rollers are and there was a big gob of hay wrapped around one of the rollers.

I knew that I needed to cut the hay off the roller so that it would work better. So, I started cutting it off. I was inside the baler chamber itself, completely inside it. That's fairly safe. What can happen to you? The tractor is running but I thought that the roller wasn't going to come down even though the tractor was running. I thought the hydraulics would keep it up. There is this thing that you can push so that it will stop it from doing it but I didn't want to take the time to do that. I planned on chopping the hay and getting it off the roller.

Well, the more I stood on those belts the more pressure I was putting on that roller so I had to stand down on the ground in between the belts. Then I could cut out the hay easier. I was doing really well and was making pretty good progress. I just about had it but I could feel that end gate on the baler just kind of putting a little more pressure on me. There was just a little bit left to cut out and I thought that I would be fine.

Well, that didn't happen. I got caught in the baler and it started squeezing my legs. A lot of times I still think I am younger and can still move quickly but I'm not as flexible as I used to be. I could not pull my big feet and my body out of there as quickly as I needed to. I thought, 'Don't panic. Don't panic.

The neighbor is right over there. Just call him and he can be right there to take care of me.' I called him. I thought it was the neighbor's son Tucker who works for me. It wasn't. Tucker wasn't where I thought he was. He was back home another mile.

When I called Tucker I told him that I was in trouble and could he get right over here. He said he was in his truck then and he would head my way. He drove down that road setting all kinds of speed records and got to me quickly. By the time he got to me I was really hurting. That thing was really putting a clamp on me. It was really getting tight but he got the baler open and got me out of there. When I got out I couldn't even stand up. I tried to finish baling but that wasn't going to work so I went back to the house.

It took me a couple of days to recover from that. I knew that I was really blessed and that I had been fortunate to get out of the baler. A couple of things really made me feel that Jesus was loving me in that situation. When I got back to the house I checked my cell phone again and it was basically dead. If I had waited any longer I would not have had



Rodney Bastow



a cell phone to call anyone. Unless that other neighbor wondered why I kept staying in the same spot all the time I could have been there for a long time. Who knows what might have happened to me.

The neighbor who I thought I was calling said for him to have gotten to me he would have had to go through a maze of fences and gates to get back to his pickup. It would have taken him a lot longer to get to me than it did for his son. What do you think? Do you think Jesus loves me?

There was a song written back in 1860. It was written to cheer a dying boy. We know it because it's called 'Jesus Loves Me.' Listen to those words.

"Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.

Shouldn't that be I am weak, but He is strong?

Refrain:

"Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.

"Jesus loves me! This I know,
As He loved so long ago,
Taking children on His knee,
Saying, 'Let them come to Me.'

Repeat Refrain

"Jesus loves me still today,
Walking with me on my way,
Wanting as a friend to give
Light and love to all who live.

Repeat Refrain

"Jesus loves me! He who died
Heaven's gate to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
Let His little child come in.

Repeat Refrain

"Jesus loves me! He will stay

Close beside me all the way;
Thou hast bled and died for me,
I will henceforth live for Thee.

Repeat Refrain

"Jesus loves me! Loves me still,
Though I'm very weak and ill,
That I might from sin be free
Bled and died upon the tree."

Repeat Refrain

I like those verses. Sometimes things on the farm don't always go your way. It can be too hot. It can be too cold. It can be too wet. It can be too dry. Sometimes cows die. Sometimes they lose their calves. Prices go down. Machinery breaks down. During those times does Jesus still love me? Can I still believe that He loves me during those times?

Sometimes I have to remind myself that He does. Sometimes I have to remind myself that it's at those times that He probably loves me more than ever and I need His love more than ever.

Things in life don't always go our way. A couple of weeks ago I wanted to go to the State Wrestling Tournament in Des Moines. Mount Ayr had a boy who we thought had a good chance of being a state champion. Mount Ayr has only had one state champion in 50 years and this was our chance for a second one. I really wanted to see him wrestle because I had had him in junior high wrestling. It would be kind of my claim to fame because I had coached a state champion wrestler.

Debbie and I don't like to drive in the city. In fact Debbie and I won't drive in the city. We especially did not want to drive anywhere around Wells Fargo Arena at 6 to 9 p.m. when the tournament was going on. That wasn't a problem because I had a plan. I called my cousin to see if he could take us up there. It looked like Thursday the first night of the tournament would be the best time to go. My plan was for Debbie to go stay with her sister who lives on the other side of Des Moines. My cousin could take Debbie there and then he and I could go to the tournament. It

sounded like a beautiful plan.

Well, Debbie talked to her sister. Her sister had just had a new grandchild who wasn't doing well and needed her attention and care so this would not be a good time for Debbie to go there. That was no problem. Debbie could go with us to the tournament. She could stand to sit there for two or three hours. It wouldn't be a problem. I called my cousin back to make sure everything was all arranged and he told me that he couldn't go Thursday because he had another thing that he had to be at, so no state wrestling tournament.

Now, some of you don't know this side of me but I got really depressed. I got really bummed out about this. It was hard for me to deal with. It was probably terrible for Debbie to deal with because I was not behaving very well. She did her best to cheer me up and went above and beyond. I appreciate what she did for me that day but was still bummed out.

While I was moping around it came to me. "Jesus loves me this I know" but you know I didn't want to hear it. I didn't want to listen to that right at that time. I wanted to be unhappy and I was determined to do that.

Sometimes I forget to love Jesus. Sometimes I don't act the way that I should or do the things that Jesus wants me to do but He still loves me. He's always there to forgive so that I can once again feel His love.

Jesus loves me! This I love.
All great things are from above.
Though I sin the Lord forgives.
This is why I'm glad He lives.

He loves all men even thee.
Hates the sin but still loves ye.
Call Him Lord and seek His face
Come to Him and know His grace.

This winter a 16 year old boy from the Mount Ayr community decided to take his own life. I don't know why. Whenever I would substitute teach I would look forward to seeing Tristan there. He was always so upbeat, always had a smile. He was a good looking kid. He was very athletic and had a lot



of friends. Especially his friends were those who were probably not socially accepted.

One of the nicest things I ever heard about him was that he was the first to make new kids feel welcome. I wonder did Tristan know, did he really believe that Jesus loved him. Did he realize how much he was loved by others and did he know how much that Jesus needed him. Some people worry about what will happen to Tristan's soul. I know he will be held accountable as we all are when we sin but I know Jesus loves him and I don't believe He will overlook all the good that was in him.

Jesus loves me when I'm good,
When I do the things I should.
Jesus loves me when I'm bad,
But it makes Him oh so sad.

Several weeks ago at the same time that we lost Tristan an old friend stopped in to see us. Steve was one of Debbie's students from the late 70's and he also worked for me on the farm. Steve was another very likeable guy. In high school he was a very good athlete and a very good wrestler. That's probably what bonded us together.

He was Deb's student because he couldn't read. Some considered him slow but I knew he wasn't. Anything Steve saw done he could do. When he graduated from high school we worried about what would become of him. He drifted for a while, one odd job after another but then he met a gal named Kathy and his life changed. They got married, they raised a family and Steve became quite successful paving parking lots.

Last summer Kathy passed away. Now Steve is really hurting and he's lonely. I never really talked to Steve about Jesus but I need to. He needs to know that Jesus loves him. When he was here at our place he ate supper with us. I started to eat and Debbie said, 'Shouldn't we say the blessing?' So I did. The next morning Steve and I went out to chore. The tractor wouldn't start and we worked on it. Finally, Steve said, 'Maybe you should say a prayer.'

I hope to keep in touch with Steve.

I hope I can share with him so that he knows that Jesus loves him.

Do we love Jesus? Do we? It's easy to say that. It's easy to say that right now, right here but how about tomorrow? How about the next day? How about when we run into that person who rubs us the wrong way or the person who has done something wrong to us? You know Jesus loves those people too. Sometimes the job doesn't go the way that we want it to. Sometimes we get hurt or we get sick. Sometimes we think that we're not appreciated.

I received a post on Facebook yesterday. I don't think it's any coincidence that I got it when I did. It showed me with one of my wrestlers and the caption said, 'Coaches Who Care.'

Sometimes loved ones leave us before we're ready to let them go. We don't know why some things happen, they just do.

From Romans 8:35-39, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,*

shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus loves me! This I know
Though my hair is white as snow.
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me trust in Him.

Though my steps are oh so slow,
With my hand in His I'll go.
On through life come what may,
He'll be there to lead the way.

Though I am no longer young
I have much which He's begun.
Let me serve Christ with a smile.
Go with others the extra mile.

When the nights are dark and long,
In my heart He puts a song.
Telling me in words so clear
Have no fear for I am near.

When my work on earth is done
And life's victories have been won.
He will take me home above
Then I'll understand His love.

I love Jesus! Does He know?
Have I ever told Him so?
Jesus loves to hear me say
That I love Him every day.

Yes, I love Jesus.
Yes, I love Jesus.
Yes, I love Jesus,
Because He first loved me.



Third Sunday Is Food Sunday

Remember, the third Sunday of the month is the Sunday that we gather food and paper items to take to the Ringgold County MATURA Neighborhood Center.

For the month of March, we had 112 items that were gathered to take to the center. We have had more than 100 items each month since we have started doing this as a branch.

People can bring food any Sunday and put it in the boxes in the foyer under the coat rack. The items are collected and taken to the center once a month.

Thanks to all who have participated in helping this outreach effort to those in need in the area.

BEING THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Elder Steven Smith
Lamoni, Iowa
March 8, 2015

When Jesus offered the Sermon on the Mount he used this metaphor about being the salt of the earth:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted? the salt shall thenceforth be good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Matthew 5:15

A little background on salt, its history and its uses will help make the metaphor that Christ was using about salt a little clearer for us.

Scientifically speaking, a salt is made of a cation (+) and an anion (-) connected by a strong ionic bond. It is the yin and yang of the chemical world.

If you take an acid and a base and add them together, you will get a release of water, hydrogen gas, and a precipitate of salt.

An example of this is the chemistry experiment often done in elementary school science class. Mix an acid like vinegar with a base like baking soda — you will make bubbles and a salt.

History

Salt comes to us as a word that permeates many languages with very little change. In Greek it was called “hall.” In Welch it was called “halen.” Salt prior to being mined, in its natural state is today called “halite.”

In Old English it was “sealt”. In Proto-germanic it was “salta” In Dutch it is “zout”. In Swedish “salt”. In Protoindoeuropean “seh2l”. The French say “sal” and the Irish “salam.” In Latin it was “sal” which literally means “to jump” as our taste buds jump when salt is introduced.

Early towns were named after their relation to salt and include Salzburg meaning “salt castle” or Hallstatt (site of worlds first European salt mine).

Words using salt includes the words like “salary” where salt was traded pound for pound with gold in North Africa and salt was used as a wage barter. A slackard was said to not be “worth his salt”. The Romans favored their raw greens to be eaten salted, and called them salted...or “salad”. The flavor “jump” that resulted was pleasant. We also find that the word “assault” came from salt, indicating that a person was jumped. Finally, we find that the word for one who sails the sea was an “old salt” or a “sailor”.

Salt had high value among ancient peoples. In the Middle East it was used to seal an agreement. The Hebrews made a “covenant of salt” to show their trust in God, and salted their sacrifices. . . then ate them. In times of war, salt was scattered around a conquered city to stop plant growth and curse the inhabitants.

Early Semites and Greeks would throw salt on a fire during the new moon to hear the crackling noises of God. Early Egyptians, Greeks and Romans invoked their gods with offerings of salt and water...the genesis of the use of holy water in the Catholic church.

Color

Salt can come in a variety of colors. Salts are used to color most paint pigments, and fireworks. Historically, red mercury salts were used to color lipstick and over time become the “kiss of death” because it caused mercury poisoning, creating a dementia and eventual death.

Red paint often has iron or cobalt nitrate salts. Bright orange is caused by potassium chromate salts. Yellow can be seen in potassium chromate. Green comes from nickel chloride, blue from

copper sulfate, purple from potassium permanganate, and metallic from iron disulfide. Black paint from salt precipitated in charcoal containers or precipitated in smoke. White color in paint comes from lead salts.

Table salt is a transparent salt that does not filter out the infra red range of radiation, so has been used to form lenses on infrared lasers.

Salt and water

Table salt or sodium chloride is made of a positive charged ion that is attracted to a negatively charged ion. In table salt, a sodium ion is stacked surrounded with six chloride ions in a cube around it, with 6 sodium ions surrounding each chloride ion, creating a cubic structure.

When you break down the crystalline salt into small particles, they refract light to look like they are white, which is what you see in the salt shaker.

Salt crystals when exposed to water, readily allow two water molecules to be more closely attracted to the sodium and chloride isolating them from the main crystal. This can then be diluted further so the sodium dissociates from the chloride. The anions and cations are then called electrolytes and make it so the water can conduct electricity. Some salts dissolve quickly in water whereas other salts dissolve slowly.

If salt is placed on one side of a water permeable membrane with water on both sides, the salt will draw the water from the non-salted side. Meat is such a permeable membrane, so salting raw meat, causes the water inside the meat to cross the cell membrane, dehydrating the meat... which in turn preserves it. The salty solution on the outside, evaporates, leaving a salt precipitate that further hinders microbial growth... that is the basis for “salt pork”, and “salt fish”.

Water that has the salt added requires more energy to make it boil. If you are cooking spaghetti, and add salt to the water, it boils hotter, and allows you to cook your spaghetti without it getting soggy. If you add salt to ice, it requires a lower temperature to keep the ice solid. Therefore we see that it is put on icy roads to melt the ice. It is put in ice cream makers to lower the temperature, so the energy in the ice cream mix is removed and your ice cream is colder faster.

The oceans are about 3.5 percent salt. Its has long been known that if you make large shallow pools which are flooded with sea water then left in the sun to evaporate the water, you will precipitate out salt.

All life has salt in it with animal tissues requiring more salt than plant tissues for life, and meat eating cultures requiring less added salt than vegetable eating cultures.

Salt is an essential for life, and God gave us a way of detecting it and a drive to seek it out.

Taste

Salt has a taste. Lead diacetate is sweet (and also poisonous). Potassium bitartrate is sour. Magnesium salts are bitter. Monosodium glutamate has a umami flavor. Sodium and lithium salts give what we call a salty flavor.

The “salty” flavor occurs when sodium cations break apart from the chloride anions in a solution, such as saliva. Your mouth is covered with receptors, but the tip and sides of your tongue tend to have a higher concentration of salt responsive taste buds. These have holes or channels where sodium and lithium can enter the cell.

The sodium has a positive charge which causes an imbalance in the charge of the taste bud cells that we call depolarization. This causes the taste bud to release chemicals that stimulate nerves that go through a chain of nerves to the gustatory center of the brain, causing it to interpret the sensation as “salt” taste.

Scientists have found that you can stimulate the nerve chain, and taste salt without having any salt. They have also found chemicals that can block the sodium channels or holes in the taste bud,

so you cannot taste the salt.

The taste of salt will cause a thirst reaction. You have heard the old saying that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink. You can make them drink if you slip them a salt tablet first.

Salt as a Metaphor

That background about salt leads us to salt as a metaphor.

Jesus said we are to be the salt of the earth. We are the salt tablet that makes others want him. We are to present all that is positive and negative about us and he will separate the positive, so that others can taste of his love... and it will be pleasing.

We are to be the preservative that keeps his love fresh. We are the salt that curses evil from growing up around us. We become the pigment that makes life interesting. We can be the salt of the earth.

Section 98 of the Doctrine and Covenants, a revelation brought through Joseph Smith Jr. speaks of the same metaphor:

When men are called unto mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth, and the savor of men. They are called to be the savor of men.

Therefore, if that salt of the earth lose its savor, behold, it is thenceforth good for nothing, only to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men. D&C 98:5k-1

In other words, we become the salt of the earth by remembering the everlasting covenant.

God told Moses the everlasting covenant made with Enoch was:

And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself.

And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and

the earth shall tremble with joy;

And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch. Genesis 9:21-23

When we choose to covenant to embrace the truth, keep all his commandments and look upward we have covenanted...with the everlasting covenant.

Paul says:

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. Colossians 4:6

What we say should be a seasoning to our actions, like salt is a seasoning to food, making both our words and actions more delectable and desirable — causing others to want to keep his commandments and embrace the truth and look to God as well.

Loosing the savor

Sodium chloride retains its properties as long as it remains sodium chloride. Salt in Jesus day was mined from



Steven Smith



dried sea beds. Along with the sodium chloride that we classically think of as table salt, there were many other salts with cations like boron, cesium, barium, magnesium, even gold, and anions such as bromides and sulfates, which were also present in small amounts.

Salt that was left out where condensation could form on it, leached away the sodium chloride from the less soluble other salts and washed away. These other remaining salts were often bitter — the salt had lost its savor.

When, as people we forget to em-

brace the truth, keep the commandments, and look to God, we lose our savor. We no longer function as metaphoric salt. We leave a bitter taste in the mouth of others...and we are good only for being trampled underfoot in terms of our ability to make change for the kingdom of God to come on earth.

Let us remember to be the salt of the earth by:

1. Embracing the truth.
2. Keeping his commands.
3. Looking to God always.

S4. peaking in grace to others.

Then we become the salt tablet that makes others want him. We present all that is positive and negative about us and God can separate the positive, so that others can taste of his love... and it will be pleasing.

We can be the preservative that keeps his love fresh. We can be the salt that keeps evil from growing up around us. We can be the pigment that makes life interesting.

We can be the salt of the earth.



HAVE YOU DONE WHAT YOU COULD?

Elder Eldon Anderson
Blue Springs, MO
March 15, 2015

As Rob Rolfe shared, this is a special place for our family. Although it was a goodly number of years ago that three out of our four children were here, it still humbles me and I'm still most appreciative for the way you opened your doors, not only of the building but of your hearts to our children. This will always be a special place for them and you a special people. Thank you for that.

My scripture is going to be from something Brother Rob shared several months ago in your newsletter which we get. His scripture was out of a different book of the New Testament, and he took a little bit of a different take than I'm going to. I'm not trying to copy him but it is, I think, something that is at least needed in my life.

Many times as we speak we're looking in a mirror but we also know that if it's needed in our lives, it is probably also needed in at least one other person. For your hearing this morning I'd like to go to the book of Mark 14:4-9. We also shared just a wee bit about this in

class today. *And Jesus being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and she brake the box, and poured the ointment on his head. There were some among the disciples who had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? for it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said unto them, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? For she hath wrought a good work on me. Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good; but me ye have not always. Then in verse 8 is where I'm going to spend some time. She has done what she could, and this which she has done unto me, shall be had in remembrance in generations to come, wheresoever my gospel shall be preached; for verily she has come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, what she hath done shall be spoken of also for a memorial of her.*

So as we sit together this morning under the influence of that good Spirit, I

would trust that that which we've heard will make a little more sense to us and that God will impart to us that which would be right for us to hear and that we would have ears to hear and hearts that are softened by that powerful presence of that Holy Spirit which is always with us.

I very much appreciated the ministry of music. Thank you, Michael and Isabel. How special that must be to be able to sing with one of your children. If that happened in our household there would be wailing and gnashing of teeth of the children if their father had to sing with them. I know it's customary to thank those who provide the ministry of music. It is really a heartfelt thanks and also to Cheryl for her piano playing, but I think many times we do an injustice for not thanking those who preside, those who pray and the ministry that is there by your ministry of attendance. How precious that is.

One of the ministries that attaches to each of us is our ministry of attendance. In that we find comfort. We find opportunities for fellowship. We find it a joy to see familiar faces and when we're not here it is noticed. So thank you for coming. You may have second



thoughts by the time it's over but at least you were here and I appreciate that very much.

Have there been moments in your life when you have wondered, 'What is it that you would have me do, Lord?' A young man had a question of God. He wanted to see what God would have him do. He knelt, as we know, in a quiet woods in prayer. He petitioned his Heavenly Father for enlightenment. We know there appeared unto him two heavenly personages. The restoration of the Church in these the latter days began with one of these personages pointing to the other and saying, 'This is my beloved Son, hear Him.'

This declaration was not simply God's answer to this young man's question as to which church should he join. This declaration was an affirmation by the Eternal God to the people of this dispensation. It is His will that you and I listen to His Son. That's what it means, 'This is my beloved Son, hear Him.' When we LISTEN to Him we will be doers.

There is a very familiar scripture in James 1:22, 25 which says, *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only. . . But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* This all sounds good. We've heard it and many times we attempt to be doers as best we can. Yet if you are like me sometimes, and may be too often, you allow yourself to be caught up in the hustle of life. There are so many voices vying for our attention. There are so many lights that cause us to want to look, to hear. Yet we know that in that busyness of life there is but one true voice that we ought to listen to and there is but one true light upon whom we ought to fix our gaze. I find, at least in my life and maybe you've found in yours, that sometimes we find ourselves so busy, so distracted listening to all those voices and seeing all those lights that we forget as it says in Psalm 46:10, *Be still, and know that I am God. . .*

So in our hustle of life do we take time each day to just be still and to hear so we will have a better idea of what it is

we are to do. In those times in my life where I get so wrapped up in all of those things fortunately I have trained myself to stop and think about this scripture that I read for you this morning which is a story of a lady who came to the Lord because she loved Him. She brought a box of very precious ointment and in the presence of the Disciples she broke this ointment and poured it on Jesus' head.

Depending on what commentaries you read it has a wide range of cost but we'll just say it was worth several hundred dollars. Back then that would have been around 300 days of wages. How much she must have loved Him to give it all to Him. Then the Disciples as you heard asked why she did this. Why did she waste this? She could have sold it and given the money to the poor. Jesus said about this lady, 'Let her alone. She has wrought a good work on me.' Then He said in verse 8, She has done what she could. . .

This morning I want to confront you with what she did and to ask you a very pointed question. It's a very simple question and I confidently rely on you to answer this sometime soon in your life. What does it mean for an individual to do what he or she can? Isn't it marvelous that the Lord was and is aware of the contributions of humble people, of just almost insignificant people and of seeing into their hearts. Being aware of their minds, of their souls and their thoughts and then recognizing the faith that they have and the desires for righteousness that is theirs. We know that He is aware of all of that for each of us.

As we read the scriptures we know they are filled with common men and women who could be counted on, of people who did what they could. In those scriptures the names of these common men and women in most cases aren't given. Usually there's no lengthy narrative, there's just maybe a few simple verses. I'd like to recall for you several of those. We won't spend any time reading of them but I'll give a scriptural reference for you to read this afternoon or another time.

Jesus commended the Centurian

because of the faith he had in regards to the healing of his own servant. You may remember the story but if not look in Luke 7:2-10. He commended a lady who threw a coin into the treasury because it was all that she had in Mark 12:48-50. He commended the little boy who had some loaves and fishes in John 6:9-13. The boy unselfishly gave of all that he had and thousands were fed because a single person did what he could in serving Jesus. Jesus also commended this lady who brought this ointment for Him, probably it was the best she had and more than likely all that she had, but she did what she could.

As I've seen and visited with the people of the Restoration Movement, I have come to believe that the greatest impact of ministry, of service and of love in this universe of ours is not done by the high and the mighty, the great and the wealthy, not that they can't do it and not that they haven't done it, but the majority of what I've seen is done by the average common and/or poor individuals who recognize a stewardship of life and are content to make available to the Almighty all that they have.

We understand that all that we have comes from He who is the owner and the creator and the sustainer so we are but stewards of all that is ours. I believe, as I said, those who recognize that stewardship are content to make available to the Lord all that they have. I think this world is fashioned by people like that. I think the destiny of the Church rests in the hands of people like this so what does it mean to do what you can? What's so precious about that? What is the significance of doing what you can? Somehow sometime we're going to have to answer that question in our own life. Ultimately we're going to have to stand before the Almighty and let Him know whether or not we were playing church or whether or not we were serious about the affairs of life and about His gospel and about establishing His Kingdom.

It was either Brother Oakman or Edwards who said that the Kingdom will be here when enough of us learn the meaning of repentance and incorporate this understanding into our lives. We understand this repentance is a daily



and a lifelong process of turning from that which is of lesser worth to that which is of greatest worth. Any time we take our eye off the mark we are in sin.

We need to come to ourselves and turn from that lesser life, those lesser voices and return unto He who is. That turning, that process of repentance is oh so important. Sometimes I know we've probably hesitated to attempt to come into that presence because while we were off doing our own thing we wouldn't want some of those things that we've done put up on a big screen for all to see. But it doesn't matter to the Lord as long as we have chosen to turn from those things of lesser importance. No matter what we were doing that's behind us and we have received if we've asked His forgiveness. He went to the cross, as we know, for us and all of those sins that we've drug along as a ball and a chain we can now cut them with the bolt cutters and leave them behind. We wrestle with this process of repentance as a people and we work at it.

Sometimes in life, at least I do and maybe you do on occasion, we find ourselves making excuses. I used to say I'm too young but now I can't say that. I could say I'm getting to be too old or I'm too tired or I'm too busy or I'm too ill or I'm too angry or I'm too upset. Or, how about this one, I'm not good enough. I have nothing to offer. Somebody else can do it better than I can. Let me suggest, folks, that you tell those excuses to the Lord and see how they stack up with what He's been expecting of you. In serving the Lord it is always too soon to quit.

Velma Lewis was the oldest lady in our congregation. She could play the piano quite well and the organ. When we added on our new sanctuary in 2000 or so we got a new organ. It's got many gadgets and foot things. A number of the women who were accomplished pianists said, 'No it's too much for me.' Velma was in her early 80's at the time and was just a wee bit of a woman probably under 4'10". When she drove her car we shuddered because she couldn't see over the wheel. She had to look underneath the steering wheel. She would drive herself to church on Saturday to

practice. She had significant back pain, arthritis, and some of her disks were degenerating. Yet she would climb up on that bench in front of the organ and practice.

When the pain got too great she would get off the bench and lay down on the floor on her back until the pain went away. On Sunday she would sit on that bench the entire service and play. She would say, 'You know I never had any pain.' When you do what you can you never know what miracle will be wrought in your life or in the life of another. It would have been so easy for Velma to be like the other women and say, 'Nah this is just too complicated. I don't want to play this new organ.'

I think I want to caution you this morning if you've been like me from time to time and have used those excuses that it becomes so easy to drift into complacency, into compromise and then into inactivity and then unbelief. The eroding influence of unbelief can become so gradual, so subtle but the end result is so destructive. You see rather than make an impact for Jesus, we allow our lack of commitment to absorb us and over time we become gradually acclimated to worldliness, to theological unbelief and then we fail to take a stand for God and for His Son Jesus Christ. Maybe this simple example might help.

Most of us know what a poker is if we have a fireplace. Suppose I took that poker and stuck it in the fire until it got red hot. Not only is the poker in the fire but the fire we know is in the poker. Then suppose I have right here a 55 gallon drum of cold ice water and I say I want to raise the temperature of the water in that barrel so I take the poker and I plunge it in the water. How much effect would it have on the water? It would have very, very little but the water would take the fire out of the poker immediately.

This is what can happen to a person who loves God and is always loved by God who lets bitterness or anger or inactivity or complacency replace the love that has been freely extended to him. This lack of full commitment to the Lord and His work can cause us to

be pulled in the wrong direction. Just as the water takes the fire out of the poker so will lack of doing what we can for Jesus take God's fire out of us. You know what we have at the center of our attention has us. What has the center of your attention? What keeps you from doing what you can?

Each of us will have a work to do for God and with God. I think it's important we remember that it's not OUR work but it's HIS work that He's permitting us to assist in. If you're not sure what that is at this particular stage in your life we know that we are to go to Him in prayer in humility and with a sincere desire and ask Him to show us what it is yet we can do.

Ask God to help you organize and prioritize your time so that you can do the things that are most important in His Kingdom work. There are dead works that seemingly are good and there are good works. What are those dead works that have nothing to do really with the Kingdom that we give our attention to? You can only answer that for yourself. He will help you remove those things of the world that cause the people of the world to find you no different than they. Ask Him to help you figure out what it is He wants you to be doing.

You know sometimes we can allow ourselves to become so overcome by so many things to do that we feel so discontented by what we can't do that we do poorly what we can do. Think about that. What is it that is allowing you to be so overwhelmed? You need to do what God gave you the ability to do and don't allow compromise or anger or your busyness or unbelief to separate you from Him.

A very powerful scripture we are all familiar with is from Romans 8:35, 37-39 which says, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Then can we say this, For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth,*



nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nothing can separate us from Him. No outside force. No one who has taken God as His partner has ever failed.

There was an elderly lady in our branch whose name was Leora King. Leora was legally blind and always seemed to have some physical issue. I guess I have something to look forward to as I continue to age. But she was always there at church when the doors were open. Her daughter would bring her. I know for many of us it's a difficult thing to stand on Wednesday nights. We are commanded to pray vocally and in private. We get the private part but some of us would probably just as soon be shot in the foot than to stand and say anything in public but we're to do that.

Sister Leora would stand and would always begin her prayer the exact same way. Now when I pray and others are praying I almost always close my eyes but one day I looked down the row as she stood to pray and most everyone was mouthing the words because we all knew what she was going when she started her prayer. She would say, 'Dear God, it is a joy and a privilege to be here.' Then she would continue her prayer.

Is that what it is for us to come into this His house of prayer? After He threw out the moneychangers in the temple, He said, 'This is a house of prayer.' Yes, it is a house of preaching and teaching and singing and all of those things are important but if the aroma of prayer doesn't fill this place then I think we're missing something. So Leora would start her prayer the same way each time.

Then one day in Sunday School class Sister Leora went down. She was immediately attended to. There happened to be a doctor in our branch. He looked at her eyes. They had started to roll back and the pupils had begun to dilate. Leora was administered to. The ambulance had been called and took her to the hospital. I did not hear an audible voice but I believe the Lord in that administration to Leora said, 'Sister Leora, it's a joy and privilege to be able to grant you another day of life.'

Leora was back in our group for a time and then she was taken home. Here was a lady who could have used any number of excuses not to come, not to praise Her Father, not to acknowledge Him, not to share in her ministry of attendance.

You know to do what you can and to do it really well is quite a tremendous thing because many of us would like to do what we cannot. Many of us live in a world where we'd like to choose to do that which we cannot and forget that which we can do. I lived in Reno, NV for a number of years. I can't tell you how many people would come up to me and say, 'You know if I just won a quarter of a million dollars, I'd give half of it to the Lord. Isn't that wonderful but let me tell you it's a lot more important for us to consider how we're going to manage the \$25.00 that we do have than all the thousands of dollars that we probably never will have.'

It's a lot easier to dream about people able to preach like the old time preachers and forget about the church school class that maybe you or I could teach if we really put our mind to it. It's a lot more important for us to think about the things we CAN do than dream about all the things we can't do. For we are not living in a fantasy world, it is not a dream world. The Lord wants us to be engaged in the daily hard task of finding ways and means of responding to that which touches our hearts which we refer to as the Spirit of God.

So the scripture says this lady did what she could. The Lord says wherever the gospel is preached reference is going to be made to this lady. I feel committed this morning to refer to her for that reason. For the gospel calls you and I, men and women and children, to arise out of our lives of selfishness and sin and wickedness and pride and contemplation of all that we might have for ourselves and to serve patiently and humbly in areas in which we've been called that through us the power of God might be made manifest to those with whom we come in contact. I think that's what the Lord wants us to do.

I heard a minister say one time that it wasn't many years ago that I (this

minister) took a ride with my wife into the mountains. We looked for a little piece of property where we could just go and spend the rest of our lives whatever that might be having foolishly arrived at a point in our life where I really didn't care anymore. I wasn't interested in bearing the burdens of my calling and decided to run away.

I'm not knocking going up into the mountains and spending some time but folks we're not called to live in the mountains forever. We're not called to find that quiet place where we can live the rest of our lives and find peace and contentment and escape the cares of life. We're called, I believe, because we are His children to live where the going is the toughest and to let the light of Christ shine through us in our words and in our deeds. If perchance there are difficulties in our life which are beyond our capacity to meet the promise is that the Spirit of the good Lord will be there in great abundance to lift us up, to buoy us up, to set us straight, to give us cleansing and purification and to ultimately permit us to share in the areas in which we can.

We know sometimes things happen in our lives that seem unfair if God is a loving Heavenly Father. It is at those times that we need to seek Him as never before for at the extremities of life God is there. Even though there are things in life that give us great difficulty and bring us sorrow, yet I have found in my life that joy is not the absence of sorrowing and suffering but it IS the presence of God. So no matter what we have to face God has promised that He will help us through, that there will be joy every day.

One of our most difficult moments of life occurred when our fourth child was born with a host of difficulties. Although his life was short and it was the most difficult time of our life, it was also one of the greatest joys of our life through all of those difficulties. You know as parents we tell our children many things. We try and encourage and teach. We're not always sure if they are listening. For you children in the service today, be sure you listen to your parents. They do know what they're talking about and even though at times



they may not seem as smart as you think they ought to be, they are and you need to listen.

We kept little David in a bassinet. He was on an end table in that bassinet by the couch. He had tubes running into his nose. He had to be tube fed a half ounce at a feeding every day. We had told our children about the importance of prayer. They saw it. They heard it. We sat with them at night and listened to their prayers and offered ours.

Kathy at the time was two and a half and she crawled up on the couch and went over and put her face very close to her brothers and said, 'Dear God, please help tiny baby David boy get better.' She did what she could and though life was only there for a little while longer it indeed was a joy and a privilege to be involved in a situation, in a stewardship of life because we know they are first His children and He's loaning them unto us.

There are so many testimonies that you have in your own life of the way the Lord has provided for you and for the opportunities provided you to serve Him. I just want to remind you we are not called to do the miraculous, the glamorous, the spectacular although if we happen to be involved in that there is nothing wrong with that. But I think each and every one of us is called to do what we can, to be considerate of

our companions, of our parents, of our children, of our friends, of our congregation. We are called to find ways and means of sharing the gospel not only in word but in deed so that others might experience that inner happiness and joy and peace that passeth all understanding as the scriptures say that can be a part of our life.

If you ever get discouraged, if you are ever troubled, if you ever want to know a little more about your place in life remember what the Lord said about this lady who came to anoint His head. He said she has done a wonderful work. She has done what she could. For all those who are concerned about His gospel they shall know about this lady and about others like her and about those like you and me who live in this present day and in the years to come that are willing to assume the responsibilities in the areas of their particular influence.

It says it so well in D & C 132:3b, 4. *And all should consecrate of their talents, abilities, and substance for the prosecution of the great work intrusted to us.* Everywhere the demand for great activity exists, and for the accomplishment of our work the great essential is fraternal cooperation in service to man and devoted consecration to God and his work.

You know Jesus refused to turn

aside from His business in order to become a king that the people wanted Him to be. He was never too busy to turn aside a sick person, a friend or a little child. I am sure that He never forgot that one night His mother stood on a threshold where there was no welcome, the threshold of that little inn in Bethlehem. It was so busy, so full that the greatest event in history knocked at the door and He could not come in.

The Lord is knocking at our door. What will we be doing? When we do the best we can we never know what miracle can occur in our life or in the life of another. God created each of you, each of us for a particular purpose. What He planned for your life, for my life no one else can do.

The final scripture I'd like to read comes from Mosiah 3:21. *Therefore, I would that ye should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life, through the wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy of him, who created all things, in heaven and in earth, who is God above all. Amen.*

Let the Lord know if you'd like to do what you can.



April 2015 Schedule

Monthly Schedule Information- April 2015

Date	5-Apr	12-Apr	19-Apr	26-Apr	3-May
Speaking	Tony Crandell	Michael Jordison	Alan Smith	Jim Barber	Ed Anderson
Presiding	Steve Smith	Rodney Bastow	Jim Major	Ed Anderson	Rob Rolfe
Pianist	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke
Special Music	Alan Smith	Lynda Rolfe	Jim Barber	Steve Smith	Sue Beck
Family Devotions	Steve Smith	Tony Crandell	Sherman Phipps	Alan Smith	Michael Jordison
Greeters	Jim Majors	Bob Rowland	Gordon Winkler	George Knotts	Alan Smith
Custodians	Sherman Phipps	Ed Anderson	Bob Rowland	Rob Rolfe	Tony Crandell
Sunday Evening	Ron Smith	Rob Rolfe	Bob Rowland	Steve Smith	Ron Smith
Wed. Prayer Service	8-Apr	15-Apr	22-Apr	29-Apr	6-May
Location	Steve Smith	Gordon Winkler	Ron Smith	Bob Rowland	Rob Rolfe
Presiding	Ed Anderson	Tony Crandell	Gordon Winkler	Ron Smith	Joel Loving
Special Events					
May 3 - Potluck following Communion					



Happy Birthday to Julia Jordison (19), Aquila Galusha (24), Lynda Rolfe (29) and any others we missed.



Happy Anniversary to George and Beth Knotts (1), Norman and Cathy Nelson (28) and any others we missed.



The Mount Ayr branch spent the weekend of March 20-22 at Camp Farwesta in Stewartville, MO. Cara Smith taught two classes on love, Diane Anderson did a dramatic presentation of Amulek, and Joel Loving and his family led trust-building exercise on the challenge course. We had campfires, a cookout, a movie night and finished up the weekend with a prayer service and communion service. Almost 50 people took part in the activities of the weekend.



Retreat at Farwesta





Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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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

Smith was MC and Michael and Isabel Jordison sang that morning.

For Easter Sunday, we had a breakfast, special worship and then our Easter Sunday service.

JCRB Conference coming

The Joint Conference of Restoration Branches will be held April 12-18 at the Gathering Place Conference Center in Independence, MO.

A big portion of the conference will be spent in looking at an organizational analysis and talking about how the efforts of branches can best be organized.

The branch has chosen Cheryl Phipps, Lynda Rolfe and Geroge Knotts

as delegates for the conference and Alan Smith is serving at the acting secretary for the conference this year.

Information about the conference including documents being used and live streaming video of worships and other events is available by going to www.conferenceofbranches.org.

I Dig It Nauvoo Retreat

A coming attraction for the branch will be another I Dig It Nauvoo retreat where we will spend a weekend in Nauvoo helping with the archaeological dig at the Joseph Smith Historic Site.

Watch for details for late May or early June.