

Church of Jesus Christ

Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER

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Easter Breakfast



News & Notes

Graduation, Potluck, Retreat during month of May

We have special activities planned during May.

We have two seniors graduating from Lamoni High School this year -- Samuel Jordison and Tanner Rowland. We had an evening of celebration with Sam on Sunday, May 3. Tanner's reception is following the graduation on Saturday, May 16 at the fire hall in Lamoni.

For Mother's Day we are having a potluck dinner to share a meal with Dave and Kathy Drummond. Dave will

be the guest speaker for the morning on May 10.

We will have another idig Nauvoo retreat this year on the weekend of May 29-31 where we will help with the archeological dig there like we did last year.

See a flyer on page 18 for details. Let us know as soon as possible if you plan to go.

April Activities

We had several special activities
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RESURRECTION DAY

Elder Tony Crandell
Lamoni, IA
April 5, 2015

What an emotional week! The followers of Jesus had:

- seen him greeted as a King at the triumphal entry into Jerusalem;
- heard Him preach powerful sermons;
- watch Him drive out money changers from the Temple;
- had an intimate meal with Him on Thursday;
- then had seen him arrested, beaten, and crucified.
- They had deserted Him and one of the group had betrayed Him.
- They ran away and hid in fear that the Roman soldiers would come after them and they would suffer the same fate.
- The women in the group had spent the last three days weeping; their tear stained faces had lost all hope. But now it is time is to back to the grave and care for His body.

Now all was lost, it seemed. We've all experienced the death of a loved one; all the arrangements; the grieving and loss. This account pieces together much of what happened over 2000 years ago in Jerusalem.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had hastily prepared Jesus's body, a stone was rolled in front of the tomb and soldiers were posted and the tomb sealed. The Jewish authorities were well aware that Jesus said He would rise again – they were taking no chances.

Since that Friday evening when they buried the Lord, the One they followed and cared for, it has been days and nights filled with sorrow. They were people in the depths of sorrow, clinging to each other, reliving that horrible day. That was Friday – SUNDAY'S COMING!

At sunup, at least two and probably more women had prepared the spices and were ready to walk to the tomb

where Jesus lay. His had been a very quick burial – no time to do a really thorough job. Now they had a three-day-old dead body to anoint. What a sad procession. Can you see them – heads bowed, tears streaming down their faces, carrying the items needed to care for his body? Perhaps they were visiting in hushed tones about how they were going to get the stone rolled back so they could enter. There had been a guard posted there. Maybe they could help them. We will travel with the women as they leave before sunrise carrying lamps and spices, for a grim task. What were they thinking as they walked along? As they approached they saw the stone was already rolled away. Were they fearful someone stole his body? Matthew & Mark say there had been an earthquake and two angels were sitting on the stone.

It was still dark when Mary Magdalene made her silent, mournful way through the streets of Jerusalem. Passing through the gate in the city wall, she walked the short distance to the grotto where Joseph of Arimathea had provided a tomb for the burial of Jesus.

Approaching the tomb, she stopped short. Was this the right place? In the dark, everything looked different from when the tomb was sealed two days earlier. This couldn't be right. She was standing in front of a tomb that was open, a tomb whose sealing stone was rolled to the side. Clearly, this was a tomb waiting on its eternal resident, not the tomb where Jesus had been laid. How could it be? How could Jesus' tomb,- a tomb she saw sealed with her own eyes -- not be open?

Inching closer, Mary looked in and gasped. The light of dawn was enough for her to see that Jesus' body no longer lay on the stone shelf inside the tomb. The tomb was empty Jesus' body was gone!

Fleeing the grotto, Mary ran to the home where the disciples of Jesus were staying and told them of her discovery. Peter and John Leapt to their feet, dashed out of the house, and ran for the grotto, Mary trying to keep up. By the

time Mary arrived, Peter and John had entered the empty tomb and verified her report. The burial cloths in which Jesus had been wrapped were there, but His body was gone.

The disciples walked away silently, heads down. But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. (Based on John 20:1-11). From Turning Points Magazine.

What evidence do YOU have that Jesus rose from the grave? We will look for that evidence in this message.

These women were headed to the grave expecting to care for a dead body, wondering how they would even get access to it. What questions were in their minds as they prepared to care for their Lord's body? They had no idea what was ahead . . . Somehow, during that early morning hour – SOMETHING HAPPENED!

SOLDIERS -- The women must have wondered about the soldiers posted at the tomb. Pilate had dispatched a guard of Roman soldiers at the request of the chief priests and Pharisees so no one could steal Jesus's body and fake a resurrection.

A Roman guard unit consisted of 4 – 16 men. At any one time four would stand guard, and twelve would sleep. This was rotated every 4 hours. For anyone to steal what these soldiers were guarding, they would have to step over the sleeping guards and then deal with the ones on guard. Even though soldiers were paid to say the disciples stole Jesus's body, it would not have been possible.

THE SEAL -- Matthew 27:66 says the soldiers made the stone secure and placed a seal on it, which was only done in the presence of the Roman guard. A cord was stretched across the opening of the tomb and secured with clay at either end. The clay was stamped with the seal of the Roman governor. But on resurrection morning, the seal was broken. If it wasn't broken, would the soldiers have broken the seal to let the women in? They were assigned to keep everyone OUT!



THE STONE -- Mark tells us in Mark 16:4 that the stone was very large. Entrances to tombs were usually 4 ½ - 5 feet high. A groove was cut into the rock in front of the tomb so the lowest part was right in front of the tomb's opening. The stone had a wedge under it, and when the wedge was removed, the stone rolled into place, closing the opening of the grave. This kept animals from getting into the tomb and decimating the body. In this case, it was to make sure Jesus stayed in there. Estimates are that the stone would weigh 1 ½ - 2 tons. The women had to be wondering how they could move the stone, and then were amazed when they found that stone had been rolled away. Matthew 28:1-2

Matthew 28:1: *In the end of the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, early in the morning, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. Matthew 28:2: And behold, there had been a great earthquake; for two angels of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.*

Mark 16:2-4 *And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun; and they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? But when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, (for it was very great,) and two angels sitting thereon, clothed in long white garments; and they were affrighted. But the angels said unto them, Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; he is risen; he is not here; behold the place where they laid him.*

THE SEPULCHER - - Everyone at that time agreed that the tomb was empty. So where did the body go? The women saw that the grave was empty; the soldiers knew the grave was empty. They had fled. Where did the body go?

Matthew. 28:10-14 *Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch [soldiers] came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the*

soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

THE SHROUD -- The shroud was the wrapping around the body of Jesus. Bodies were wrapped kind of like mummies, with the head wrapped separately. If someone had stolen the body, it is likely they would have taken the grave clothes, wouldn't they. If not, they would have had to unwrap the body, leaving the shroud as a pile of dirty laundry. But what did the women find? The grave clothes were still there as they had been – with maybe just an indentation – just like an empty cocoon left by a butterfly. This was more convincing to the disciples than the stone being rolled away. This proved to them that Jesus's body wasn't stolen but that He had risen.

John 20:6-9: *Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. The Lord had told them, but they had not understood.*

THE ANGELS -- Matthew 28:2-3: *And behold, there had been a great earthquake; for two angels of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. And their countenance was like lightning, and their raiment white as snow; and for fear of them the keepers did shake, and became as though they were dead. Luke said they were "in shining garments"*

Mark described them as in long white garments. These angels had to be pretty awesome – those Roman guards – those brave ferocious soldiers – fainted away when they saw them! And the angels answered and said unto the

women, *Fear not ye; for we know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified.*

Matthew 28:5: *He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you.*

John 20:11: *But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. There were angels at both ends of the slab where Jesus had lain. The grave clothes, which were undoubtedly bloody, were between them. Here is one more type and shadow for you. Do you remember the ark of the covenant? It had an angel on either end of it and once a year the high priest would go in and would pour the blood of the offering between those gold angels. When Jesus had risen there was an angel on either end of the slab in the tomb where He had laid. The grave clothes, undoubtedly containing blood of the Lord were*



Tony Crandell



in the center. A picture of the ark of the covenant.

THE SIGHTINGS -- Who was the first to see Jesus? Mary Magdalene, who was so distraught trying to figure out what had happened to her Lord. Remember what happened then? Mary stayed near the tomb crying. Matthew 28:7-9: *And as they went to tell his disciples, behold Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*

John 16:8-10: *Now when Jesus was risen, early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils; And she went and told them who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.* We also have the account of Jesus appearing to the two men on the road to Emmaus.

THE SCARS -- Remember that as the proof that it really was Jesus, He appeared to them in an upper room. When Thomas didn't believe because he hadn't been there at the first appearance of Jesus, he was shown the scars in the hands and feet, and wound in His side. When Jesus appeared to the folks in the Americas, which must have been where He went for the eight day interval between the times the disciples saw Him. Remember that the people there were shown the nail prints in His hands and feet. Every person came and saw and touched.

3 Nephi 5:14-17 5:14: *And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto them, saying, Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands, and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; And this they did do, going forth one by one, until they had all gone forth, and did see with*

their eyes, and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety, and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, should come. And when they had all gone forth, and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying, Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him.

DISCIPLES DISCOVERY -- The women ran to tell the disciples, who probably were hiding from the Romans, heavy with guilt for deserting their Lord and Peter also for denying Him. What a sad group of guys they must have been. Mark says the angels told the women to go tell the disciples and Peter. He also said that Mary went and told them, as they mourned and wept.

Luke tells us more: Luke 24:3-10 *And they [women] entered into the sepulcher, and not finding the body of the Lord Jesus, they were much perplexed thereabout; And were affrighted, and bowed down their faces to the earth. But behold the angels said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?*

He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, *The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again? And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women who were with them, who told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.* Mark 16:10 *And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. At least two disciples were hopeful – for Peter and John jumped up and ran to the tomb. John outran Peter so was the first to enter the tomb.*

John 20:2-9: *Then she [Mary] runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, [John] and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and*

that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher. So they ran both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

But we DO KNOW the scriptures – Do you believe? Today is the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We can rejoice because He Lives! Because He comes to those who believe in Him. Because He has promised to be with us. He paid our sin debt; He came to us on this earth so we could be with Him in heaven. *He is not here: for He is risen.* - Matthew 28:6

It is a disturbing truth that Jesus Christ literally came out of the grave.

You just can't be neutral about the resurrection. If you are a thinking person, you're going to have to face the fact of the resurrection. Either it is true or it is not true. Either He came out of that grave or He did not. Now, which side are you on? You can't simply say, "It doesn't really make any difference. Let's just put our arms around everybody. We all believe the same thing." Or we're all going to the same place. No, no, no! When you take a stand for truth, you're going to have a head-on collision with the darkness that doesn't want the light shining in!

The question is – Would you see Jesus? Is your heart broken for Him? He is risen today! Open your heart and see Him and hear Him speak to you – He says Fear not, Peace, . . . go and tell. As King Benjamin said in Mosiah 2:13-22, *Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things both in heaven and in earth; Believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; Believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend. And again: Believe that ye must*



repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you: And now, if you believe all these things, see that ye do them. He Lives and is coming again!! Or if ye have known of his goodness, and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceeding great joy in your souls, Even so I would that

ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long suffering towards you unworthy creatures, And humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel; And behold, I say unto you,

that if ye do this, ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins.

John said in John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

OH, WHAT A SAVIOR!

ARE WE OVERCOMERS?

Elder Michael Jordison
Iowa
April 12, 2015

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life.

For a scripture reading I would like to share with you from one of the top 65 books of the Bible; 1st John 4:1-21; 5:1-13: *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now it is already in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is*

love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time, except them who believe. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. by this we know that we love the children of God, when we

love god, and keep his commandments For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may continue to believe on the name of the Son of God.

This morning I thought about sharing with you all of the sins that I have



overcome. <silence> I say that in jest, but the reality is that we all struggle with sin. We are all human. We are all weak. I've thought a lot about my own walk with the Lord and where I'm at with that walk. I've thought about how I fit into the picture of the Kingdom of Zion here at this time. I haven't been very satisfied with my position and myself. Although I could talk about a lot of my many individual sins I don't want to do that this morning. And I'm not going to talk about your individual sins either. I'm going to share a little bit about perhaps one of the biggest struggles that I've been dealing with at this time.

From the scripture that I read this morning from 1st John 5:18 it says that . . . *whosoever is born of God continueth not in sin; but he that is begotten of God and keepeth himself, that wicked one overcometh him not.* If you recall Alma once asked the brethren of the church . . . *Have ye spiritually been born of God?* (Alma 3:27) I've thought about that question. Have I spiritually been born of God? And I ask you, Have you been born of God? That might mean different things to some of you but I believe that we've been taught in this church that when we were baptized unto repentance by one having authority the elders then came and laid their hands upon our heads and we were confirmed as members of the church. But we were also given the gift of the Holy Ghost and told that we were born again. I don't want to speak about what all of that means because we could spend a lot of time talking about that today. But I want to focus on the idea that if we have truly been born of God, and if what John is saying here is correct and if we're continuing to sin, then it stands to reason that maybe **we haven't been born of God.** Does that make sense to you?

At the account of the Last Supper Jesus leaned over to Peter at one point during that meal and said to him, 'Peter, when you are converted strengthen your brethren.' Here you have Peter who has walked and talked with the Lord Jesus Christ for approximately three and a half years and Jesus leans

over to Peter who should know everything, right? Peter's the one that at Cesare Philippi said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus looked at Peter and said, 'Flesh and blood has not revealed that to you but my Father which is in Heaven.' Peter knew. Peter, this one who had the great revelation of who Jesus was through the power of Almighty God, evidently wasn't converted because there at that last supper Jesus leans over to him and says, 'When you are converted, strengthen your brethren.' This is what I want to talk about this morning a little bit, being converted.

Apostle Paul, said that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* (Romans 3:23) Now that doesn't mean some or part of us. It means we have all sinned and therefore come short of the glory of God. How can we profess to be born of God but yet still continue to sin? From the Doctrine & Covenants Section 1:5f we read, *for I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance . . .* For Pi day (March 14) we made pies at our house. One of the pies that we made was a lemon meringue pie which was actually good. I don't like lemon pie but this one was good. When you make the meringue on the lemon meringue pie you have to separate the yellow yolk from the white of the egg. If you get the tiniest bit of yolk mixed in with the white of the egg and you beat it and beat it, what happens? It doesn't whip up like it should, does it? You cannot make the meringue. This is what God is saying that He can't look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. We can't have the tiniest bit of sin in us and still have fellowship with God as He intends.

The key for us to understand here is the fact that if we are born again, it doesn't mean that we will never sin again. It says that when you are born of God you will not continue in sin. But for me that's really just a small change in the words. When you continue in sin is that the same as sinning? For me for a long time it was. When we continue to sin we are continuing a pattern or condi-

tion of who we are. Paul went on to say after he was converted, *Now then, it is no more I that do sin; but I seek to subdue that sin which dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good I find not, only in Christ.* (Romans 7:18-19) Paul said I can't do anything good because I choose to. I am human and I am prone to sin. I have a sin nature. The only good that I could possibly ever do is because of Christ who is in me and strengthens me.

We, of ourselves, cannot be perfect or good because to be perfect or good is to be without sin. To be perfect is to not have any of that little bit of yolk mixed in. Paul used the phrase, *I seek to subdue that sin which dwelleth in me.* That's what I have struggled with my entire life. I sin. You sin. We all sin, right? But somehow we have got to learn to subdue that sin, to overcome it. We are all conflicted every single day. We are all tempted by sin. Jesus was tempted by sin if you remember. The devil came to Him and took Him up to the top of the mountain and told Him to cast Himself down and the angels who were given charge over Him would see that He was not hurt. It's not wrong to be tempted. It's not a sin to be tempted but the object is to subdue, to overcome that temptation.

It says in 1 John that when we give into temptation we are allowing ourselves to be overcome by the wicked one. (1 John 5:18) Well, who is the wicked one? The wicked one is the devil, right, who was cast to earth. One battle does not make a war. Wars consist of many battles. Some battles are lost and some are won. Sometimes the battles are fought on different fronts in the midst of a war. The prince of this world, the devil, has waged war upon mankind. He's waged war upon me. He's waged war upon you. When we sin it's a matter of being overcome by his forces. But when we sin that is a battle and the war is not won from a single battle. If one unit of troops is defeated in battle a commander doesn't fall back in retreat. They send droves of forces to win. Sometimes you have to move



and change your tactics a little bit but the idea here is that when we are overcome with sin, we have to rethink. We have to repent. We have to change our lives. We have to change our lifestyle. We have to change whatever it is that we are doing so that we can overcome and not be overcome by the enemy.

Paul, John and even Jesus taught that it's possible to overcome the world. To overcome doesn't mean that there won't be any battles lost. To overcome means that we will not give up. That's how the war is won- if we don't give up. We can be tired. We can be worn. We can be scourged. Jesus was beaten. He couldn't even carry the cross on His back because the muscles were worn out. All the way to the end, did He ever give up? No. They raised Him up on the tree. Did He give up? No. That's the war that we're called to wage every single day. We could talk about the various sins that we might struggle with, the battles that we have to fight. Those are important but Jesus said I have overcome the world. He that is in you is stronger than he who is of the world. As Latter Day Saints moving towards the Kingdom of Zion it's important that we not give up. We of ourselves will never ever overcome anything. But Christ, who has already overcome - Christ who is in us, can and will.

I've become discouraged. I have a history of depression in my family. I get discouraged. I struggle. I'm not always the model husband. In fact, I'm probably never the model husband. I'm not always even a somewhat good husband. And I'm not always a very good father. I'm not always a very good son or brother. I'm not trying to be self-defeating here, but I want you to know that I struggle with myself. And sometimes when I get in those moments of self-pity, those moments of "self defeat" then other things start to slip, start to fall. Pretty soon I'm struggling at my work. It's because satan has this lie out there that if you have failed then you are a failure. I take that to heart sometimes. I really do. I hope none of you do that but I do. Somehow or other we've got to get past this feeling of internalizing everything and looking at ourselves because as Jim

(Barber) and I discussed this morning what we do here at church today is not about us. It's about Jesus Christ and what we will do for Him. (Now granted He does everything that He can for us so you could turn it around and say that today is for us.) But our worship today is about Jesus Christ and promoting His gospel and His Kingdom and imparting that to others. When we start to look at our sins and the things that we struggle with, we're not looking at Jesus Christ any more are we? We're looking at ourselves and that's what satan did. If you remember, God asked who was going to go save mankind which He had created. And satan said that he would do it only he wanted God's honor and glory. He said that he would make sure that not a single one would be lost. Satan looked at himself. He said, 'Give me Thine honor. Give me the glory.' He wanted to make it about him. Satan seeks to recreate that selfishness in each one of us. Every time that we succumb to a sin he wants to make it about us.

Jesus, on the other hand, came to His Father and said that He would go. He said that He would save mankind and do what needed to be done, but that He would give all the glory and honor to the Father. Christ on the other hand wishes to recreate His selflessness in us, to make our victory about our God.

There have been times when I have been very prideful. My pride has even caused me to turn away from God because of my being ashamed. I know sometimes what I'm supposed to do, what I'm supposed to say but I don't want God to tell me what I'm supposed to do. Let me figure it out on my own. That probably never happens to the rest of you I hope. But we need to remove ourselves from this equation because we are not the victors and despite what we may think - we will never be able to overcome the sin that oppresses us of ourselves. And because God loves me, and because God loves you He's very interested in what we do. He doesn't want us to sin. He doesn't want us to get so caught up in our individual sin that we can't ever see the way out. That why He says that His hand is always extended to

us. No matter what we do, no matter what we say, no matter how far away we run from Him, He is always standing there with His hand extended out to us to pull us out of the pit we've dug back to Him.

When you see the sun outside can you look at it? Can you just go look up in the sky and stare at the sun? No, because it's too bright. That sun is bright because it's a big ball of gas and fire and is super bright. Every single day the sun is burning itself up. Someday, I don't know when it will be, that sun is going to burn out and it's going to die. If that day were today and it burned out what would happen to life on earth? It would go away because we cannot live without that sun and what it provides for us - heat and light to sustain all life on Earth. Everything that God made in this world He made to teach us something about Him. Just like that sun gives us life, provides everything that we need, His Son Jesus Christ is so bright that if we were to look upon Him in all His glory it would blind us just like the sun when we look in the sky. Jesus Christ provides all that we need to to sustain our lives.



Michael Jordison



And to do that, like the sun in the sky, Jesus Christ is dying every single day for us.

That's kind of a strange concept I know, but we live in something called the midst of eternity. Eternity has no past or future. It simply is. God is. God isn't just in the past. He's not just in the future. God simply is, all the time. His sacrifice is in effect every single day, every moment of our existence. It's providing us life. He is giving Himself for us.

Arthur Oakman gave a sermon some time ago on the meaning of the crucifixion. I'm going to share a little bit of that with you this morning. He said, *'There are some pusillanimous philosophers who say that humanity needs education and enlightenment. All we need is for the process of evolution to continue a little longer and eventually there will evolve a superman. What utter rubbish that is. Men are not uneducated imperfect creatures that need education and enlightenment. Men are rebels. They need to lay down their arms and surrender to God. We are in rebellion against the order of the universe and that is a terrible thing. The gospel is not the gospel of Jesus Christ because it promises forgiveness to those who repent. It's the gospel of Jesus Christ because it promises repentance to those who sin and when you're repentant you're living the life of God. That's why Christ died. We share in His humanity and that goodness has infected the whole human race. Let me repeat this. The gospel is not the gospel of Jesus Christ because it promises forgiveness to those who repent which is what a lot of us think. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the [good news] because it promises repentance to those that sin and when you're repentant you're living the life of God. We think of repentance as the great gift from God but I believe what Brother Oakman is saying here is true. The real gift is not the forgiveness. The real gift is the opportunity to repent, to change, to overcome.'*

Early on when Julia and I were newly married and I was starting to read the scriptures for the first time in my life, I had an experience where I had a vision. In that vision I saw this utter blackness.

It was like being in outer darkness, or what I would imagine outer darkness to be. As I looked upon the darkness I began to see something far away. It was a point of light, just a little speck. Kind of like that tiny little speck of yolk in the egg white I mentioned earlier. It was very small, but that point of light began to get brighter and brighter and to grow and to grow until I could see that at the center of that point of light was a figure on a cross. I was given to know that all that is, was, and will be was contained in that figure upon the cross. The entire gospel and everything we can understand or hope to know was somehow a part of that figure.

The glory of God is the cross. All light comes from His sacrifice and if we are going to reflect any light of Christ it's going to be because of our sacrifice. We cannot sacrifice when we're serving ourselves, when we're in despair, when we've listened to the devil's lies that we're not good enough to repent, that we're not good enough to try again, to not give up. If we're going to build or be a part of the building of the Kingdom of God there are sins that we have to get rid of. There are things that we need to change. There are things we need to do that we're not doing. But we cannot give up the fight. Yes, we'll lose. Yes, we'll get on each other's nerves from time to time. Others will upset us by things they do or say contrary to our way of thinking, but we have to work together. The war is more than our own battles, and it's more than just one. To overcome is to not give up and to avoid friendly fire on those struggling as well. That's the message of the gospel. That's the message of repentance- that we still have this opportunity to engage while it remains day. Jesus bears His battle scars today. They are scars of glory.

Some of you haven't heard this story but when Julia's grandfather, Seventy George Njeim, was in the nursing home we went to see him. Julia's sister Jennifer and her husband, Carlos) also came to see him. Carlos was raised Catholic in Guadalajara, Mexico though he wasn't devout. Carlos heard that George was a minister so he wanted

to bring something to George to show his appreciation for him even though he didn't know him so Carlos went and bought a cross. It was just a plain and simple cross that you could hang on the wall. When they got to the room and began introductions Carlos looked around and saw that on the wall there was a beautiful ornate crucifix. It looked like it was hand carved. Carlos looked down at his humble feeble little cross and was almost embarrassed to give it to George but he did. He said hello and that he had brought this gift to him. He told George that he probably wouldn't like it because he already had this nice ornate crucifix up on the wall. I don't know how old George was then, probably in his late 90s, and George looked at him and said, 'I like this one better.' Carlos said, 'What do you mean you like this one better. It's just a plain old cross and you've got this really nice one on the wall.' George said, 'I like this one because this one is empty.'

That's the promise for us. Jesus said that we have to take our cross, we have to bear our cross and we have to be crucified with Him. Now the power of eternal life is to overcome sin. That's Jesus' work. That's not our work. Jesus may have to remain upon that cross because He willingly does that. He's constantly sacrificing Himself for us just like the sun does every single day. Our work is to merely keep the commandments. What's the first commandment? *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, might, mind, soul and strength.* What's the second? *We are to love our neighbor as we love our self.* That is our goal and when we are brought unto the gospel of Jesus Christ, Jesus says to repent and be baptized for the remission of our sins. That is our work, to repent, to not give up, to continue to fight the battle that's before us every day. It doesn't matter where that battle is or who it's with. We have to overcome the one that is in the world- and we can only do that through the power and the strength of Jesus Christ who sustains us, who leads us, who teaches us and shows us the way. In the scriptures it says that it given us to abide in us the record of heaven. This promise is given to each one of us when



the hands were laid upon our heads. *Therefore it is given to abide in you, the record of heaven, the Comforter, the peaceable things of immortal glory, the truth of all things, that which quickeneth all things which maketh alive all things, that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice and judgment.* (Genesis 6:64) That is the promise to each one of us.

How can we continue in sin with such a great promise, with such a great gift? I was talking with Eric Odida one time about the gift of the Holy Ghost. When you are given a gift at your birthday or for Christmas or any time it's usually all wrapped up in paper. What do you do with it? Do you thank the person and set it aside? No you open it up. We have been given gifts. We've been given tools. We've been given all of these things and for the most part many times we have left them either in the box or we've just left the box wrapped up. Satan wants to convince us that we're not

worthy of those gifts. He wants to convince me of that great lie in those times when I get depressed. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* However...it doesn't matter what I've done. It doesn't matter what you've done. God loves us unconditionally and offers that great gift of repentance every single day. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life.

The battle is not the war. One, two, three, -a hundred sins does not mean that all is lost. To believe that Jesus is the Son of God is to recognize that he has power to redeem us from any state of failure or trial that we endure or imagine. Life is more than a single moment in time. It is an opportunity to work out our salvation. Time is the gift of Grace to mankind. To be discouraged is not the great sin. To be overcome with discouragement so that we will not accept the opportunity to "try again" is

the real sin, for that is what separates us from God. And though nothing can keep God from loving us, our failure to repent will keep us from accepting it. That is the reason that we must learn to subdue or overcome sin, through our repentance.

May God gives us eyes to see and ears to understand that He has already overcome the world; and that He offers us each and every day the ability to choose the right path, regardless of past choices. I hope that as a congregation, as families, in whatever situation you find yourself in, whoever you're dealing with that you'll remember that God is with you. He is with us and if we say something or do something that we shouldn't have done, we have the opportunity to make amends, to rethink, to repent and start over again. Hopefully we'll realize that God's strength and His Spirit is with us and we'll begin to build His Kingdom.



ADDICTED TO THE SERVICE OF THE SAINTS

High Priest Alan Smith
Mount Ayr, Iowa
April 19, 2015

I've just returned from a week at General Conference and so if you don't mind I'd like to share some testimonies and information from conference with you and give you a little flavor of at least my perspective of what went on and what we're called to do. It's a blessing to have a pollination of ideas with people from all around the world that was available there. It helps us understand why it's important for us to be apart of the body of Christ which is much bigger than our branch here, or southern Iowa or even the United States.

I'm going to share a scripture with you this morning that is new to me. The

scripture is one that our daughter Erin shared with the women when she came to be the speaker at the women's banquet during the week.

It's from 1 Corinthians 16:15:

I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,

This scripture is talking about Stephanas, who lived in Achaia, which was the Roman governmental area of southern Greece. Stephanas and his family were the first members in Achaia -- in other words, the first fruits. Paul says that these people were so excited about ministering to the saints that he uses the word "addicted."

Interestingly enough, this is the only time in the Bible that the word ad-

dicted is used.

Addicted is a pretty strong word. A couple of dictionary definitions include "enthusiastically bound or devoted to a particular thing or activity" or "devoted to something by customary practice."

Synonyms for addicted are obsessed with, fixated on, dedicated to, fanatical about, passionate about, enamored of, to a slave to.

What a wonderful thing to be addicted to -- the ministry of the saints. How would our church look different today if each one of us would be addicted, obsessed with, fixated on, fanatical about ministry to the saints.

We can only become addicted to service when we have experienced the joy with ministering to the Saints. We have to be very familiar with it to want to do it with every part of our be-



ing. We have to know Christ to want to serve him because he calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves as we express our love for him.

For often than not, the things we are passionate about are things of this world that keep us from this putting the kingdom and serving others first in our lives.

I want to share with you some few experiences this week that get me more enamored with, passionate about ministering to the Saints.

One of the things that we worked on this week was a statement of purpose for the group to help the branches and groups that take part in the General Conference do a better job of focusing on the ministry of Christ.

Here's the new statement of purpose:

Who we are

The Joint Conference of Restoration Branches is a body of people, individual branches and other authoritatively baptized members who share a belief in the distinctive message of the Restoration found in the Inspired Version of the Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, the authority of the priesthood and the sanctity of the ordinances and the sacrament.

Our purpose

The purpose of the JCRB is to bring people into a covenant with the Father through Jesus Christ. We exist to spread the Restored Gospel of Christ, to assist in the gathering of the House of Israel, and to establish Zion, a city of righteousness, the New Jerusalem. We exist to provide a venue for the members of the Restoration to confer together to make decisions on how to carry out these purposes.

There was a lot of discussion on this topic. We tweaked versions of this several times. Sometimes the result was much longer but many wanted to pare it back to simple statements. It was a statement of the vision of the conference so that efforts were focused on bringing ministry of Christ into the lives of people. The conference will try to have everything done by the group to focus on this purpose instead of on many other good efforts that could be made.

When shared it with my sister Kar-

en, who was not able to attend the discussion, both of us felt a flood of the spirit confirming that if we became addicted to the work of the kingdom -- to bring ministry of Christ to people's lives -- we would be blessed.

It may not be too big of a thing by itself, but we have the promise that from small things big things can come.

But all things must come to pass in their time; wherefore be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great. Doctrine and Covenants 64:6c

It was wonderful to recognize the ministry of Christ is active in many other countries as represented by the international delegates. Priesthood from these countries helped serve the sacrament at the first service and provided ministry all during the week to the Saints, including sharing testimonies at the missionary service. The ministry of the past is bearing fruit in those who can now bring ministry to us.

When we sang sand "We Are Marching to Zion" after our first charge of the week in the opening communion service with brother Roger Gault, I could really feel that maybe we were taking some steps in that direction.

I hope that we began taking some steps toward working together in unity -- putting personal agendas aside -- and trying to passionately function at the body of Christ. We passed a half million budget to bring ministry of Christ to people around the world. This seems like a lot compared to what we have raised in the past, but it is just a drop in the bucket compared to the opportunities presenting themselves around the world.

Many good testimonies were shared during the conference and I'd like to share as best I can the testimony of my nephew Jonah Bates, who was ordained to be a Seventy during the week.

Jonah had rejoiced when his brother Micah had been called to the ministry of the Seventy, but when he was told of his call to the same office, he hadn't necessarily thought about the fact that he would be called as well. He made the

call a matter of fasting and prayer with his wife, Morgan. He wanted a testimony of the call that was more than a good feeling -- something he would know had to come from the Lord.

He said he thought he would get an answer in a few days when they started the process, but that was not the case. Through their fasting and prayer, the couple had some wonderful testimonies of God working through their lives, but they didn't receive the confirmation that they sought.

This process of taking time for fasting and prayer went on for several months until it was time to make a decision or tell the Seventy to wait another year until he had received a confirmation of the call.

Finally he asked the other priesthood of the branch to fast and pray with him over a decision he had to make. He didn't tell them what the decision was. He attends a branch where the priesthood would not be inclined to believe that such a call fit into what should be done in the Restoration movement as it is currently functioning. They would not support the call to Seventy or High Priest.

Jonah said this request was to lead up to a men's meeting that is held once a month on Wednesday night in his branch. They had a good spirit as they met in the meeting, but there as no help shared for Jonah in his quest for confirmation of the call. Until after the meeting was over. Then one of the men texted him a group of scriptures with Jonah that he said he had been led to in his preparation that day.

Jonah wanted to know what the experience was that brought these scriptures to mind. The fellow priesthood member shared that he had had an unusually long lunch period at work that day, which he had used to pray for the situation. The scriptures were brought to his mind as part of that experience.

There were several scriptures shared -- all having to do with the missionary efforts and ministry to the Saints in this manner. One was a portion of Section 133:2c

The work awaiting the efforts of the missionary forces is great and there is no



time for contentions.

Another was from Section 135:

The hastening time is here and greater unity than ever before is necessary if the forces of opposition are to be met;

and such unity will prevail if those holding the priesthood will remember their commission to preach the gospel, and each officer will strive to discharge his own duty and magnify his calling.

The promise has been given that no power shall stay the hand of God in the accomplishment of his purposes among his people;

and as the church shall move forward in its great work, the fulfillment of prophecy may cause the Saints to tremble at the exhibition of divine power, yet they shall rejoice in the protection of his grace.

The authorities of the church whose duty it is to appoint men to missionary tasks should remember the previously given instructions to send out by twos; and so far as practicable let the missionaries be so sent. There is wisdom and safety in this. Doctrine and Covenants 135:2b-4

With these scriptures and the testimony surrounding them, he knew that he had his answer. The Lord had used someone who probably never would have suggested these scriptures on his own to provide an answer to his prayer for confirmation.

Later had shared what his decision with the other priesthood, still a bit concerned about how they might react. If his acceptance of the call was going to make it so they didn't want him to participate in the branch by teaching a class that he had scheduled, he wanted to let them have an out.

Testimony was that when shared this with the group, they understood that this was something he must do to respond to the Lord. The Lord is working with those who want to minister to the Saints in ways we may not even be aware of.

There were other examples of new insights to get us excited about ministry shared during the week.

Ron Smith was led in his preparation for a class for the Seventy to understand more completely how the Book of Mormon broadens the covenants with

the house of Israel to all the remnants of the House of Israel -- something he will share with you at some point. This understanding provides another reason why the Book of Mormon truly is the fullness of the gospel.

Yesterday at a family gathering, Jonah Bates shared his understanding of a scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants which says:

If that your fastings and your mourning might come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, which is, by interpretation, the Creator of the first day; the beginning and the end. Doctrine and Covenants 92:1f

His study of Hebrew and the concepts of early doctrine -- with some of these understandings coming from discoveries in the last few years -- makes this scripture another example of things shared by Joseph Smith that he couldn't have known about on his own.

A simple rendition is that "the Lord of Sabaoth" literally can be translated as "Creator of the first day" with the understanding that on day one in the Hebrew scripture, light came and that the world was created out of God and not just by God.

This fits in with other revelations from the Inspired Version and Doctrine and Covenants what tell us about the creation in ways that are true to the Hebrew interpretation but not readily available to the rest of Christianity.

The final service a blessing to me in preparing to try to minister to the Saints. Our son Nathan played for the service, and that was a blessing for me to share in the ministry of the service with him. We sang hymns of dedication during the service, and I shared a bit of testimony about each hymn we sang.

We began with a call to worship I felt was a promise to us today if we will become addicted to ministering to the Saints.

And the Lord said unto Enoch, Go forth, and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee.

Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance; for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good.

Say unto this people, choose ye this day to serve the Lord God who made you.

Behold, my Spirit is upon you; wherefore all thy words will I justify, and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course; and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me.

Genesis 6:33-36

What a powerful testimony that if we go forth as we are commanded, nothing can stand in the way of God's purposes being fulfilled.

We began with "Hark the Voice of Jesus Calling." I briefly shared the experience I have shared with many of you where I heard the Lord speak "Arise and Go Forth" during a song in the "Jonah" musical in answer to some of my prayers last summer in regard to our experience with Kyle Chown. I had felt inspired by the Spirit to know things I was supposed to do to minister in the past but it took me until more than 60 years of age to hear the voice that Joseph Smith heard when he was 14.

We sang "It May Not Be On the Mountains Height" and I shared some of what it was like to sit in the Auditor-



Alan Smith



rium during the final service of World Conference where the assignments for appointees were read out. We did not know where we were going to go before they came to Dad's name, and singing that hymn was an expression of what we were willing to do. I especially remember the time when I was 10 years old and we had come back from Hawaii to find out where our next assignment would be. We were sent to Lamoni for four years at that time. (Following the service Gary Whiting, who was on the rostrum with me, noted that he had the same experiences, only he had to wait to the "W's" instead of only the "S's".

We sang "I The Lord of Sea and Sky" and I shared the experience I had this last year when attending a service at Living Hope Restoration Branch in Independence, MO. This song was sung and during one of the stanzas, a sister rose in response. The chorus goes:

"Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart."

She was responding to the song by indicating her response to say "here she was." The Lord put a message to her on my heart saying he recognized her dedication and giving her some promises about how she would be blessed in ministering to his people.

So when we sang the song for the service, I invited people to stand during the chorus if this was the desire of their hearts that morning. I asked them not to look around to see who else was standing, but to focus on their commitment. The Spirit ministered to me as I saw so many stand in response.

We finished with "Send Me Forth O Blessed Master" and I shared the testimony that is familiar with many on our branch about the time my brother Ron asked Dad for a blessing before he went on one of his missions to Africa. Dad was in the depths of dementia at the time and couldn't really communicate with us.

Ron was blessed, however, when Dad began to whistle. It wasn't plain at first what he was doing. But then the message became plain. He was whistling the tune to "Send Me Forth O Blessed Master."

The first verse says "Send me forth O Blessed Master!

*There are souls in sorrow bowed,
Send me forth to homes of want and homes of care.*

And with joy I will obey the call and in thy blessed name,

I will take the blessed light of the gospel there.

*Call me forth to active service
And my prompt response shall be
"Here am I send me!"*

*I am ready to report for orders
Master summon me*

And I'll go on any errand of love for thee."

There was not doubt in what he was communicating.

Brother Fred Greene gave the final charge, using the scripture from Ezekiel about God breathing life into dry bones and said this was taking place in the Restoration and in groups around the world seeking Christ. He said he felt he was seeing this scripture being fulfilled

as people took a new interest in ministering to the Saints.

I hope these few thoughts about what went on at conference are a blessing to you this morning as we have come to worship together.

So what do we need to do to be more active in the work of the Lord.

We can we start each day by saying:
Here I am Lord. Is it I lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go Lord if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

Remember that: *All things must come to pass in their time; wherefore be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.*

And live so it can be said about us like it was of Stephanas:

You know those people in the Mount Ayr Restoration Branch?

They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints.



Food for Food Pantry



A total of 143 food, health and paper goods items were collected to take to the Mount Ayr MATURA Neighborhood Center in the month of April. The branch is using the third Sunday of the month to collect the items that help the hungry in the area with needs. The food collections make a big difference for the food pantry, according to MATURA officials. Thanks for your help so far. We should easily break the 1,00 item mark by the end of the year at this rate.



THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Priest Jim Barber Bethany, Missouri April 26, 2015

Isaiah 61:11 was used as a Call to Worship. *For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*

The scripture this morning is taken from the book of Matthew 16:14-19. *And when Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias; or one of the prophets. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

I had kind of a tough time deciding what to talk about this morning. I got to thinking about the time when I came into the church. There were two gentlemen who came to our house and gave "cottage meetings." The little hand-out that I gave you this morning is a picture of the church that Christ built. They talked about that church so I'd like to talk this morning about that church also.

The scripture that I read to begin with talks about Christ building His church. The scriptures on the back of the handout talk about the Rock of Revelation to begin with. Matthew 16:19 really doesn't talk about the Rock of

Revelation, it's kind of inferring that Peter was that rock but if you read the scriptures ahead of that, it said that flesh and blood had not revealed this to Simon Bar-Jona but His Heavenly Father who was in Heaven. So, it's the rock of revelation that the Church is built upon. When you are building something you always have to start in a particular place. You need to have a focus point and to plumb everything to that one particular point.

As they talked about how the Church was built they put Jesus Christ as the cornerstone. We have to look to Him and focus our life around the life that Jesus lived. In 1st Peter 2:4-6 it says, *To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* When thinking about this I thought about the cornerstone that is in the Temple Lot. We have never built a church there yet or a temple but someday hopefully we will. The cornerstone is still there and is in the same place.

The priesthood makes up the foundation of the Church and is divided into two separate divisions: the Melchisedec and the Aaronic. If you look at the picture you can see that the Aaronic is on the right side of the door and the Melchisedec is on the left side. The Melchisedec Priesthood is basically made up of Elders and High Priests who they can also act as Seventies, Evangelists, Bishops, Prophets and Apostles. Ephesians 4:11 says, *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists. . .*

We find the Elder talked about

in Acts 14:23 which says, *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

The Seventy are usually referred to as missionaries. In Luke 10:1, 2 it says, *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place where he himself would come. And he said unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.*

The High Priest is mentioned in Hebrews 8:3. *For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.*

1 Timothy 3:1-5 refers to the Bishops. *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)* It sounds to me like the Bishop has to be almost a saint. It says he is to be the husband of one wife, not many wives and not the husband of another man. It think it's interesting that we discussed marriage in class this morning.

The Aaronic Priesthood is divided up into Priests, Teachers and Deacons. In Hebrews 7:11 it says, *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the*



order of Aaron?

The Priest is talked about in Hebrews 7:11. *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?*

The Teacher is mentioned in Ephesians 4:11, 12. . . . *and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*

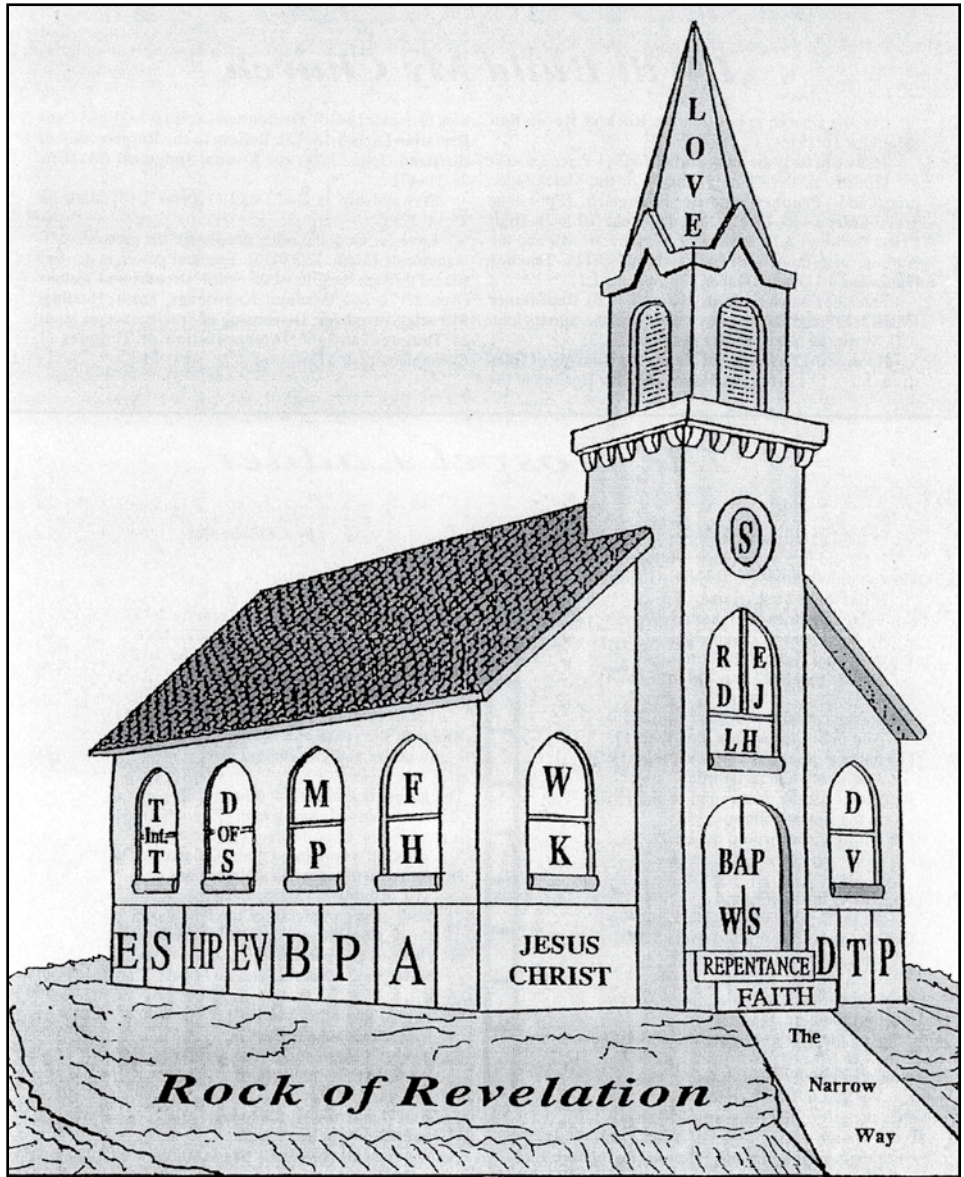
The Deacon is mentioned in Philipians 1:1. *Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*

I think it's interesting that Ephesians 4:12 gives the purpose for the priesthood. *We have to have a strong foundation and the purpose of the priesthood is for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*

As we look at our picture we see steps going up to the door. We have to enter into the Church by faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, *But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* As we are aware that God actually is, that He lives and that He died for us then we have to come to repentance. We have to realize that we have not lived the perfect life and that we need to change. So we need to come repenting which is mentioned in Mark 1:13. *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

The door to the Church is through baptism of the water and the Spirit. In John 3:5: *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* I am going to talk a little bit about baptism later so I'm going to go on for now.

You have to walk the narrow way to get there which is stated in Matthew 7:23. *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Again, we have to look at that focal point and focus on



The Church That Christ Built

Jesus Christ and stay in that narrow path. Look at the example that He set for us and follow His teachings.

When you build a building you usually put windows in it. What's the purpose of putting windows in a building? It's to let light in. We receive light through the gifts of the Spirit so the windows are made up of the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are the laying on of the hands for the blessing of children (the laying on of hands is right above the door). Mark 10:11-14 says, *And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and the disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw and heard them,*

he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, and put his hands upon them, and blessed them. We have to become as a little child before we can enter into the Kingdom of God. We have to do away with all the things that we know in the world and become as a little child and let Him lead us.

The laying on of hands is also used for administration for the healing of the sick set out in James 5:14-16. *Is any sick*



among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

We also use the laying of hands for the ordinations of ministry stated in Acts 13:2, 3. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

The laying on of hands is also used for receiving the baptism of the Spirit referred to in Acts 8:14-17. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.

We also have to believe in the resurrection of the dead which is the window right about the laying on of hands. In John 11:25: Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Matthew 25:31-47 says this about eternal judgment. And his lord shall say unto his servants, Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he shall sit upon the throne of his glory; And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth sheep from the goats; the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. And he shall sit upon his throne, and the twelve apostles with him. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

We have to be good stewards and that's the little oval window in the spire of the Church. Stewardship is God's call stated in 1st Peter 4:10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. And again in Matthew 25:14-29: For it is like as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway went on his journey. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same; and gained other five talents. And likewise he who received two talents, he also gained other two. But he who had received one, went and digged in

the earth and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received the five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents; behold, I have gained two talents besides them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he who had received the one talent came, and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not scattered. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; and lo, here is thy talent; take it from me as thou hast from thine other servants, for it is thine. His lord answered and said



Jim Barber



unto him, O wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not scattered. Having known this, therefore, thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, and at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. I will take, therefore, the talent from you, and give it unto him who hath ten talents. For unto every one who hath obtained other talents, shall be given, and he shall have an abundance.

As we read this I think we see that we need to use our talents for the use in God's Kingdom. That talent can be money or it can be other things. If you have the gift of singing then you need to sing for the Lord. If you have the gift of music, of playing the piano or whatever that gift might be, you need to share that gift with others. If you don't you are going to lose that talent and you're going to lose your chance to get into the Kingdom of God.

Also, in the windows we see on the right side of the door dreams and visions. Acts 2:17 says, *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.* I look forward to that day when these things will happen and we can see ahead. We can see the visions that lie ahead of us that will draw us closer to God so that He might open up our minds that we might be able to comprehend all things.

We also have wisdom and knowledge, faith and healing, miracles and prophecies, discerning of spirits, diverse kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues. We find these mentioned in 1st Corinthians 12:1-12. *Now concerning spiritual things, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And*

there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. These are the things that we have to have in order to enter into God's Kingdom.

At the top of the Church is Love and all of these things below that really don't mean anything if you don't have Love. Love is what binds us all together. In Mark 13:33-36: *And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is; Hearken, and hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

Christ built His Church when He was here on the earth. I believe that He restored His Church 185 years ago when He came to Joseph Smith, Jr. because He wanted to reestablish His Church here on the earth. Through revelation Joseph and others built this Church again. We need to remember that and to walk that straight and narrow way and always look for Jesus to see this Church. It seems like satan and the world around us is trying to tear that Church down again.

I want to share with you parts of a sermon that I heard. Several weeks ago

I was out before Church feeding my cows. I had the radio on in the tractor. The guy that was giving the sermon was saying, 'We have a Bible and we don't need anything else. That is our instruction book. If we follow that Bible we can get into the Kingdom of Heaven.' You know he is right. If we do follow all of the teachings of the Bible we can get into the Kingdom of God but then he went on to say, 'We really don't need baptism. Christ has already done that for us. Christ's work is done. There's no use for revelation. We have everything that we need right here in the Bible.' I would like to talk about what he said. For one thing this minister fulfilled prophecy.

I was going to talk about baptism too. If we have no need of baptism why was Jesus baptized? Why did He go to the only man on the earth at that time who had the authority to baptize Him? That man was John the Baptist. The scriptures tell how He was baptized. They say He went down into the waters and He came up out of the waters. I've often wondered how you could clean yourself by just putting a little water on top of your head. He went down into the waters completely and He came up out of the waters a new man. Now there was no one on earth at that time that had the authority to baptize by the Holy Spirit except Jesus. He couldn't baptize Himself with the Holy Spirit so God sent down a dove from above. As you visualize the dove coming down and landing on His head, it looks like hands landing on Jesus head.

Did Jesus need to be baptized? Probably not since He was perfect but He did it so that we would see what we needed to do. Also, if we don't need baptism why did Jesus tell His disciples to go into all the earth teaching them the gospel of Jesus Christ and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the son and the Holy Ghost.

I feel that this minister was wrong in what he was saying. He's probably like a lot of other people who are leading people astray saying that people today don't need to be baptized. They believe that God has done it all. Jesus died for us and all we have to do is believe on



Him.

I was talking about the prophecy that this man fulfilled. I'd like to turn to the Book of Mormon in 2nd Nephi 12:44-48, 53-70, *And my words shall hiss forth unto the ends of the earth, for a standard unto my people, which are of the house of Israel. And because my words shall hiss forth, many of the Gentiles shall say, A bible, a bible, we have got a bible, and there can not be any more bible. But thus saith the Lord God: O fools, they shall have a bible; and it shall proceed forth from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people. And what thank they the Jews for the bible which they received from them? Yea, what do the Gentiles mean? I'm going to skip over to verse 53. Thou fool, that shall say, A bible, we have got a bible, and we need no more bible. Have ye obtained a bible save it were by the Jews? Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath; And I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together, the testimony of the two nations shall run together also. And I do this that I may prove unto many, that I am the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and that I speak forth my words according to mine own pleasure. And because that I have spoken one word, ye need not suppose that I can not speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be, until the end of man; neither from that time hence forth and for ever. Wherefore, because that ye have a bible, ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written: For I command all men, both in the east, and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak*

unto them: For out of the books which shall be written, I will judge the world, every man according to his works, according to that which is written. For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews, and they shall write it: And I shall also speak unto the Nephites, and they shall write it; And I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; And I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth, and they shall write it.

I think we can see here that God speaks to all of His people. Yes, He was a Jew and the Jews were His chosen people but He is the God of Israel. All of the twelve tribes of Israel at sometime have heard and seen Jesus Christ. We only know about two of the twelve, the Jews and the tribe of Joseph. There will be other scriptures that will come forth I am sure from the other tribes..

I've got a couple of emails that I would like to close with, some things that I thought were kind of important. One of them is entitled "Why Go To Church."

If you're spiritually alive, you're going to love this! If you're spiritually dead, you won't want to read it. If you're spiritually curious, there is still hope!

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. 'I've gone for 30 years now,' he wrote, 'and in that time I have heard something like 3000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them so, I think I'm wasting my time and the priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all.'

This started a real controversy in the 'Letters to the Editor' column. Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: 'I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this. . . They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually

dead today!' When you are DOWN to nothing. . . God is UP to something!

Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible! Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual nourishment!

Did you know.

When you carry "the Bible" Satan has a head ache;

When you open it, he collapses;

When he sees you reading it he loses his strength

AND

When you stand on the Word of God, Satan can't hurt you!

There was another email that talked about things that God won't ask you when you meet Him.

God won't ask what kind of a car you drove. He'll ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.

God won't ask the square footage of your house. He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.

God won't ask about the clothes in your closet. He'll ask how many you helped to clothe.

God won't ask what your highest salary was. He'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.

God won't ask what your job title was. He'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.

God won't ask how many friends you had. He'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.

God won't ask in what neighborhood you lived. He'll ask how you treated your neighbors.

God won't ask about the color of your skin. He'll ask about the content of your character.

One last closing thought. Never look down on anyone unless you are helping them up.





Retreat

Friday- Sunday, May 29-31, 2015

Nauvoo House • Nauvoo, IL

Come join the Mount Ayr Restoration Branch as we join in the idigNauvoo project again this summer. With the success of the last two years at the location of the home built for Joseph Smith Sr. and his wife Lucy Mack in Nauvoo we are starting on a new project. Samuel H. Smith, first formal missionary of the Restoration and brother of the prophet Joseph Smith lived and died in a home across the block of the Mansion House. You and your family can help literally uncover more of the Smith family's roots in Nauvoo by locating the site of the home.

Here is a tentative schedule of activities:

Friday, May 29: Gather at the Nauvoo House in Nauvoo. It is located on the Community of Christ historic site area at the end of Water Street. We will be sleeping in large rooms in the house -- the men on the top floor and the women on the second floor. Bring your bedding for single bunk beds. We'll have some snacks and a short introduction to the weekend before we go to bed.

Saturday, May 30: After breakfast, the first work session is from 8:30 a.m. to noon and the second is from 1 to 5 p.m. Part of the group will dig in one session and part in the other. Those who aren't digging can work in the cleaning and recording area or tour some of the Mormon historic sites.

We'll have supper following the second session and then have some evening activities planned, including a tour of the Joseph Smith Historic Sites. We'll finish up the evening with a campfire.

Sunday, May 31: We'll have breakfast, pack up, and then go to the Restoration Visitor's Center where the Nauvoo branch meets when it has services in Nauvoo. We'll have our morning worship services there and then head back home.

There will be a freewill offering to cover the expenses of the retreat.

THINGS TO BRING:

- Bedding
- Work Clothes
- Your idig Nauvoo tshirt and trowel from last year if you have one
- Clothes for church Sunday
- A spirit of adventure





May 2015 Schedule

Date	3-May	10-May	17-May	24-May	31-May	7-Jun
Speaking	Ed Anderson	Dave Drummond	Kent Clisby	Rodney Bastow	Nauvoo Retreat	Rob Rolfe
Presiding	Rob Rolfe	Sherman Phipps	Alan Smith	Steve Smith	No service in Mt Ayr	Michael Jordison
Pianist	Bonnie Majors	Cheryl Phipps	Cheryl Phipps	Bonnie Majors		Bonnie Majors
Special Music	Sue Beck	Rob Rolfe	Bonnie Majors	Steve Smith		Lynda Rolfe
Family Devotions	Michael Jordison	Jim Barber	Ed Anderson	Rob Rolfe		Jim Majors
Greeters	Alan Smith	Steve Smith	Rodney Bastow	Michael Jordison		Bob Rowland
Custodians	Tony Crandell	Alan Smith	Jim Barber	Rodney Bastow		Sherman Phipps
Sunday Evening	Ron Smith	Rob Rolfe	Bob Rowland	Steve Smith	Ron Smith	Rob Rolfe
Wed. Prayer Service	6-May	13-May	20-May	27-May	3-Jun	10-Jun
Location	Ed Anderson	Steve Smith	Alan Smith	Ron Smith	Bob Rowland	Rob Rolfe
Presiding	Joel Loving	Rodney Bastow	Rob Rolfe	Michael Jordison	Steve Smith	Alan Smith
Special Events						
	May 3 - Potluck following Communion					
	May 10 - Potluck following Service					
	May 29-31 Dig Nauvoo Retreat					



Happy Birthday to Bob Rowland (2) and any others we missed.



Happy Anniversary to Ron and Di Smith (28) and Jim and Lindsay Barber (30) and any others we missed.



Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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

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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

planned during April for the branch.

Easter Sunday was April 5 and we will had the annual Easter breakfast to begin the morning of worship. We had a good crowd on hand to take part in the meal.

We then had special Easter worship activities for the rest of the morning. The report on the Easter message is included in this issue.

A baby shower for Mia Schoff was 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 grand-daughter of Ed and Diane Anderson.

June Activity

A group from the branch plans to attend the Booth Brothers gospel trio concert postponed until Friday, June 12, at the Country Meadows Baptist Church in Independence, MO.

That event was postponed because of the weather in February.

Missionary Family Reunion

Mark your calendars for the Missionary Family Reunion June 21-27 at Graceland University and get your registrations in to Cheryl Phipps.

We look for another great week of worship and fellowship with Saints

from around the country.

Search Missionary Family Reunion on the web for details of the week. "Come to the Water" is the theme this year.