

Church of Jesus Christ

November 2019

Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER



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“Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers...”



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News & Notes



Bob Bell (fourth from left) was honored Friday, October 25 at Graceland University and presented with an Award of Recognition for his past contributions as Lamoni Police Chief. His service was invaluable to the community and is a credit to his faith in Jesus Christ. (Read the PR announcement on page 15)

He is pictured above with his family; wife, Liz, and sons, daughter-in-laws, grandchildren and brother-in-law. Congratulations Bob!

delivered to the Center last month.

Food centers will be accepting \$10 dinners, which can be purchased at the Mt Ayr grocery stores Nov. 4 through Dec 17th. Please consider this need.

Graceland University Orchestra held their annual Halloween concert in the Shaw Center. Freshman, Josh Jordison opened the concert with a little bit of Bach and then Handel's Dead March in his debut on the organ to *darken* the evening.

\$200 in food donations were





Shirley Janice Edgerton

Our dear Sister, Shirley, passed away October 19, 2019 and entered into her reward. As a part of the Mount Ayr congregation, she will be greatly missed. A wife, a mom and and a grandmother she will be remembered as a loving lady who was always kind to strangers, a giver, a mobile candy supplier and a life-long animal lover. We take comfort that she now is at peace having been released from the dementia which held her captive her last few years.



Shirley Janice Edgerton, age 83, of Lamoni, Iowa, the daughter of Harvey Louis and Mary Ellen (Bixby) Spillman, was born November 5, 1935, in Kellerton, Iowa. She left this life at the Great Regional Hospice House in Creston, Iowa on Saturday, October 19, 2019. When Shirley was young her family moved to Denver, Colorado. She attended school and graduated from East High School in 1953. She then moved to Warrensburg, Missouri to attend Central Missouri State University majoring in education. In 1956, she married John William “Jack” Lyon, Jr. in Warrensburg. They lived in Oceanside, California while Jack was stationed there while serving in the United States Marines. After his discharge they moved to Missouri before going to Dallas, Texas in 1981. They later divorced. Shirley lived in New York for a short time before moving back to

Denver to be close to her mother. On December 14, 1994, she was united in marriage to Earl Dwight Edgerton in Decatur, Iowa. In 1995, she moved to Lamoni where she was still residing. Shirley and Jack were blessed with two children, Daniel and Elizabeth. She made a career of working secretarial jobs for various banking and law offices. In her free time Shirley loved being with her family. She also enjoyed traveling, especially to Mexico. She was an animal lover and rescued many animals over the years. She was a member of the Mount Ayr Restoration Branch Church. Preceding her in death were her parents and sister, Betty Woodworth.

Survivors include her husband, Dwight Edgerton of Lamoni; children, Danny and Victoria Lyon of Dallas, Texas and Elizabeth and Bob Bell of Lamoni; grandsons, Sky & Helen Lyon, Andrew Lyon, Christopher & Teal Bell, Bryan Bell, and Brandon & Maggie Bell; six great grandchildren; three nieces, Shari Woodworth, Lori Woodworth, and Kathy Woodworth; and other relatives and friends. Funeral services will be held at the Lamoni Community of Christ in Lamoni, Iowa at 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 26, 2019. Burial is in the Rose Hill Cemetery, Lamoni, Iowa. Arrangements were through the Slade – O’Donnell Funeral Home in Leon, Iowa.





FAMILY

Deacon Bob Rowland

Lamoni, Iowa

September 29, 2019

High Priest Sherman Phipps used parts of Psalm 33 as a Call to Worship. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; to praise the Lord is comely for the upright in heart. Praise the Lord with thy voice; sing unto him with the psaltery and harp, an instrument with ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise. For the word of the Lord is given to the upright, and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap; he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was finished; he commanded, and it stood fast. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever; the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Blessed are the nations and the people whom the Lord God hath chosen for his own inheritance.* (Psalm 33:1-9, 11, 12)

Sherman Phipps commented: Bob is a mason by trade and I have always been pretty impressed with what I've seen of his work. I've never heard anyone say anything but good

about his work. But what I wanted to say about Bob this morning is that from my experience with him there is only one motivating power that would bring him to this podium this morning. This is not the kind of thing that Bob likes to do but he has a love for Christ and for the gospel and I know he has a love for you people and that's the only thing that would motivate him enough to get him up here. I really appreciate Bob and all that he tries to do for everybody and I appreciate, especially this morning, his willingness to come up and do something that probably is not what he would have chosen to do but when he feels like the Lord asks him to do it, he will do it. I appreciate that.

Good morning, everybody. Like Sherman said this is out of my comfort zone. I've done it a couple of times and it seems like I think that every time I come back it will be easier but it's really not. This is the first time there have been this many people which adds just a little bit more to my anxiety.

In trying to come up with something to share, there were a few things that came to mind. I've known that I was going to speak for about six weeks but, of course, I am a procrastinator so I didn't really put anything together until last night for the most part. As Sherman said I do construction. I live in Lamoni but most of my work is in the Des Moines area so I have a lot of drive time for my mind to wander and think about what I was going to say. It seems I was always prompted to share about "Family."

I was raised outside of the church. I didn't really get involved in the church until I came to Lamoni and met Jennifer and, of course, Sherman and Cheryl. I do believe from the way that I was raised that my parents loved me. Sibling-wise we had our issues like all families do but God was never part of my family growing up. By being in this congregation and being in this family what I feel I missed out on is huge. Unlike those families that have been raised in the church, I feel it is a major loss for me not to have grown up in the church.

I'm going to be sharing some of my growing up years and where things are today for me as far as family goes. I am one of three children. My mom was married a few times. I was born in Texas and raised in Alaska and now I'm in Lamoni. God has a sense of humor I believe in the paths that He guides us since I have lived in Lamoni for twenty plus years.

I had a brother who I was extremely close to growing up. He was older than I was. I can remember when he reached the dating age. I used to go on the dates with him. Then Viet Nam came. He enlisted and anybody that has had affiliation with family who served in Viet Nam now it changed them. He came home with a lot of different issues. He did have a family in California and had a pretty productive business life but then he turned to alcohol. Once again since I wasn't



raised in the church, neither was he. Long story short he ended up moving up to Oregon where my mom lived and eventually took his own life. Had I have been in the church at the time that this happened there is a part of me that feels that if I had prayed for him and reached out when I could that it would have helped him. We have computers and phones to communicate with our loved ones now and even if you have problems with someone you love, you need to call or text them and tell them you love them.

I think about this occasionally with my brother. Did he know when he left that he was loved by me or by God or anybody? I am not condoning what he did by any means. After this had happened we found out that he was eaten up with Agent Orange. We had no clue about this. My mom feels that he felt that he was such a burden on the family and that being diagnosed with Agent Orange was one more thing that he couldn't deal with. As I said earlier the thing that I struggle with is did he know that he was loved? Maybe all it would have taken would have been a phone call or a prayer. I am guilty of not praying for him.

I have a sister who is also older than I am. Until about two years ago we communicated a little bit but prior to that it had probably been 5 or 6 years and then when we did communicate it wasn't pleasant. I won't go into all the parameters of that just that it is not acceptable. Even now we haven't communicated. She lives in Oregon as well where my mom lives. My mom never married the man I consider my stepdad. They were together for twenty plus years and he was a good guy. When they got together they knew they were not going to have kids or anything like that so they saw no need to get married. They would just share together. I considered him my stepdad. He passed away of a heart attack so my mom was there by herself, except for my sister.

Fast forward a little bit as my mom got older things started to change for her and she had to be put into an assisted living facility. I am in Lamoni and they are out there and with choices that I have made in my life, I was not at a place where I could really contribute so my sister took that burden on to take care of my mom. Once again I didn't call her or pray for her or any of that. I was a little jealous of my sister because I couldn't be there. No matter how your family is your mom is mom. No matter how good or how bad the circumstances in life are, your mom is your mom.

Two years ago was the last time that I had visited with my sister. They had put my mom in a facility that with the issues that my sister and I had, I was not on the list of contacts so when I tried to contact the hospital to visit with my mom it took some doing to get through. I convinced the facility that I was family and was able to talk to my mom a little bit. About a month later I tried to contact her again and she didn't know who I was. I don't know if she had Alzheimer's or dementia but she didn't know who I was.

There have been opportunities to go out there and I chose not to because I knew it would be good-bye when I left and I wouldn't be able to see her again so out of my own selfishness I didn't do that. I've tried to contact my sister because I don't know if my mom is dead or alive. My connection with the hospital has been severed. If I call, because of my voice, they know who I am but I am not responded to. I wonder if my mom knows that I love her or if she is not here anymore did she know that I loved her and mentally if she's not here does she remember that I loved her before that came into play because I didn't call and tell her all the time or I didn't pray for her all the time.

I believe I was put in Lamoni for a reason more than to just torment Jennifer. Jennifer and I have started praying every night for a while now but not as long as we should have. We have incorporated our church family and those that we know that are in need and our children into those prayers. I still spend a lot of time in my drives back and forth to work wondering what if. What if I would have reached out to my brother, would he maybe still be alive. I don't know. I do want to really emphasize again the struggles that everyone has with family. We have five children. Every one of them has their own issues, good and bad. It's not saying that they are all troubled children. Every one of us have family members that have either tormented us or irritated us in some way, no matter what it is. You can walk away from them for a few minutes and then at least call them or reach out and do like Deni does. I love Deni to death. She can always hug everybody no matter what the situation in her life might be or theirs. When she hugs me I know she loves me. Every day you need to do that with your family. Once again that's my opinion. I fall short a lot of times. Jennifer can attest to that. There are times I sit down to eat and take four or five bites and then remember we need to pray over the food and those in our family.

I was blessed yesterday. I was able to work on a side job with my son Tanner. I refer to my children as #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 based on age. It's not that I love one any more than another. Half the time I call Ryder Tanner or vice versa. My #3 son Tanner is also a mason. My #1 son based on age is a mason in Kansas City. Tanner has moved to Kansas City and is working with my oldest son who has his own company. But Tanner came down this weekend to give me a hand. I called him and told him that I was in a bind and running out of time because of weather and a lot of other stuff going on. He didn't hesitate but came and pitched in. I told him that as soon as things were taken care of moneywise I'd send him some money but he said not to worry about it. Tanner and I have had issues in the past as all parents and children do but I do believe that praying for him and telling him when I see him that I love him helps him get through the difficult things in his life.



I have a daughter in Alaska who has struggled but I think she is doing better. I find it a bit ironic that being raised in Alaska and enjoying hunting, I only have one daughter and she is the one in Alaska. My sons are all in Iowa and Missouri. God has a sense of humor.

A few people in the congregation used to send texts to church family telling them how much they appreciated them and loved them. I received a few of those texts and the moment that I got them and read them it gave me a warm fuzzy. It just gives you a whole different outlook for the day or it does me. My prayer would be that we could do that more. We are all God's children so to me that means that we are one great big family throughout the entire planet. We do pray at night for our children and our church family but we should pray for everybody and love everybody no matter what the situation is. The man that I work for in construction from time to time can just set me on fire. Jennifer is always saying to be thankful that he's still keeping me working because I'm not as productive as the younger guys so I should be thankful for that. I need to pray for him even though he makes me mad.

Especially in your families I hope nobody goes through the thought of somebody who is gone wondering if they really knew that you loved them.

I hope everybody is aware that there is only 60 more days until Thanksgiving and 86 more shopping days until Christmas. In my prayers all of you are there and I pray that after God you would keep your families uppermost in your hearts and prayers.



REPENTANCE

Elder Ed Anderson

Lamoni, Iowa

October 6, 2019

Brother Jim Barber used 3rd Nephi 8:46-49 as a Call to Worship for our Communion Service. *Therefore blessed are ye if ye shall keep my commandments, which the Father hath commanded me that I should give unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye are led away captive by him. And as I have prayed among you, even so shall ye pray in my church, among my people who do repent and are baptized in my name. Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you.*

For a scripture reading Brother Anderson chose Matthew 5:16-18. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Therefore, let your light so shine before this world, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

It's great to be here to worship, to partake of the Sacrament and renew our covenants. I just want to talk a little bit about what we just did. What did we do? We promised to take upon us His name, to always remember Him and keep His commandments. Those words are in the prayer on the bread. I guess I would challenge you today.

“No one can be really happy unless he does the thing that down deep in his heart he feels that he ought to do and unless he is where he feels God wants him to be.”

Apostle Paul Hanson
 excerpt from ***Saints' Herald***
 Feb. 20, 1934



This is really not what I am going to talk about today but I want to challenge you. We've renewed our covenant and taken of the bread and wine. Those who are not members have been enveloped in His Spirit. I want to know what thing we are going to do different tomorrow. What difference will taking of the communion make in our lives? Will they be any different tomorrow? We come, we partake and go home. Are we the same as before we partook? We shouldn't be. It's like a renewal of our covenant, a renewal of our baptism. That we've gone into the water again with Christ. We've covenanted with Him to keep His commandments so we should be different tomorrow.

The scripture that I read talked about being the light to the world and in Matthew 5:16 it talks about the city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. To my mind that is speaking to us today. This was Jesus talking back then sharing the Beatitudes with His disciples and others. He said that a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. What are we trying to accomplish? Are we not trying to be that city? Are we trying to be a light to the world? The scriptures talk about all the nations will come up to Zion to learn of her ways. Can we accomplish that ourselves? No, we need God with us.

There are some simplistic things, decisions that we encounter every day. Our decisions are based upon our beliefs. One of the things that I have a problem with and I'm kind of guessing everybody else does is when we repent, do we actually mean it? Now that may sound strange but are we just sorry for what we've done? We know we have done wrong but we really liked what we did. In the back of our mind somewhere we are saying that we really want to do that again. I know it's not right and I don't feel good about it but in the back of my mind I know that I want to do it again. So when it presents itself again, I'm sitting there saying, 'I can always repent.' That is not a good scene. Unfortunately that happens to me sometimes. I really don't repent. I'm not sorry enough to absolutely make up my mind and say, 'OK, I'm not doing that again.'

Jesus has come to be the light of the world. When your light shines are you a little match or one of these LED lights over here? Which would you rather be an LED light or a match, one of a crowd? Christ calls us to be a light to the world. We're not spectators in this event that we're partaking of. We are supposed to be participants, not sitting in our seats and watching things go by. We're supposed to be the active ingredients. We're supposed to be the ones on the field doing the playing, the acting out, doing the ministry, doing the missionary work, helping our neighbors and friends. Not saying, 'Oh, well he needs help. I wish somebody would help him.' We're supposed to be the ones helping.

John 3:19 says *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* I don't know all of your backgrounds and your experiences but evil does love darkness. Evil doesn't want to be known. Why are taverns dark? The people in the taverns don't want everybody to see

how they act or what they do. We hide our evil behind our happy faces. We don't want everybody to know what we think all the time because more than likely, at least for me, I don't always think righteously but I'm not going to tell you from the pulpit. Maybe I should confess all of the sins that I've committed. You would be here a while.

Close your eyes and put yourself in a box. There are no lights or windows. The door is closed. Now crack the door on the box. It's bright outside but crack the door on that box and let a little light in. Alma when he talked about planting a seed said that if it grows, if you give it some attention it begins to feel that it's good. Once you see a little bit of light from the seed that's planted, open the door a little further and the light begins to shine in. When the light begins to shine in your mind is excited. Your mind is enlightened. Your body is enlightened and you begin to see the world differently. You begin to see it as Christ sees it.

Repentance isn't a one-time thing nor does all your repentance clear all your sins. I don't even know all of the sins I commit so when I'm sitting here I repent. I repent of the things that I know are sins but as the light fills my soul as I repent the door opens wider and wider and I begin to see myself as Christ sees me. Then I can start becoming that light. I can repent of the things that I don't even realize that I need to repent of right now.

Satan is really deceptive. He whispers to you. He tells you that there is something behind that door over there and you need to go check it out. It is pleasurable. It is desirable and if you make that decision to go and take a little peek behind that door to see what's there, you see that it appeals to your human nature. He encourages you to go in. He says, 'There is no harm in that. Just go ahead and peek a little bit. Go in a little bit and take a look. There's no harm in that.' But after you have peeked and opened the door maybe you saw a friend in there. Maybe you saw something that you desired. Satan tells you that that is Ok. It is good so you go in. You don't partake. You are just there thinking that you are still good, you are still representing Christ. I haven't done anything wrong but it wears on you. Pretty soon you are saying, 'Oh, it won't hurt if I do this. I can repent. There is no sin in that. I'm doing this for a good cause. I am doing the work of God. I am ministering to these people in this situation.'

But do you know what happens? After a while of being there you are part of the problem. You are part of the scene. You are part of the sins that are going on in there. It is your choices. Everyone is given to know good from evil. When you hearken to Satan things in your life get darker. When you hearken to God things in your life get lighter. Problems and temptations are not as effective when you listen to Christ. When you listen to Satan what happens? All of that light goes away. No matter how much light you have achieved in your life, if you turn and make your choices toward Satan you will be full of darkness and what happens to people who are full of darkness? They are cast out according to Alma. One flaxen



cord leads to another flaxen cord and pretty soon you are all wrapped up. Pretty soon you belong to Satan. Alma talks about neglecting the tree that he's planted. He planted the seed and it grew up into a tree and it starts to grow and it's good but what happens if you neglect that seed? What happens if you neglect that tree? You turn from it. It dies and becomes darkness.

Repentance cracks open the door, as I said before, and lets the light of Christ in. It's progressive, line upon line precept upon precept. Your life becomes lighter. You understand Christ and His ways better. You feel His Spirit easier. You let the light expand your mind, casting out the darkness. As I said before when apostasy took place in the AD 200s, the Spirit was also taken from the world because that was the source. It was being restored then in the Reformation period where God began working with the earth again. There were new ideas and inventions because God was working again with the people and eventually there was Restoration which we are a part of which brings more light to the world. But what happens if the Restoration becomes darkness? Again the light is being taken from the earth. I think if we looked at the world around us we could probably say that light is being taken from the earth, the light of Christ. Society is becoming darker tending more to evil.

It's up to us. We've got to really make up our minds. We've got to really repent and say we're not going to do those things anymore that lead to darkness. We're going to be Christ like. It's not easy. It's the choice between light and dark.



DIRTY FINGERNAILS?

Elder Michael Jordison

Lamoni, Iowa

October 13, 2019

The fingernail is quite an amazing little tool. It protects the end of our fingers. It helps us pull a splinter from our skin or push the puss out of a wound. It allows us to scratch an itch. It can even help us pick a guitar string. If it breaks then with a little bit of time it regrows itself. It can look pretty amazing too, if we put some fancy polish on it or paint it with sparkles and designs. I'm not sure what God was thinking when He designed it, but surely He must have created it for good reason.

Well, I noticed after working in the yard the other day that my hands had gotten pretty dirty. And after showering and cleaning up I noticed that there was still some dirt under those nails. I thought to myself, 'You know, for an amazing

little invention, it sure has a design flaw?' Why on earth would God have created such a useful tool - only to sabotage it with this flaw, allowing dirt and grime to get lodged up in there?

As I thought about that it occurred to me that maybe - just maybe - God designed it in a way to teach us something. Just maybe He wanted us to learn that sometimes we have to get dirty in order to get a job done. I don't have to tell you that not all work is done in a clean and sterile environment. Sometimes we have to exert some effort, sometimes we have to take on some risk in order to get the work done. Sometimes we have to do things and go places that we'd rather not. Dirty fingernails can be the evidence that we're not afraid of doing the hard thing.

Dirty fingernails don't look very pretty. Many times I've come home from work to rush off for some important event and later realized that I didn't get all the dirt under my nails cleaned out. Now not all work gets you dirty, but there are some things in life that you can't avoid doing - if you don't have someone else doing them for you. And if you do, you can't help but get some dirt and grit under your fingernails. The thing about dirt under your fingernails is that it takes some doing to get it out. You can shower and soap down, but sometimes you have to soak those fingers awhile and use a small file to get to the dirt hidden deep down inside. Even then it may take some time.

Dirty nails mean you're doing something. But eventually they need cleaned out. Jesus got His fingernails dirty too. I'm pretty sure that even the Son God didn't shy away from hard work growing up. As he learned the business of his father, Joseph, He probably got a few splinters as well as some stain and wood grime under his nails. But He showed the evidence of hard work in other ways too, not just as a carpenter. He showed it in those long days of preaching to the multitudes; the weariness of healing person after person as they came to Him for help; the exasperation He may have felt after explaining things to His disciples for the 100th time; and contending with the elders of the synagogues as time after time they tried to make Him a blasphemer.

That was just the small potatoes of His work. He got His fingernails dirty as he faced the courts of the Jews and was scourged by the Romans; the long and arduous walk up Golgotha, carrying the cross, to the place where he would be crucified; and ultimately, as the Father's Spirit withdrew from Him, He took all the sins of the world upon Himself. That was pretty dirty work. There wasn't a chance that He could get away from that without getting the filth upon Him. He knew what was coming, but He did it anyway. He knew that in order to get the job done he would have to get dirty. But He wasn't afraid because He knew that the dirt was evidence of the reason that He came in the first place - to die. And He knew that the filth would be overcome.

One could say that God made us, like fingernails, with an inherent design flaw: That flaw is our agency. Agency is something that we call our ability to choose for ourselves.



God made us with the ability to choose - to choose whether to follow His commandments or to choose to do our own thing. One could rightly argue that if God hadn't given our first parents their agency, they wouldn't have rebelled against Him in the Garden of Eden. They would have lived there forever and saw no pain or misery or death.

God could have made us like robots, beings programmed to behave and perform a certain way, outside of the ability to act for ourselves. Have you ever had a computer or a phone or some other electronic device go haywire and do its own thing instead of the thing that you wanted it to do - instead of the thing that it was programmed to do? Devices that do that on a regular basis we say - have a design flaw.



We often go against our programming, against the will of our Designer and Creator. So you might say that we were made with this design flaw. But the reality is that this perceived flaw - the gift of choosing for ourselves - is really a great gift. Without it we would never know the joy of salvation; we would never know the awesome power of forgiveness; and we would never know the true meaning and magnitude of His Love and His Sacrifice. Without agency, we would not know freewill and what it means to give back to someone.

Which is better do you think? To have your spouse or your children forced to love you and to spend time with you? Or is it better that they choose to love you because they want to and enjoy being around you? Which do you get fulfillment from?

What about the agency of God? Have you thought about that? God said that His words could not be made of no effect

so they cannot return unto Him void. They must be fulfilled. When He condemned Adam and Eve, because of their transgression in the garden, that condemnation brought to them death. They had to die because of God's declaration. In order to save man and I think you and I consequently, Jesus Christ made a choice to act on our behalf. It was His choice to pay the penalty of death in our place. God wasn't compelled by some obligation to do it. God has the ability to create numberless worlds, to create countless people. He didn't have to reclaim us when we rebelled against Him. He could have just created some more.

There is nothing that requires God to do anything on our behalf. He made us and He gave us the gift of agency to choose for ourselves just like Him. What we do with it is our own concern and the consequences of our own making. While I believe this is true God didn't have to do anything about our sin but He chose to. By His own free will God moved with compassion and a desire to obtain a lasting fellowship with us. He separated Himself in a way that I don't think we can really fully comprehend. We can't understand that He paid the penalty for our sin.

I have heard many people say that they could never believe in or worship a God that would create this world: a world with pain and misery, with war, with suffering. The thing is I don't think these people understand or maybe we just haven't been good about sharing the message. They don't understand the agency of God and what He has done by His own free will. What He is doing to redeem all of mankind. People that can't see this are stuck with a perspective that all that there is just what they can see with their eyes. This was one of the first revealed consequences of sin as it entered into the world. If you remember when Adam and Eve partook what was the first thing that happened? Their eyes were opened.

This is true: God didn't have to do anything on our behalf about our sin. But he chose to. By His own free will, God was moved with compassion, and a desire to obtain a lasting fellowship with us. He separated Himself in a way that we really can't even understand, and paid the penalty for our sin.

I've heard people say that they could never believe in or worship a God who would create the world we live in, with all the pain and misery and suffering that there is. These people don't understand - and maybe we haven't been vocal enough about this - but they don't understand the agency of God and what He has done and what He IS doing to redeem all of mankind. People that can't see this are stuck with the perspective that all that there is is only what they can see. That was the first revealed consequence of sin entering the world - their eyes were opened. And now all that is beyond the veil is hidden to our natural eyes. We have to look further than what we see on the surface to understand that God is seeking us and desires to be with us.

Following Christ means that we get our hands dirty too,



right down to the fingernail. We've been given the opportunity to be co-laborers with Christ in His work. And that means that we might need to go places and do things that might be out of our comfort range. But it most certainly means that we need to be engaged in the nitty gritty work that requires effort and discipline, work that leaves a mark on us, and that changes us forever.

As Jesus prayed to His father before the crucifixion He mentioned His disciples. He prayed that God would not remove them from the world, but that He would be with them and that he would sanctify them while they were yet in the world. John 17:15-19 says, *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* And then He went on in His prayer to mention you. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.* (20, 22)

Jesus didn't pray that we would escape the world and the things of it, but rather that we might be in it, but sanctified and kept from the evil of it. His wasn't a prayer that everything would be nice and rosy and go our way, but rather a prayer that we would have what we need to overcome the temptations and evil influences that would inevitably come our way. Just as Jesus got his hands dirty in the process, we too are bound to get a dirty as Jesus sends us out into the world (vs. 18). The key for us is found in the communion prayers that we have recorded in the Book of Mormon. In the Gospel of John we just learned that Jesus prayed that we would be kept from evil and sanctified through the truth. What is truth?

John 14:6 says *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* Jesus is the Truth! To be sanctified through the truth we must become sanctified through Christ. We become sanctified through our obedience in the communion of our Lord. I don't know if you thought about this much before, but the scriptures teach us that communion - is a commandment.

In Moroni 4:1-2 it says, *The manner of their elders and priests administering the flesh and blood of Christ unto the church: And they administered it according to the commandments of Christ; wherefore we know the manner to be true, and the elder or priest administered it.* In 3rd Nephi 8 we find this, *And when the multitude had eaten and were filled, he said unto the disciples, Behold, there shall one be ordained among you, and to him will I give power that he shall break bread, and bless it, and give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name. And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread, and blessed it, and*

gave it unto you. And when the disciples had done this, Jesus said unto them, Blessed are ye for this thing which ye have done, for this is fulfilling my commandments, and this doth witness unto the Father that ye are willing to do that which I have commanded you. And this shall ye always do unto those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me, ye shall have my Spirit to be with you. (3 Ne 8: 32, 33, 39-41)

The words that Jesus spoke tell us clearly that partaking of the Communion is a witness to the Father that we have been obedient to Christ's commandment. We are those who have repented of their sins and have been baptized in the name of Christ in the way that He taught.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans regarding baptism, saying: *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead to sin is freed from sin.* (Romans 6:1-7)

The manner of our baptism is to be complete and utter. The Jews required Gentiles (non-Jews) to be baptized in order to be adopted into the house of Israel. Gentiles had to strip down naked and enter the water covering themselves completely before coming up and out again. They had to leave and renounce their families who were not also making this covenant with them, making their new family the house of Israel.

When Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish high council, came to Jesus by night to discuss the kingdom of God, Jesus told him that he must be born again. He became confused by Jesus' answer. He didn't understand how an Israelite, such as He, would need to be baptized again - for he was not a Gentile.

Paul's explanation would not come until later but it brought to light the fact that the baptism that is required is one of completeness and comprised of more than just being buried in the water - it is a baptism into Christ, symbolized through a complete immersion into the water, and as many as are baptized into Christ's death are to be planted in the likeness also of His resurrection - born a new creature. This new creature would have to renounce his former ways and give up the selfishness and blindness that sin harbors.

Jesus told Nicodemus that he would have to be born of both the water and the spirit to see the Kingdom of God. (Romans 14:17) *The Kingdom of God is not meat nor drink,*



bur righteousness, and peace and joy, **in the Holy Ghost.** We can easily see when someone has been baptized in the water, but what about the spirit?

On the day of Pentecost, after Christ had ascended into heaven the book of Acts tells us that there came a sound as of a mighty rushing wind, where the spirit of God moved upon the people and appeared as flames of fire upon them. That would be something very observable. What if every time someone was baptized there appeared a little flame over their head and they just walked around with a light all the time? We could tell who was baptized and who wasn't then couldn't we? Well, the analogy is correct, that we should have the fire of the Holy Ghost within us to light our way, but we don't have a physical manifestation of it, so there must be something else that gives evidence.

We know that in this church of Christ, the elders are commanded to explain the gift of the spirit and the workings of the church unto all those who are baptized for the remission of sins. And that understanding is to come before they lay their hands on the head of those baptized and give the Holy Ghost, which is to be passed on like the flame of a lit candle is passed to another candle. Those who receive this gift have the promise from John 16:13 ... *when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.* So what is it then from our communion that allows us to be sanctified through the truth? It is partaking of the emblems as a witness that we have and we will follow Christ in death and in life.

The prayers over the bread and the wine ask for two things: a blessing and a request that the emblems are sanctified for the souls of all those who eat and drink. The *blessing* is to grant us His grace and power to do His will. The *sanctification* is to allow a pure place within us for His spirit to dwell. It is done with the purpose of remembering the covenant made through a complete baptism of both water and of the spirit. Remembering the covenant in baptism is also remembering being buried into Christ's death and raised a new creature, freed from sin.

This isn't "freed from sin," like a get out of jail free card. Freed from sin, means freed from the bondage of our temptations and failures; freed and allowed to live without being tied to that sin if we choose. If we continue to sin without regard to change then we haven't been born of the spirit and our communion serves as an empty ritual. We have no evidence of being born of the Spirit.

It's like being a Jew, who refuses to be baptized because they think they are already a part of the covenant people and don't need to change when in reality God is looking for a circumcised *heart* who seeks after His will and His way.

I like the way that Ed Anderson spoke about the Spirit of Truth last Sunday, that the Spirit is a light that entered into a door. The further you opened up the door, the more light there was that came in.

Jesus is knocking at the door of our hearts. He wants to come in but the filthiness of our houses makes us want to keep the door shut. Maybe we're just satisfied with opening

the door a little way and peering out to visit with Him. I've been to people's houses to work on their phone service and they hardly would open the door to visit with me. Sometimes they would come out on the porch and close the door behind them. They didn't want me in their house and it was pretty obvious.

Taking communion without having the Holy Ghost manifest in our lives is like meeting Jesus on the porch and not inviting Him in. One of the purposes of having His Spirit in us is to illuminate all the dark places of our lives so that we can clean them up. The more light there is, the easier it is to see. Jesus knows all about the dirt in our lives. He got some of it under His nails as he carried the cross up the hill. He's not afraid to go into a place that needs to be cleaned up. He wants to. Not to condemn, but help us. - *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.* (John 3:17)

Do you still have dirt under your nails? Do you still have things in your life that need to be cleaned up and changed? By the power of His Spirit, given to us in our baptism, God gives us the strength and ability to search those things out so that we can overcome them - that we might be freed from that sin. And once we clean out the dirt from one job, it's time to start working on another area of sin in our lives. And we're bound to get more dirt under there. Through the communion, we're remembering the covenant of repentance that we've made in baptism and receiving the gift of sanctification which enlightens not only our minds, but the recesses of our hearts. And the light from that is what continues to shine in our lives, showing us the way to become more like Jesus, as we shed our sin.

It is in this way we can be assured of the promise that we will always have His Spirit to be with us. We are expected to work out our salvation - that doesn't mean that we must do it alone, but it does mean that we work alongside of Jesus, being first baptized with Him into his death - into our death, recreated as a new creature and given the Spirit of Promise that leads us into all truth guiding our way when the darkness is all around.



NOTICE:

**Potlucks are now the
2nd Sunday
of the month**



HARVEST TIME

Priest Joe Mickelson

Lamoni, Iowa
October 20, 2019

Brother Mickelson read Doctrine & Covenants 6:2a as his scripture. *Behold, the field is white, already to harvest; therefore, whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God. Yea, whosoever will thrust in his sickle and reap, the same is called of God.*

Earlier this week, harvest began on Mickelson Farms. Prior to the rain that came yesterday, we were able to put in 4 solid days of work, commencing what is one of my favorite times of the year, despite the additional workload that comes with it. While in the field this past week, in preparation of this morning, I reflected on what this single event – harvest – has meant to my family for generations now. For a farmer, it is a time like no other. It's a time that can secure the future of the family and its business, and it is a time that can also condemn them. It's a time of great hope and joy, but also a time of great stress and fatigue. No matter what the outcome, though, it is a time that bonds us together as a family, as we work together for a common purpose.

One of my greatest struggles has long been the knowledge that I am prone to prioritize work, and most especially the work on the farm which I love the most, over

everything else in my life. I remember a conversation that I had with my father when I was close to graduating from college. I informed him, probably for the first time in a “formal” manner, that I ultimately wanted to farm for a living, as he has. He told me that he could teach me everything I'd need to know to be a successful farmer. “What I can't teach you,” he continued, “is how to avoid making farming become your whole life.” I'm beginning to think that perhaps there is some genetically transmissible component to that trait.

So, as I spent the last few days in the cab of a tractor, considering what I could offer to you this morning, I began to reflect on the things that the Lord has taught me about Himself, about myself, and about His Gospel through the venture of our family's business. Though farming can, for some of us, become an all-consuming career, that doesn't mean that it isn't teaching us Godly principles along the way. In fact, I've perhaps learned more about my savior by what He has taught me on that piece of Iowa dirt than anywhere else. What I've come up with today is an attempt to put into meaningful words the principles of the Gospel that I feel I've been taught by my experiences on the Mickelson farm.

My brothers and I are the fifth generation of Mickelson's to farm the same piece of dirt here in south central Iowa. Our destinies were sealed in 1876, closing in on 150 years ago, when my grandfather's grandfather, C.P. Mickelson, bought the farm that we now call home. Growing up on the farm, I became aware at an early age that my family was characterized by two key attributes: (1) we were farmers, and (2) we were latter day saints. Those two features of the Mickelson name, at least from what I could tell, defined who we were, and who we were supposed to be. I am the beneficiary of generations of men and women who conducted their spiritual and business lives in such a way as to earn a reputation that was inherently passed down to me upon birth. One of the lessons that I've come to learn since becoming a father is that it is perhaps my greatest duty to ensure that my boys can say the same one day.

The two men who've played the biggest role in shaping me as a farmer and as a minister are my grandfather and my father, both of whom you've heard me talk about before. Both men share a common characteristic that I hope to emulate; they demonstrate their beliefs not by their words, but by their conduct. This leads me to my first “bullet point” of the morning.

Practice What You Preach

There is not a man, nor, really is there a woman, in my family who is an “open communicator.” There are many issues, whether they be social, political, or religious, which I have never discussed with members of my family. In most cases, there is no need. I know what my father feels about the gospel principle of stewardship because I've seen the meticulous care he takes in preparing a field for planting, ensuring that his equipment is clean and well-kept, even keeping his grater ditches mowed down tight in the summer.



I knew, without needing to ask, how important it was to my grandfather that the Sabbath day be kept holy because of his consistent attendance at the Bloomington church on Sunday mornings, despite the fact that there was work to be done at home.

Our greatest witness to the world of what we believe is not what we say, but what we do. I heard Alex Carr preach in Decatur some time ago, and he stated that, “The devil’s most effective workers are Christians who profess to believe in the teachings of Christ, but who live their lives in ways contrary to those teachings.” Nothing could be more truthful. I would add to that statement by saying that the Lord’s most effective workers are not those who profess to believe in Christ’s message, but those who live according to it on a daily basis. It must become engrained in our DNA. *Well did Esaias prophecy... These people draw nigh unto me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* (Matthew 15:7)

I have been taught by example, not by preaching, how to live a life with integrity, respect, and consecration to a cause. We all must strive to be that same kind of teacher to everyone we interact with. If we profess to belong to Christ as individuals, we must live in a Christ-like manner. If we profess to belong to Christ as a Church, we must act as He has directed. *Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* (James 1:22)

There is No Line Between Secular and Sacred

The next gospel principle that I’ve learned from the farm is that there is no distinction between that which is secular and that which is sacred. I was taught to take great care in the work that I perform on the farm. Whether it’s how to handle a newborn calf or how to plant corn in a straight row, every task we perform must be done with purpose and intent. We should all be perfectionists. I pray that the work that is performed by my hands will honor the God that created them. I share Arthur Oakman’s sentiment, that the Lord Jesus was not likely a shoddy carpenter. Rather, I am certain, that every piece of work He performed was an artistic endeavor. We, too, have the ability to honor our Heavenly Father with the skills which He has bestowed upon us. Not only do we have that ability, but we have that obligation.

Everything we do is a sacred event. Everything we say is a sacred word. Everything we touch is a sacred creation of the Lord’s own making. Therefore, we must treat our work with the same reverence as we treat our church services. *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men, Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.* (Colossians 3:23-24)

Proper Preparation is Critical

Lesson number three is that there is no replacement for preparation. When I worked in hog barns in southern Illinois, my first boss once told me that if you’re not working ahead, then you’re already behind. I’ve witnessed that attitude in my family’s farming operation, as well. Whether it’s performing routine maintenance on tractors and combines, replacing

parts on a planter that have started to show some wear and tear, or spot cultivating weedy spots in a field in the fall, preparing in ways to mitigate the risk of setbacks is essential to any farming operation.

A seed bed must be properly prepared in order for that seed to reach its fullest potential. A heifer must be fed, vaccinated, and cared for properly in preparation of breeding. A hog barn must be properly washed and sanitized in preparation of a new group of piglets to arrive in a safe and healthy environment. Grain bins must be swept out, sprayed for insects, and augers tested in preparation of being filled again during harvest.

We are all going to face unforeseen challenges in our lives. Illnesses, disorders, divorces, the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job – the list goes on and on. Our spiritual preparation will determine our ability to weather those storms. The amount of time we spend in earnest and humble prayer, scripture study, fasting, and seeking to come closer to the Lord Jesus will make or break us in those moments. Preparing for flooding by building terraces and laying tile in a field won’t stop the flood waters from coming. It will, however, mitigate the damage that is done when those rains do come. Our spiritual preparation won’t stop bad things from occurring in our lives, but it will allow us to endure them with faith and perseverance. Paul said: *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content... I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* (Philippians 4:11,13)

Our preparation will arm us with the understanding that nothing can separate us from our Savior. *For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 8:38-39)

The Storms Will Come... As Will the Drought

To continue on the theme of the previous principle, I’ve also learned during my time on the farm an undeniable truth: eventually, the storm will come... and so will the drought. As I mentioned before, these are the moments for which our preparation is so critical. In the last 12 months, farmers across Iowa and the Midwest have fallen victim to devastating flooding. Last winter, a wet fall prevented many farmers from gathering in all of their crops. Instead, they sat in snow covered fields, profits wasting away with each passing day. This spring, flooding prevented farmers from planting an estimated 19.4 million acres across the U.S. Many more had to re-plant fields at least once. There is a stretch of river bottoms along I-35 by Pattonsburg, MO that I drive by a lot when I go back and forth to Kansas City for work. I saw those fields flooded at least 4 separate times this past Spring, and once more about a month ago. I know they planted those fields at least three times in an attempt to avoid taking prevent-plant.

There have been metaphorical “storms” in the



agricultural industry the last couple of years, as well, in the form of trade wars and biofuels disputes that have suppressed market prices, forced ethanol plants to shut down, and tightened margins for farmers to levels not seen since the 1980s farm crisis. Challenges await the farming community at every turn. That is a fact that we must face head on as producers.

As stated earlier, challenges in our spiritual lives are also a guarantee. The adversary will not sit idly by and allow us to draw closer to Christ without putting up a fight of his own. There is a tendency in Christianity today to teach people that believing in the Lord will solve all of your problems. The term “prosperity gospel” has been coined for these teachings. If we enter into a relationship with God with the expectation that He’s going to keep us from facing adversity, then our faith will be shattered in no time at all. God does not promise us a life of ease. Instead, He calls us to a life that will not be easy. The examples of this in scripture are everywhere. God’s children, the Israelites, were enslaved in Egypt. They were delivered from that bondage only to wander in the desert wilderness, with manna as their sustenance. Job suffered devastating loss that is beyond my comprehension. Stephen was stoned for his faith. The Apostle Paul was beheaded. Peter and Andrew were crucified. Thomas was said to have been killed by the spears of four soldiers. Philip, Matthew, and Bartholomew were all martyred, as well. James was stoned and clubbed. Matthais, who replaced Judas, was burned to death. John was exiled to Patmos. Joseph and Hyrum Smith also became martyrs along with the rest. These were pillars of the Christian faith. These were men and women who have done more for the work of the Kingdom than perhaps any other. Yet, they faced lives full of turmoil, heartbreak, and pain. It is said of many of them, however, that they faced their deaths singing hymns to the Lord.

We are going to face storms. We are going to endure droughts. The Gospel does not tell us that we will avoid these things, but instead it cultivates within us the power to remain faithful in spite of them. It focuses our hearts upon the truth that the pains we endure in this life are fleeting, and that the promises that are ours for the taking in the next life are worth the suffering.

Be a Good Neighbor

One of the lessons that my father has instilled upon me is the importance of being a good neighbor. Dad goes above and beyond to ensure that his decisions within our farming operation are not going to negatively impact those around us. This principle does not only encompass those who live nearby, but also anyone who might be a stakeholder, or be impacted in any way by our actions. He has earned the trust and respect from landlords by caring for the ground he rents from them the same way he cares for the land he owns himself. When a neighbor asks for a border fence to be repaired or re-built, he is quick to oblige. That neighborly philosophy is a driving force behind his success as a farmer.

Each year, we see stories on the news or read articles in

the Farm Journal about neighboring farmers who have put their own field work on hold in order to help out a neighbor who is sick and unable to perform their labors. I just saw an article of this sort two days ago. Most farmers don’t give it a second thought. When someone from that fraternity is incapable of doing what needs to be done, his neighbors step to the plate and do it for him, knowing that if the tables were turned the actions would be reciprocated.

We must take this same attitude into our ministry. We must serve without any expectation of returned favor. We don’t always see eye-to-eye with our neighbors. Often, they don’t treat us or our operation the same way that we’ve treated them. But that doesn’t diminish our obligation to do what’s right. When we see someone in need, we are not called to evaluate their worthiness of our help. Instead, we are called to help, and let God sort out the rest. *Who now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him who fell among the thieves? And he said, He who showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do likewise.* (Luke 10:37-38)

Be an Eternal Optimist

There is a common trait amongst farmers which I am convinced is a mandatory characteristic if you are to enter the industry. The trait which I’m referring to is that of eternal optimism. To be more specific, a farmer must have an overwhelmingly high level of hope and faith. Despite all of the negative influences that I mentioned earlier which the Ag sector has endured the last couple of years, farmers continue to plant seeds each spring. Every year, when planting season arrives, hope is renewed in the mind of the farmer. Visions of bumper crops fill our minds, and we plant tens of thousands of dollars-worth of seeds in the dirt with the faith that it will receive all the nutrients it needs to grow and develop into a profitable product that can be harvested. Without that sense of hope, optimism, and faith, the seed would never be planted, and the fruit would never be borne.

In order for us to bear fruit spiritually, we must first plant the seeds of the gospel principles in our lives with hope and faith that they will grow. In other words, we must choose to live according to the commandments before we ever gain an assurance that, by so doing, we will reap any sort of blessing. And, like the farmer whose seeds do not yield much grain in the fall, when our spiritual seeds fail to yield the fruit that we expected, we must plant them again with renewed hope.

If You Don’t Do the Work, It Won’t Get Done

Another principle of farming that I learned at an early age is that if you don’t do the work, it’s simply not going to get done. This isn’t necessarily unique to farming. However, there are times that this principle has more drastic implications in the farming arena than in other professions. If I decide that I don’t want to train one of the customers who bought one of our needle-free injection devices, the consequence is that the customer will likely be calling me for help every day for the next two months. If I decide not to bottle feed the calf that lost its mother for a couple of days,



that calf is likely to die. The chores that must be done on a family farm like ours are non-negotiable. They must be done, day in and day out. Livestock don't know or care if it's a holiday or weekend, they need the same care on those days as any other day. They don't care if it's 2AM and you're asleep, if they need assistance calving, you better be there to provide that assistance. Crops don't care if you've got other plans, when they are ready to be harvested, the combine has to be moving.

Our relationship to God is much the same. Nobody can do the work for us, and if we don't do it ourselves, the consequences are life and death. How much time, effort, and energy we put into the Lord's work ultimately falls squarely upon our own shoulders. We have others around for assistance from time to time – the priesthood, our fellow members, mentors, etc. – but, they can only offer support. They cannot do the work for us.

Farming is a Family Affair

Last weekend, I had some relatives come to town. Judith Hutchcroft, and her daughter Marlene came bearing the ashes of Judith's late husband, Jim. Jim, Judith, and Marlene lived in Lamoni before I was born, and spent a number of years on our farm. Jim, apparently, had told Judith that he didn't want a big funeral, but instead wanted his ashes spread in one of the places he loved the most – our farm in southern Iowa. So, last Saturday, our family gathered on top of a pond dam to honor Jim's wishes, and his life. Dad offered a prayer and read the scripture from the Gospel of John in which Jesus discusses preparing a place for us in Heaven, that we may abide together again one day. It was a wonderful service, and one that I am sure was pleasing to Jim.

During this ten-minute service, Dad discussed the fact that there are a number of places on our farm that bring back memories of certain people. I can certainly relate to that notion. For instance, while disking corn stalks in one field, I might look over at a fence that I helped grandpa build. Immediately, the memory of that day comes to mind. While mowing hay, I may look over at a pond where my brother and I used to spend the better part of our summer camping and fishing. As I fill up buckets of corn, I am reminded of the countless mornings in which I climbed into Dad's rusty old pickup that would barely start in the winter to go feed cows.

We don't farm merely because we enjoy the work. That is certainly part of it, but it's not why we do it. We do it because family members who never even knew us helped pave the way to make it possible for us. We do it so that we can pave the way for family members down the road, who we will never meet. Saying that it is a family business does not just mean that it is operated by fathers and sons. It is a family business because generations of Mickelson's dating back to 1876 worked tirelessly so that I can be here. It's a family business because I will work tirelessly so that my kids and grandkids can have that same opportunity.

The work that we do as a church is a family affair. We aren't doing what we're doing for ourselves, but rather for

those who will follow after us. Many have labored in this church diligently for generations so that we can have the opportunity to freely stand here this morning and worship in this manner. Our decisions will directly impact the ability of our children and our children's children to be involved in the work of the Restored Gospel. We're all aware of the fractures and diminishing membership of the church. It is our obligation to face that challenge head on – not so that we can gain more members to this branch, but so that our children can be assured of their opportunity to be a part of a congregation like we have here. The fellowship and ministry that I've enjoyed since coming to this branch has been life-altering for me and my family. I want desperately for the generations who follow to be able to experience what I've experienced with you all. It is our obligation to ensure that they have that opportunity.

I am often stubborn, and I often get my priorities out of order. However, the Lord continues to find ways to teach me about Him, whether it is through scripture, in prayer services, or in the seat of a Case tractor. There is no boundary to His dominion, and there is no limit to His revelatory power. Look for Him in your workplaces, in your schools, and in your homes. He is speaking to each of us, each day, attempting to teach us a little more about who He is, and what He desires of us. *Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.* Revelation 14:15



Lord, bless this land that you've given me.

And may I always know, as I tend each crop and critter

You're the One who helps them grow.

Grant me strength and wisdom

And protect me from harm

And thank you Lord for Your gracious gift,

The blessing of my farm.





NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

As Christians we are called to stand for the orphan. February 2019 UNICEF statistics estimate that there are between 140-153 million orphans worldwide; the majority of which have been abandoned or given up by a single parent. 15.1 million of those have lost both parents. Sunday, November 10 is designated as Orphan Sunday - a day for churches and various organizations to hold events to raise awareness and encourage action on behalf of these vulnerable children around the world.

In the US alone there are more than 125,000 children in foster care waiting to be adopted. There are approximately 312,000 more in the foster program who are hoping for reunification with their families or who have “aged out” of the system. Approximately 437,000 in the US are in the foster care system.

Several Mt. Ayr Restoration Branch families have been blessed by adoption over the years. Currently the Jordison family is waiting to be matched with a precious girl from Haiti.

Please join with us and so many others in praying for these children who are waiting for a family of their own. And especially this Orphan Sunday consider how you might be able to help.

If you would like to learn more about supporting events or how to get involved, visit the Christian Alliance For Orphans (cafo.org) or google, Orphan Sunday, National Adoption Month or National Adoption Day.

We may not all be called to foster or adopt but each of us can do something to show God’s love for the fatherless and the motherless.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction...”
James 1:27

Graceland Award of Recognition

This award is made by Graceland University in recognition of those who have demonstrated special contributions of time, talents, resources and personal sacrifices to benefit Graceland. The recipients must be living but need not be Graceland alumni. The Board of Trustees asked the Alumni Association to establish this award as an additional way to honor the people who support Graceland and university programs in an exceptional way.

Bob Bell '86 received the Graceland Award of Recognition. Bell was a high school senior in Port Huron, Michigan, when Graceland football coach Dan Hanton '65 urged him to visit the campus with six friends. Bell fell in love with Graceland and enrolled in the fall of 1977.

Bell is not shy about admitting that he had a rough start at Graceland. “I didn’t actually make the dean’s list, but I sure made the dean’s office,” he shared. Once he “got his head on straight,” he turned things around and earned a Bachelor of Arts in physical education and health with an elementary education endorsement. That foundation sustained him through 17 years of teaching in elementary and high school classrooms as a special education specialist.

Bell always looked up to those in the military and was just 26 when he joined the Army Reserves. He has been to Korea three times, Bosnia and Germany, and he served three tours of duty in Iraq. He trained soldiers at the Rock Island Arsenal in Mississippi for four years before hanging up his military uniform in 2013. Thank you, Bob, for your service to our nation.

Bell donned the Lamoni Police Department uniform in 2014 and served as police chief from 2015-19. It was in this role that he worked side by side with Graceland's dean of students Dave Schaal '80, turning college students in the right direction through personal mentoring and counseling. Schaal commented, “Bob has a real knack for connecting with young people, sharing his own journey while helping students see the light. He’s been invaluable in our mission here at Graceland.”

<https://www.graceland.edu/news-events/news/1668422/graceland-university-recognizes-contributions-of-honored-alumni-and-friends>

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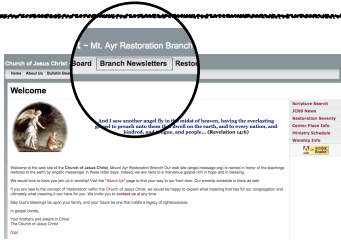


Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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



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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)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 4,11,18,25 - Doctrine & Covenants Class - Mondays at 7 PM held at the Mickelson home in Lamoni.

Nov 9 - Adoption Fundraiser for Jordison's - 6 PM Saturday evening at the 39th St Community Of Christ Church in Independence.

Nov. 10 - Thanksgiving Dinner - Sunday after the 11:00 service we will have our annual dinner. Sign up sheet is with Deni Loving.

Nov. 17 - Baby Shower - At our 6 PM Sunday evening fellowship we will hold a baby shower for Mary Downs and Brett Perkins. It has been suggested that you bring a favorite book in lieu of other gifts. Yay! More babies!!

Nov 28 - Thanksgiving Day - Thank you Lord!

Dec 8 - Potluck - We have moved our potlucks to the 2nd Sunday of each month

