

The Gospel News

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Coming Back



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A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST GENERAL CHURCH CONFERENCE OCTOBER 2021

Brothers, Sisters & Friends who Love the Lord,

We're excited to announce that The Church of Jesus Christ will be meeting again as a congregation of the saints of God in General Conference. After two years of difficulty and uncertainty, we are planning a wonderful time of gathering and fellowship. The Conference will convene on Friday, October 8 for all elders and teachers, and the General Ladies' Uplift Circle will also meet together that day for their conference.

The Conference will be open for all saints and friends of the Church on Saturday and Sunday, October 9 & 10. Saturday will be a spiritual day filled with singing and seminars from the Apostles, with time allocated to enjoy an abundant season of fellowship.

Sunday will be a wonderful spiritual day as the Lord has called two new Laborers into the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and we plan for these brothers to be ordained during our Sunday morning service.

Please plan to gather with the Laborers of the vineyard and all who love the Lord in October 2021.

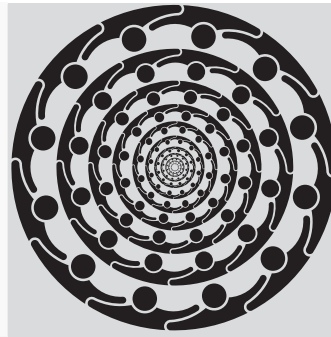
In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

James Crudup, Joel Gehly, John Griffith, Paul Liberto, Thomas M. Liberto, Leonard A. Loyalvo, Frank Natoli, Paul A. Palmieri, Peter Scolaro, Jerry Valenti

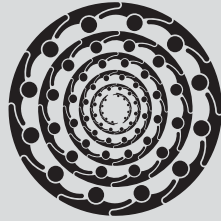


Our theme this month:
 “ComingBack”
 or “GettingBack”
 or “FinallyReturning”
 or “HumanContact,Yea!”
 or “Can’tWaitToHug”

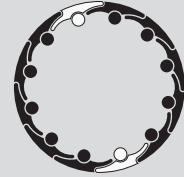


Make your plans now
 to be “coming back”
 to the October
 General Church
 Conference.
 First time together in
 18 months!

Pray for the Q70
 as we discuss the
 limitations and
 possibilities of all the
 global mission work.
 We wanna be
 “getting back” to it.



Don’t miss
 the ordination of
 two apostles,
 marking the Q12
 “finally returning”
 to a full quorum after
 12 years.



September is
 “coming back” to school
 month for most of
 our church’s youth.
 Pray for their safety.



If your branch or
 mission is “getting back”
 to live meetings,
 (with a little zooming
 on the side),
 Praise the Lord!

Alma 7:23
 “...asking for
 whatsoever things
 ye stand in need,
 both spiritual and
 temporal;...



...always “returning”
 thanks unto God for
 whatsoever things ye
 do receive.
 The best “return.”



BFTP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck

In September of 1959, sixty-two years ago this month, Brother and Sister Luna, while visiting Mexico, made a contact that began the Tijuana, Mexico work. His name was Franco, a converted alcoholic, and he asked them if they knew a Spanish-speaking minister who could lead their congregation as their minister had left.

After several experiences, Brother Eddie and Sister Evelyn Perdue started to meet with his group, making the trip to Tijuana from southern California. Sister Mary Lovalvo had a dream where she saw the Perdues going to the desert mountains. She saw pools of water in which children were swimming, and they were blessed. When the

Perdues expressed the desire to relocate to Mexico the General Church granted permission to go. They departed immediately, leaving their daughter to care for their home in their absence, and moved to a trailer near the Mexican border. Meanwhile, in Mexico, two young men (who were later baptized) built a room for them.

The Perdues moved into the room before it was finished. Sister Perdue stated, “We had only three walls, using a blanket to form a fourth one. Later, another room was added. We were overjoyed to be here. At least we were trying to do something for the Lord. We had a small table, two folding chairs, a

(Continued on page 11)



Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ, while working to draw Israel to Christ through efforts focused on the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America



Vision Statement

- Living and worshipping in unity and righteousness will result in the fullness of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, culminating in continuous growth of the Church and fulfillment of Christ's promises concerning His Kingdom on Earth.



"An Unequally Traveled Two-Way Street"

By Elder Doug Obradovich

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." (John 15:16)

Both lanes frequently experience undeserved volume. The southbound, generously. The northbound lane, sparsely. Southbound traffic originates in heaven and flows earthward. Northbound traffic ventures from earth to heaven. This highway has been discussed throughout man's existence, quite possibly more over the past year than any time in most of our lives. The causeway is named "Trust," and defined by our confidence in some event now or upcoming. Its traffic is based upon belief established by events/experiences from our past. Thus, our trust is often doled out sparingly.

Growing up, I had responsibilities just like you. All were rewards, based upon some prior behavior, which taught and reinforced trust as being "earned." I now question that conclusion, as experience has shown trust to be impossible to earn. And like you, I have both trusted and been trusted, with most ending in failure. Only One possessed an impeccable record in trustworthiness, yet He continues to inherit the disappointments we have created. Thus, the northbound lane remains lightly traveled.

Ironically, the moment we were least deserving, God granted His trust implicitly. After compiling a lifelong record of evidence that convicted us as being unworthy of His confidence, we weakly apologized and asked Him to trust us anyway. God accepted. Imagine the person who has continuously stolen from you asking to borrow money. On the day of our baptisms, we were not simply granted forgiveness through His grace, but also entrusted to serve as His representatives. Instantly transformed from our lowest point to our highest point, and miraculously shifted from sinner to Saint, while not presenting any qualified resume' to earn such trust.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son" (John 3:16), continues explaining, "whosoever believeth on Him" would inherit "everlasting life." God's unconditional love was extended to all people, as "the world" received the same invitation to believe and receive. Everyone has full access to God's glory. Everyone can become benefactors of His mercy and forgiveness. Before anyone was numbered amongst, "whosoever believeth on Him," we were first, "the world." When we were least trustworthy, He trusted us. Thus, the

southbound lane is always flowing smoothly and purposefully.

Our lives are encounters with others who match our untrustworthiness, which leaves us inflexible. We struggle to extend our hearts, which keeps the northbound lane less frequented. God continues to prove Himself worthy of our trust, yet we withhold more often than we relent. The Creator is guilty by association to His creation. He asks for our trust and we refuse, clinging to our skepticism without evidence of His ever failing. Jesus responds with unexplainable generosity, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). He does this despite our streak of perfect imperfection, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

No, trust is not earned; it is a faith-based endeavor. Who am I to ever have been entrusted with God's Holy Spirit? Who am I to have been trusted to receive His forgiveness and the moniker, ambassador? Who am I to withhold my trust in God? Who am I? I'm the guy traveling right beside you, northbound on the Highway called Trust.

Each week, Brother Larry Henderson shares a message with the membership of Farmington Hills Branch #2 to reflect on during their Wednesday fast & prayer. He has been unable to attend the branch in person since the start of the pandemic as he lives in Canada and the border has remained closed. For the next four months we will share some of these inspirational, thought-provoking messages.

Fast & Pray He Loves You
 GOD'S PEACE AND JOY *God is Merciful*
Pause Bring your cares PRAY WITHOUT CEASING
 to the Lord **POWERFUL** He listens
 Pray Changes things Pray for
 Talk to the Lord **for** your fields
 PRAY FOR THE CHURCH Pray for the sick
 sacrifice *Pray for your Branch*
 PRAY FOR THE YOUTH **Prayer.** Pray for your family
 Pray for forgiveness He will hear you
 MOVE THE HAND OF GOD *Power to change*
 In all things give thanks
 Pray for the mission fields

Pause for Prayer *By Elder Larry Henderson*

"**A**nd my soul hungered." I'm sure Brother Leonard Lovalvo knows where to find these words. I have seen him blessed on several occasions when he used the Book of Enos as a starting point for his sermon.

Enos has a beautiful testimony of his "wrestle" before he received a remission of his sins. Remission is a churchy word you don't hear used out in everyday life. To remit, is to release from the guilt or penalty of sin, in this case. The words of his father Jacob, the brother of Nephi, flooded over Enos' soul while he went out hunting. How many times did Jacob encourage his son to seek the things of the Spirit? How many times did Enos go hunting to provide for his family? How many times did he consider the words of his father? Why was that particular day the day his soul began to hunger? What drove him to his knees and compelled him to cry out to God in prayer for the concern of his soul. I am sure the answer to all those questions is the answered prayers of all those that loved him.

How many of us have loved ones we pray for daily? Think about those that have attended our meetings for years and fallen under the conviction of God's Holy Spirit. Some have been raised their whole life surrounded by the truth of the restored gospel. They have seen others come into our meetings as strangers and accept the gift of salvation and give their life to the Lord. They have seen healings and been healed. Their lives have been spared from sickness, and God has answered their plea for help. They have listened to the wondrous

testimonies of God working in our lives. All this, and they still have not asked to be freed from their sin and guilt before God.

My dear loved ones, it is time for us to cry out in mighty prayer for the welfare of their souls. Plead and beg for the Holy Spirit to fall upon them, even as it fell upon Enos, that they may have their heart changed and their soul filled to overflowing with thanksgiving to our Savior and Friend Jesus Christ. What are you willing to sacrifice this day to see your child repent and serve the Lord? How much time are you willing to give to petition for the saving of the lost soul of your friend or family member? Are you willing to give equally for the soul of a stranger?

For those of us that have given our life to Jesus and know how wonderful it feels to have our sins forgiven and receive God's blessings daily, it is imperative that we truly and COMPLETELY give our life, our time, and our abundance so that others may come to the realization that our prayers and their faith has made them whole.

In your mind, look around our congregation. Single out every soul that has not received a remission of their sins. Make them the center of your petition today. We must pray with faith, that tomorrow our prayers may be filled with thanksgiving for our new converts. There are people that I'm thinking of as I write this. When I pass communion near them, I smile and say "next week." That is my hope! The week we will pass by no soul with the communion. They will all have their names in the Book of Life! DO YOUR PART AND GIVE COMPLETELY OF YOURSELF TO SAVING THEIR SOULS!!

By Elder Anthony Scolaro

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Carolynn O'Connor
gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org
734-260-0213

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Chuck Maddox, Jr.
chuck.maddoxjr@thechurchofjesuschrist.org
937-266-2506

CONSULTANTS
Alex Gentile
Paul Liberto
Leonard A. Lovallo
Anthony Scolaro
Cathy Gentile

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Dianne Maddox

DESIGN & LAYOUT
Ken Lombardo

COPY EDITOR
Anthony Scolaro

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Sophia O'Connor

QUORUM OF 70 EDITOR
Q70 Communication Team
q70team@gmail.com
313-820-4503

GMBA EDITOR
Christine Martorana
christinemaddox13@gmail.com
937-266-2539

GENERAL CIRCLE EDITOR
LuAnn Carson
uannie@comcast.net
724-518-0491

REGION EDITORS

ATLANTIC COAST
Michael Zaino
michael.zaino@thechurchofjesuschrist.org
732-289-4191

GREAT LAKES
Kim Komjathy
komjathy1976@gmail.com
313-461-3176

MIDWEST
midwest@thechurchofjesuschrist.org

PACIFIC
Jody Greger
cjcsldr@yahoo.com
209-810-4880

PENN-MID ATLANTIC
Ray Intrieri
lemans65@gmail.com
724-622-7249

SOUTHEAST
Mandy Griffith
mandygriffith324@gmail.com
727-264-7905

SOUTHWEST
Anthony Scolaro
anthony.scolaro@thechurchofjesuschrist.org
732-259-3861

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We have experienced shortages of various kinds in today's world, but two things that don't seem to be in short supply are information and news sources. Facts, statistics, and reports about people and events are available through a variety of methods and channels, delivered to us in forms that we elect to read, watch, or listen to. And in our electronically connected society, we even receive information passively as it flashes, minute by minute, across our phones, screens, and watches. With all this communication, it's important for us to realize that "information" isn't the only thing we are getting.

Lately we've seen the term "narrative" used in connection with the sea of news and information surrounding us. While that word can simply refer to a story of some kind, it has a more powerful connotation: admittedly, a narrative communicates a point of view. History is a set of narratives, more than simply reporting data, the author of a narrative can influence the thinking of the listener by deciding what to tell, how to tell it, and importantly, what *not* to tell.

Narratives have played an important part in shaping and sustaining civilizations and cultures from the earliest times. In a world where news media abound, the word "narrative" appropriately implies that what we're reading or hearing is just one point of view—one version of a story—that may not be completely accurate; in other words, not the entire truth.

The scriptures give us many examples where believing and perpetuating false narratives, versions of the truth told from an alternate point of view, have been the cause of great iniquity and destruction in the world, beginning with mankind's initial fall from grace and causing contention and strife within families and nations, extending in many cases over generations. And it seems that all of these falsehoods come from the same source.

It didn't take too many changes to God's instructions for Satan to convince our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1-5). The Book of Mormon clearly explains how Satan's lies to Adam and Eve, to Cain, to the builders of the Tower of Babel, and others continue to entice mankind into sin and transgression to this day (Helaman 6:27-30). The Lamanites' perpetual hatred of the Nephites was fueled by a story of Nephi usurping his elder brothers' leadership. The accounts of a lineup of false teachers and doctrines (Sherem, Nehor, Korihor, the Zoramites, etc.) give us numerous glimpses of narratives gone wrong.

Today when we look for guidance to inform our attitudes and actions, we need to be as cautious as ever. We should be discerning about what we tune into, proving all things, and holding fast to that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We should weigh the relative importance of what we hear on the scales of Eternity, seeking God's counsel regarding who and how much to believe, and whether and how to respond. As we look to Jesus Christ as our primary example, we come to realize again and again that the scriptures—the word of God—hold the answers to all of our questions.

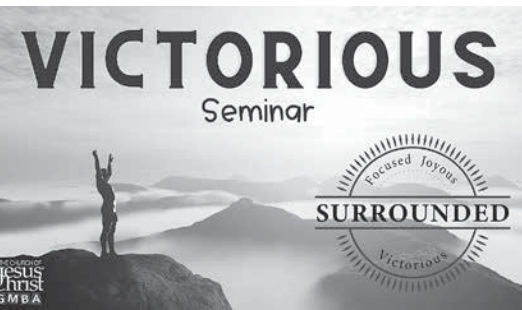
We cannot overemphasize the importance that faith plays in helping us to discern the truth in the narratives that we hear. Drawing a comparison with those who lacked faith, the author of Hebrews states, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Chapter 4 v. 2). Having a firm belief in an all-knowing and all-good God provides us with the lens through which we must view the narratives life throws at us. The values established in God's word—the clear delineations between right and wrong, good and evil—form a foundation for us upon which to build our house (Luke 6:48). The narrative given by the Lord Himself in the Bible and the Book of Mormon is true and unchanging.



GMBA Camp In 2021

CAMP THEME SONG

The Safety of My Father's Arms



STATS

Over 30 people participated in the live cooking class

Over 40 kids participated in the live kids Zooms

Over 200 people logged in to the live Sunday night meeting

Over 250 people logged in to the live Wednesday night viewing party

Over 4200 views on the GMBA YouTube page

500 viewing hours on the GMBA YouTube page

QUOTES

How has the theme "Surrounded" become more robust to you this week?

"I've started to think about what and who I surround myself with and how important that is to how close I feel to God." – *Christine Martorana*

"It's made me even more thankful for the Family of God!" – *Cameron Staley*

"It just reinforced that no matter what, I am surrounded by God and my church family!" – *Maddy and Nathan*

"As enjoyable as last year was, the opportunity to connect more directly with each other outside of just Zooms during the scavenger hunt actually helped us keep even more focused on the week, despite still having to work and the rest of life going on around us. Truly a blessing!" – *Bryan Champine*

"I use to only think it was about God protecting me but now I realize I am surrounded by so much more- His love, my church family, music, victories." – *Alyssa Maddox*

"I realize that this concept is something I want to meditate on." – *Theresa Bravo*

"The scavenger hunt was great because I felt surrounded by my brothers and sisters even though we are so far apart." – *Dianne Maddox*

"It made me very thankful to know the Lord and it reminded me what a treasure it is to be part of the Church." – *Jared Scolaro*



And I hear (and then I hear) the words, "It's all right (all right)"



Wednesday night tech team



And I feel love (then I feel love)





Access GMBA Camp In content on the GMBA Youth Ministry YouTube page:
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=gmba+youth+ministry

"Just enforcing the fact that when we focus on the Lord, we have more joy and are absolutely surrounded by his love!" – *Tanya Wood*

"It has been a big reminder of how blessed I am to be surrounded by God's love, the Gospel, and the brothers and sisters that I love so much."
 – *Carolynn and Lola O'Connor*

"This theme has become a turning point in my life this week in both my natural and spiritual life. I am constantly surrounded by situations that allow me to call on my Savior to help me make the right decisions." – *Sharon Sloan*

SCAVENGER HUNT



12 TEAMS

MISSIONS IN THE VIRTUAL
SCAVENGER HUNT **145**

68 PARTICIPANTS

VIDEO SUBMISSIONS **454**
 PHOTO SUBMISSIONS **646**

MICHELLE BROWN **MVP**

WINNING TEAM

COME ALL YE IN FIRST
 (BRYAN AND REBECCA CHAMPINE; JARED SCOLARO; JON AND ZARELLA SCOLARO; AARON, MITCHELL, AND REID SCOLARO; GRACIE AND CALVIN GIBSON; LUCA BERTOLO)



Blessed Memories!

New Gospel News Series: Young People Writing Young People

Dear Young People,

What is one piece of advice that you have received that you will never forget? This is the question that came to my mind when I was asked to write this letter. I wanted to take the best piece of advice I have received and pass it on to all of you, and pray that it becomes a blessing in your life.

A few years ago, I was talking to Sister Barb Nuzzi, and she told me to talk to the Lord like He is your best friend. Talk to Him, cry to Him, and even laugh with Him because He does have a sense of humor! The Lord is not only there to guide you, help you, and show you all the amazing things this life holds, but He

is always there to laugh with you. The Lord is your best friend, so talk and laugh with Him like one. If I have learned one thing, it is that He works in some mysterious and miraculous ways. He is always working in your life. Our future is His memory. This is very important to remember, because being a young person can be difficult, but it is important to not dwell on the difficult things in life because the Lord is by your side all the time helping you. He is always there to talk and will never stop listening. He is your number one supporter.

When I think about this advice, I think about one of my favorite verses, which is Matthew 28:20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and

lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." The Lord is with you all the time, forever and always; that is why the advice that I was given plays such a big role in my life, and I hope it starts in yours as well. It is amazing how we can go to Him for anything and talk to Him about anything, whether serious or funny, and know that we will be okay because He is faithful.

I ask you to remember this piece of advice that I am passing on to all of you. Open your heart to the Lord, laugh with Him, and counsel with Him. Know that it's okay if we fall short sometimes and mess up; the good thing is, our Lord is faithful and forgiving. He is always there to catch you when needed, and is always guiding you. Talk to the Lord like He is your best friend. Talk to Him, cry to him, and even laugh with him.

With Love,
Sister Olivia Siebert

Answers from last month:

"Because I made a commitment at the water's edge. Because the Lord has done so much for me that I want to thank and serve Him; be a light for others. And because I look forward to the day when I will see my family and the saints who have gone before me. Amen." – *Sister Janice Frammolino, Detroit, MI Branch #1*

"He gives me hope. To be an example for my daughter. Because he has rescued me from myself over and over again!" – *Sister Christine Martorana, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"Because I love Him, need Him, and by His grace want to spend eternity with Him!" – *Sister Donna Bogle, Aliquippa, PA Branch*

"It is my 'reasonable service' for the price He paid for my salvation. It brings me great joy! Serving God gives my life purpose and

meaning." – *Sister Darlene Ignagni, Fort Worth, TX Branch*

"I serve the Lord because He changed my life completely when I decided to follow Him. I serve Him because I can trust Him as He is the only constant in this vile world and He has given me a road map and manuals as guides to lead me along the way. I serve Him because I can talk to Him through prayer and He picks me up and helps me in my lowest moments. He loves me just as I am. I serve Him and only Him, and I love Him." – *Sister Carmela Madison, Freehold, NJ Branch.*

"To have Eternal Life. To show my light that others might see their way to God. To give God All Honor, Praise and Glory that He so rightly Deserves." – *Sister Sharon Sloan, Forest Hills, FL Branch*

"The Spirit of God convicted me the first time I attended at age 19 to understand and appreciate His

love for me. I owe a debt to Him and it's the only way I know to repay it. I desire eternal salvation and the added bonus of enjoying His blessings in this life." – *Brother Frank Natoli, Detroit, MI Branch #1.*

"He loves me, He blesses me, and He takes care of me!" – *Brother Giovanni Lind, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"The covenant I made with the Lord on the day I was baptized, the hope of eternal salvation if I prove faithful, the blessings He continues to bestow upon me." – *Sister KarenJo Pandone, Farmington Hills, MI Branch*

"He loved me. He saved me. I love Him." – *Brother Anthony Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch*

"He saved my life so it's my turn to do something for Him. It brings me peace, understanding, comfort, and hope. It's part of my purpose, if not the whole thing." – *Sister Charity Lombardo,*

Metuchen, NJ Branch

"Because He is faithful. Because He doesn't lie. I am blessed by His grace and mercy" – *Sister Terri Everett, Creekside, MI Branch*

"Obedience, salvation, and love." – *Sister Donna Eskut, North Georgia Mission.*

"I serve God because He died for me. He loves me even when I mess up. He asked me to help my fellow man." – *Sister Anita Znoy, Creekside, MI Branch*

"The gift of salvation. The blessings that follow me when I serve Him. Because I love Him." – *Brother Michael Zaino, Edison, NJ Branch.*

"My soul's salvation. Peace and hope that God has my back, no matter the situation. The love of God manifested so many ways" – *Sister Denise Pennell, Columbus, OH Branch*

Food Groups

By Apostle Jerry Valenti

5 People who are experts on nutrition have defined “food groups” to assist us in establishing a healthy diet. Basically, you should try to eat something from each food group each day in order to maximize your health. The scriptures also describe food groups that we should incorporate into our lives to maximize our spiritual health. Here are 5 amazing facts relating to scriptural food groups.

1 Living Water – When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), He offered her “living water”, representing forgiveness of sins, the Holy Ghost as a Comforter, and a place in the kingdom of God. The same living water is available to us today. We need to drink of this water before worrying about any of the other food groups below. And, once we drink of it, we’ll never thirst again.

2 Bread of Life – Jesus describes Himself as the “bread of life” (John 6:35). Partaking of the bread of life is somewhat similar to drinking the living water as it represents coming to Christ. However, we continue to partake of Christ on a regular basis whenever we follow His examples in our lives and also when we partake of the bread to remember how He sacrificed Himself for us.

3 Milk (and Honey) – On the one hand, people who partake of the milk of the Gospel are babes in Christ (similar to babies being fed milk by their mothers) who are not yet mature enough to handle the meat (Hebrews 5:12-13). However, a second definition can be found in the Old Testament when the Israelites are headed for a land of promise that was “flowing with milk and honey” – this expression described a particularly fertile land that could produce abundant and juicy fruit. This should be a goal for each of us, that we would be that type of fertile ground that can produce abundant fruit for the Lord.

4 Fruits of the Spirit – “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,

temperance” (Galatians 5:22-23). Unlike the other food groups, these fruits aren’t for us to digest but rather they represent what grows within us as a result of the Spirit of God and can benefit the people who we interact with.

5 Meat – As mentioned earlier, the meat of the gospel typically refers to the greater understanding that grows within us as we mature spiritually (Hebrews 5:14). However, it’s more than just understanding—it also represents taking that understanding and turning it into action that benefits the kingdom of God. Jesus told His disciples, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34). If we want to truly be partaking of the meat of the gospel, we need to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).



Ladies' Uplift Circle News

My Independence Day

By Sister Luann Carson

In July we celebrated Independence Day, a day over two hundred years ago when our country declared itself to be free and independent. We read in the Declaration of Independence,

...whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive . . . it is the right of the people . . . to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles . . . as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

This can correlate to us spiritually as well. We were once under the ‘destructive rule’ of worldly things. But when we experienced repentance and baptism, we ‘abolished’ that rule and came under a new ‘government’, the government of Jesus Christ. His government’s foundation leads us to safety and joy! “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2).

Do you have an Independence Day to celebrate? Following are some

examples from the Saints.

I was sitting in a Thursday evening Church service when I felt God’s call. When I didn’t answer, a black cloud came into the building through a window and hung over my head. I immediately knew if I didn’t ask to be baptized, God may not call me again. I jumped up and asked to be baptized. - Sister Lucetta Scaglione

At age 19, I was one of the last of my Church friend group who hadn’t been baptized. When the other person who also had not been baptized asked at camp, I was questioning when my time would come. I felt I wasn’t good enough and needed to be “perfect” before I could ask. The Sunday after camp, the sermon was about how we don’t need to be perfect; we need to take that step and get baptized, then God will help us with the rest. I asked for my baptism that Sunday, the same day as my friend. As I found out later, another sister had had a dream that we would both be baptized. - Sister Kristina Stroyne

(Continued on page 11)



New Starts

The Bible and Book of Mormon are full of stories about people having to make new starts in life. The Jewish girl Esther had to leave her home and go alone to the strange palace when the king was looking for a new wife. Think how many mean and jealous other people were there to try and be queen. He chose Esther.

When she found out that her people's enemy, Haman, planned to kill and rob all the Jewish people in the land, she had to pray and fast and ask God for courage to ask the king not to do this. Beautiful Esther went uninvited to the throne room and the king allowed her in. She asked him for the lives of all her people. The king of that huge country listened to her. She saved them all.

When the Brother of Jared, their friends, and families were led away from the confusion at the Tower of Babel (See Genesis 11:1-9 and the book of Ether) they had to start all over. They hunted for their food. They carried honey, and many, many seeds to plant to eat. They learned to build barges.

They had the courage to leave all they knew behind and to get into eight small little barges, which were blown by God's great winds across and even underneath the ocean. Can you imagine how scared they were? The Brother of Jared, their leader, prayed and asked God to give them two lights in each of the barges. He prayed and saw the finger of the Lord touch them and make them glow.

In the fall, many of you will be starting new things. It may be a new school with new friends and new teachers. It may be you will start a new sport, or learn how to open a locker quickly, find someone to sit with in the lunchroom or on the bus, or try to learn how to sing or play an instrument.

But, you are not alone. First of all, the brothers and sisters in church including me will be praying and asking the Lord to guide all of our children and protect you. We all can pray you will be able to figure out what you must learn, and even enjoy it.

In the Bible you can memorize the words of the great prophet Isaiah (See chapter 41:Verse 10.) He tells us, "Fear thou not (don't be afraid) for I am with thee (you) Be not dismayed (anxious and giving up), for I am your God. Yes, I will help you; yes I will uphold you (keep you from falling or giving up) with the right hand of righteousness!" You have an invisible friend sending you help at all times. Pray. Ask for courage and also, when the trouble is over, thank God. Thank him deeply.

Tell others how God has helped you.

And in the Bible, the Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the people in Philippi (See Philippians 4:13). He told them, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Say this to yourself, or in your heart, when you are trying something new that you're worried or scared about.

You are not alone. Our Jesus loves you. You can whisper a prayer, ask others to pray for you, sing a great church song, say a prayer out loud. Call on God the great Creator. He is your friend. He will help you and He loves you!

With much care and love,

Your friend and Sister in Christ, *Sister Jan*

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My Independence Day Continued from page 9

was going about with the four sons of Mosiah to destroy the Church of God. The angel of the Lord appeared and spake with a voice of thunder, which caused the earth to shake. So great was our astonishment, that we fell to the earth. The angel declared that the Lord said, "This is my church. . . the Lord hath heard the prayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth." We all five fell to the earth, and I became dumb and could not move. The people fasted and prayed for me for two days. I received strength and told the people, I have "repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit." -Alma (Read the full account in Mosiah 27:8-31.)

The water was cold, rough, and the sky was clouded. When my grandpa and I stepped into the water, the heavens opened and the sun shined down on just the two of us. As I gave my life to the Lord, the Lord took my grandpa home minutes after we came out of the water. A brother spoke in the word of the Lord, "Well done my good and faithful servant. Do not cry for him, but cry for those standing by the wayside never tasting the waters of life." - Sister Colleen Moore

A sister was singing a song at a Church retreat with the words, "Anybody here wanna live forever, say I do." I couldn't remain in my seat because I knew I had to jump up and say 'I do!' -Sister LuAnn Carson

When my mom died in my arms, I felt like a changed woman. The next weeks were very difficult. One Saturday as I went to wash my hair, the thought came to me, "Why, since it will be wet tomorrow?" When I got to Church the next day all I could do was cry. My heart was broken, and I was overwhelmed with a feeling of repentance. As soon as the minister finished speaking, I jumped up and asked for my baptism. - Sister Norma Cross

I "made havoc of the church," "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" As I journeyed, suddenly I saw a light from heaven. I fell and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" When I asked who was speaking, "The Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Trembling and astonished, I had no sight for three days. When Ananias put his hands on me and prayed, I received my

sight and was baptized. -Saul/Paul (Read the full account in Acts 8 & 9.)

One Sunday I began to cry, feeling God's Spirit, but was too timid to ask for my baptism. A brother called the hymn, "Why Do You Wait, Dear Brother," but he asked us to sing 'sister' instead of 'brother.' By the end of the song I had stood and asked to be baptized. As I was immersed, I saw a figure of a body raise up from me and float away, and everything was so bright. I am afraid of water but felt no fear. - Sister Terri Nath

I was keeper of the prison where Paul and Silas were prisoners. "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God . . . And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." When I woke up and saw the prison doors open, I decided to kill myself. "But Paul cried saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." Trembling, I asked, "What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Straitway that same night, I and all mine were baptized. -the keeper of the prison (Read the full account in Acts 16:25-33.)

I was baptized on July 11, 2002 at GMBA Camp in Saginaw, MI. My natural brother and I were both baptized that day by our grandfather, Brother Rich Scaglione. What a blessing it was to be taken into the waters by my Pap, and to be able to share that day with my brother! - Sister Stefanie Arcuri

While hunting in the forests, the words my father spoke about eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart. My soul hungered; and I cried unto God in mighty prayer for my soul all day and night. I heard a voice saying: "Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee." My guilt was swept away because of my faith in Christ. The voice said, "Go to, thy faith hath made thee whole." Enos (Read the full account in Enos 1-8.)

Did you notice that no two testimonies are exactly alike? God's call comes to all in a special, individual way. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1).

Do you have an Independence Day that you'd like to share? Email to uannie@comcast.net so others can be blessed by your unique experience.

Blast from the Past

Continued from page 2

camp cook stove and two cots. These mountains were very dark at night. There was no water, and no electricity; we used kerosene lamps. There were many large rats because of the brush nearby, some snakes, and the howling of the coyotes could be heard at night."

This was the beginning of the work in Tijuana. Since then, The Church has grown greatly in Mexico and the Perdues have long gone on to their reward. They were true missionaries, who were often afflicted and persecuted, but were pillars, teaching the Restored Gospel to all with whom they came in contact.



Are you interested in serving on the Gospel News?

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Join the media team and help with graphic design and logo creation.

Join the outreach team and develop questions of the month or generate blessing bit submissions to engage readers.

Share your interest and ideas by emailing gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org. We will discuss all volunteer opportunities with you.

Blessing Bits

BB He Gives us the Key

When Sister Diane Behr was introduced to the Church, she questioned the Book of Mormon. She made it a matter of prayer and had a dream. In this dream, she saw a beautiful gilded white Bible with a locked lock. She was then given a small black book. She opened it; a key fell out and successfully unlocked the Bible. This dream gave her to believe the Book of Mormon, the small black book she received in the dream, held the key to understanding the Bible fully. Sister Diane shared this experience with me as I visited her in the hospital following a trip to India. I shared with her some of the struggles with the people in India accepting the Book of Mormon. I was then able to share Sister Diane's experience with the people there, helping to convince them of the truth. – *Brother Dino DiMelis, Farmington Hills, MI Branch #2.*

BB He Communicates With Us

During the weekend of the January 6th Capitol riots, I had been praying about a personal, stressful situation. The Lord communicated

to me in a unique, direct way. I was scrolling through my cell phone, and at the very top appeared a text message with the familiar green background and white speech bubble with these words: "God. Good night. I can handle this stressful situation." I was astonished, clicked on the message, and poof, it disappeared, but the Lord gave me peace for the situation I was praying about. In addition, I knew the Lord was assuring me He was in control of all things including the unrest that was about us that weekend. God is truly still on His throne.

– *Sister Linda Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch*

BB He Moves Obstacles in Our Path

I recently began my naturalization process to become a United States Citizen. I was told the process would take up to 2 years to even begin. I then was presented with the opportunity to support the Church's Colombia committee, but any hope of traveling to Colombia depended on my citizenship status. I prayed that the Lord would make a way. After speaking with my legal counsel, he was shocked that my application had been accepted so quickly and I was

moving through the process much faster than anticipated. What I was told would take 2 years took only 2 months. He even showed my wife and me the stack of applications that had been turned in before me but had not been accepted yet. I praise God for his intervention. – *Brother Moroni Bojorquez, Modesto, CA Branch*

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Zarella Scolaro at zarellamosqueda@gmail.com [in approximately 150 words].
Answers to Question of the Month to gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org.



Question for this month: Where do you see or feel God most in Nature?



Answer from last month: What are the top 3 reasons why you serve the Lord? "Love-Love-Love. Because He loves me. Because I love Him. Because I love others." – *Sister Renée Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch*

Turn back to page 8 for more answers to this question.

Know ye not that ye are in the hands of God? Mormon 5:23

