

# The Gospel News

## IN THIS ISSUE:

*Joy to the  
World!*



**Blast From The Past**  
Page 2

**Calendar**  
Page 2

**Word Up**  
Page 3

**Topic Series**  
Page 4

**Editorial Viewpoint**  
Page 5

**GMBA News**  
Page 8

**Ladies' Uplift Circle  
News**  
Page 9

**Children's Corner**  
Page 10

**Blessing Bits**  
Page 12

*Brother Pete Giannetti and Brother Scott Griffith were ordained apostles on October 10, 2021 at the World Operations Center in Greensburg, PA. The article below was written to give us an opportunity to learn more about them, their service to the Church, and their willingness to take on this calling. —Editor*

## Called to Be a Servant

*By Brother Joe Giannetti*

"Step by step, I'll help to build the kingdom. Step by step, I'll serve each one I see..." These were the words to a hymn that Brother Pete Giannetti Jr. quoted in his address after he was ordained an apostle in The Church of Jesus Christ.

The same calling that began with Jesus' original twelve disciples, who would eventually become the leaders of the church and witnesses to His resurrection, now rests upon our Brother Pete. In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus clearly instructs his disciples regarding what characteristics their leadership of the church should possess when He said, "...the Gentiles exercise dominion over them [the people] ...But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." This same "servant leadership" instruction from the Savior is now laid upon the heart of our Brother Pete as he ended his address with these words, "I love you in Jesus Christ and I look forward to seeing you often and serving you with God's love."

Brother Pete was blessed, born and raised in the Church in the Aliquippa, PA Branch where his grandparents, Brother Joe and Sister Antionette Giannetti, and his parents, Brother Pete Sr. and Sister Patty Giannetti, were members. At that time, the Aliquippa Branch was thriving with a growing group of young people which was nurtured by the local ministry and the love of all the wonderful brothers and sisters, most of whom lived in the neighborhood around the church. Brother Pete remembers that time as follows: "It was just a beautiful way to grow up. We had an amazing group of young people that were very close. We spent our summers together. We traveled everywhere together...all the Church conferences, the GMBAs, visiting different parts of the Church. Those friendships have lasted until this day. The branch was thriving, and



(Continued on page 6)



And Joseph also went from Galilee... to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. Luke 2:4,5



..out of the city of Nazareth, onto the city of David which is called Bethlehem. Luke 2:5

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over their flock by night. Luke 2:8



And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. Luke 2:9

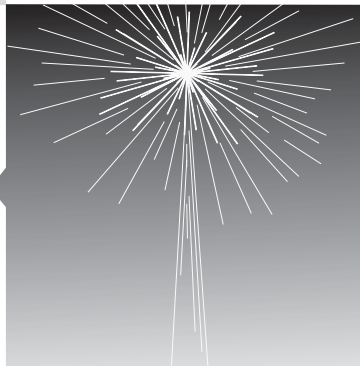


And they came with haste and found Mary, Joseph and the babe lying in a manger. Luke 2:16



... behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem. Matthew 2:1

When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Matthew 2:10



...and when they had opened their treasures they presented to him gifts: Gold and frankincense and myrrh. Matthew 2:11



# BTFP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck

**Forty-three years ago the song, "Touch the Nailprints, Know for Certain" was given to Sister Arlene Buffington.** Prior to the song, Sis. Arlene had a dream. "I looked over on a distant hill and saw a multitude of people. I knew it was the House of Israel. I saw my brother Jim standing with them. I looked in the sky above them and saw a tiny silver metal star. I said, "The Star of David," and I awoke.

"A few days later, my husband, Bro. Bob Buffington, read Revelations 22:16, 'I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the

Bright and Morning Star.' My husband called to me, 'Arlene, come and listen to what I've opened to. Here is your dream.' We felt a great blessing. The following Sunday morning as I arose for Church, I felt the Spirit and Power of God fall upon me as my dream flashed before me, and I began to sing 'Touch the Nailprints, Know for Certain.' The blessing was very great. I was quite shaken with the Spirit of God upon me all that day and evening".

Star of David, shining silver, see your great Redeemer lives  
Gather 'round Him, House of Israel, taste forgiveness that He gives.

(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.



I found her sitting at the kitchen table, mouth agape, staring at a handwritten 4x6 card. The scribble on the card immediately identified her mother's handwriting but I couldn't interpret her shocked face. Candace told me she had just discovered that this family recipe included one tiny item not mentioned when her mom originally coached her over the phone. Candace said, "I knew mine never tasted like my mom's." Of course, it didn't. It wasn't! One tiny ingredient can change everything.

The message of love can be equally delicious. Unless it also is missing one ingredient.

The past few years have proven to be some of the most troubling in recent history, creating multiple vacuums; not the least of which was peace. Love, kindness, and decency aside, a most challenging venture was simply locating tranquility. The political climate, coupled with COVID's effects, seemed to tear at families and communities, leaving so many individuals raw,

## *"The Missing Ingredient"* By Brother Doug Obradovich **"PEACE I leave with you, my PEACE I give unto you" (John 14:27)**

vulnerable, discouraged, scarred, frustrated, exposed, and isolated. The result: serenity-separation. Who could foresee mankind's upcoming encounter with worldwide, national, and local unrest? It seemed every facet of life was disturbed on some level.

Numerous international ethnicities offer one-word greetings, such as Shalom, Salām, Vrede, Pace, and Paz. They all share the same meaning, resulting in multiples of people worldwide immediately greeted with "Peace." Any society that salutes one another as such, must surely proactively position themselves in support of and/or provide for such quieting of the soul.

Jesus understood that the value of peace includes providing health, oneness, gentleness, and love. Jesus promised, promoted, and provided His followers with peace. We, who are best equipped, better able, and most suited to speak from firsthand experience about the Love of God and the peace provided by His Holy Spirit, must serve as surrogates for the Savior. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" (Isaiah 52:7). We have received the fulness of His recipe, with no missing ingredients. We are called to publish peace through our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Long before the recent stirrings everyone has endured, peace was already a fleeting occurrence for so many. Peace has forever seemed impossible to capture and possess by most. Knowing this, Jesus offered His abiding gift, the Holy Ghost, as the most enticing complement to His greatest gift, love. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." He understood the devastation found in the absence of harmony and the fulfillment experienced in receiving such an enduring presence.

Like these courageous cultures whose one-word introductions are "Peace," we, as possessors of the missing ingredient, must exhibit God's goodwill in every instance. Mormon identified us as "Peaceable followers of Christ." If Jesus had only offered love, the absence of some missing ingredient would be as discernable as Candace's dish. A tablespoon of love, with a pinch of peace stirred in, is most delectable, just as the Word describes, "Peace and love be multiplied" (Jude 1:2).

How beautiful upon the mountains, indeed!  
And how delicious, too!

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 **for** your fields  
 Talk to the Lord **Prayer.** Pray for the sick  
 PRAY FOR THE CHURCH Pray for your Branch  
 Sacrifice **Prayer.** Pray for your family  
 PRAY FOR THE YOUTH He will hear you  
 Pray for forgiveness **Prayer.** He will hear you  
 MOVE THE HAND OF GOD Power to change  
 in all things give thanks  
 Pray for the mission fields

## The Gift of a Bible

By Brother Larry Henderson

**D**evotion is not a word you hear very often outside of the Church. In fact, we don't hear it very often in Church. However, we see it in Church and in the lives of those that truly love Jesus Christ. Devotion is not an end, but it is one of the means to the end. By end, I am not referring to the end of our life.

In one of our Sunday night Native America Operating Committee Zoom meetings, we heard that the family of Brother Alma Cadman gave him a new Bible every Christmas. He was not collecting Bibles. He was wearing them out! Every year he would need a new bible because it had become worn from flipping the pages, and soaked by his tears as he prayed for understanding, and possibly smudged by his fingers because he couldn't wait to read God's word and didn't wipe off his hands. Brother Alma

had a devotion to learning how to walk with God. How to discern good from evil by comparing it to the word of God. He had a burning desire to understand the prophecies so he could help the brothers and sisters to understand them. Nothing was mentioned of his Book of Mormon. I am sure it needed replacing quite often as well.

My grandmother, Margaret Heaps, gave me an expensive study Bible when I graduated high school. She wrote a small memo and added 2 Tim 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." She was never ashamed because she studied the Word and prayed with devotion. I could not count how many times my grandfather, Jim Heaps, depended on her. As an evangelist, he spoke frequently in our meetings. In the middle of a sermon, he would not remember a verse in the Bible or Book of Mormon. Without hesitating, he would look for my grandmother in the congregation. When he found her, he would point to her and say, "Peg, how does it go? I never saw her shrug her shoulders or look embarrassed. When he asked her, she was always able to quote whatever verse he was struggling with that day. I remember being so impressed, and even proud, that my grandma was so gifted. I know she never graduated high school. I'm not sure if she even went to high school. I do know she was an example of devotion.

Let us make an effort in devotion to prayer and the Word, that we may come to the end I referred to earlier. The result of our devotion will be a greater knowledge of God and His will for us. We will also find greater joy in keeping His commandments and serving others in this life and there will be no end, to our **joy, peace, love, gratitude, and contentment** in Christ. Let your end begin today.

God be with each of you as you spend time with the Lord. I hope everyone will need a new Bible and Book of Mormon for Christmas. Don't forget knee pads for a stocking stuffer!

## Favorite Christmas dessert or a favorite Christmas tradition food

Continued from back cover

"My favorite dessert to make and eat is this carrot cake! Delicious! It's called 'To Die for Carrot Cake.'"  
 –Brother Michael Zaino, Edison, NJ Branch



"Cornbread dressing."  
 –Sister Sharon Sloan, Forest Hills, FL Branch



"Lasagna! A huge pan of it...and even better the second or third day!"  
 –Brother Mark Kovacic, North Georgia Mission.

"Anise pizzelles are my favorite Christmas dessert! My favorite Christmas memory about food is warm cinnamon rolls on Christmas morning with my parents, brother, and sister."  
 –Sister Christine Martorana, Lake Worth, FL Branch

"The cookie trays my mother and grandmother would make. This recipe is special and simple. Just 'Mom's Cookies.' No further description needed!"  
 –Sister Dianne Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch

"While I was growing up, as Christmas drew near each year my mother would spend a day baking different kinds of Christmas cookies, and store them away to serve or give out over the holidays. Remembering even further back, her mother and aunts would come over and they would make traditional Sicilian Christmas cookies and desserts together."  
 –Brother Anthony Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch

"My Mother baked the huge 22-plus pound turkey every year. We kids would toast the loaves of bread 2 slices at a time for her yummy dressing!"  
 –Sister Jan Bork, Farmington Hills, MI Branch



"Cannoli cake is a favorite at our holiday dinners. It is made with my grandma Isabell's chiffon cake recipe and my grandma (nonna)

Chiara's cannoli cream recipe. Making and enjoying it reminds me of both of them of how Blessed I was to have them in my life."  
 –Sister Carolynn O'Connor, Farmington Hills, MI



"Canadian butter tarts."  
 –Sister Barbara Henderson Weiner, Irvina, CA Branch

## Gift List

By Brother Anthony Sclaro

**A**t a time of year when our focus is drawn toward gift giving, it's important for us to take time to appreciate the gift of God's Son in our lives. At some point during this season, many re-read the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke, where the angel appears to the shepherds in Judea, proclaiming the arrival of that most precious Gift.

In another time and place, as recorded in Mosiah Chapter 3, King Benjamin was similarly visited by a "herald angel" who declared unto him glad tidings of great joy. The gift that he brought to this king, approximately 125 years before Jesus' birth, was the Gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation. His message that day was as life-changing as what the shepherds saw and heard the night that Christ was born. It had a powerful effect on King Benjamin's people, and it carries the same power for us today.

This chapter is amazing in the level of detail it gives about the purpose behind Christ's coming and His effect on the human family. The "gifts" enumerated in verses 5-18 of Mosiah 3 (summarized below), are different from the type we unwrap on Christmas morning; we may even find some of them unappealing to our natural senses. But the gifts that Jesus brought to Earth are eternal. They are of infinite value. They make straight what is crooked, and heal what is broken in our fallen world—and our fallen souls—reconciling us with our Heavenly Father and offering hope to all who turn to Him. God's word makes it clear that these gifts were given with more love than any earthly Christmas present we could wish for:

- His condescension and ministry of bodily healing
- His ministry of casting out evil spirits
- His suffering and anguish for mankind's sins
- His unique identity as Son of God and son of man
- His mission of salvation, and His rejection and crucifixion
- His resurrection and righteous judgment upon the children of men
- His atoning blood's power over unknowing and ignorant sinners
- His condemnation of the willfully unrepentant
- His mercy in foretelling His coming by prophecy
- His longsuffering in adding the law as a schoolmaster
- His lovingkindness in sending signs and wonders, types and shadows, and prophets among His people
- His atoning blood's power over the souls of little children
- His being the only name, the only way or means, by which salvation comes to the human family
- His rightful judgment over the dying infant, and the need for every soul to humble themselves and believe that salvation comes through His blood

The elements that make up this list of gifts are presented numerous times throughout the Bible and Book of Mormon, wherever the Messiah is spoken of. As undeserving recipients of the Lord's mercy and grace, I encourage all of us to gladly embrace these good tidings—accept all of His gifts, and benefit from all of the ways in which our lives are enriched through knowing Jesus Christ. As freely as we have received, freely we should impart these gifts to others, in word and deed, realizing that it is our Father's will for every soul to be given the Gift of His Son.

**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. Lovullo  
Anthony Sclaro  
Cathy Gentile

**CIRCULATION MANAGER**  
Dianne Maddox

**DESIGN & LAYOUT**  
Ken Lombardo

**COPY EDITOR**  
Anthony Sclaro

**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 Sclaro  
anthony.sclaro@thechurchofjesuschrist.org  
732-259-3861

THE GOSPEL NEWS (ISSN 0279-1056) is published monthly for \$30.00 per year by The Church of Jesus Christ, World Operations Center, 110 Walton Tea Room Road, Greensburg, PA 15601-9998, 724-837-7799. Periodical postage paid at Greensburg, PA and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO: 6899 Bayshore Dr Lake Worth, FL 33462.

DONATIONS MAY BE SENT TO: 6899 Bayshore Dr., Lake Worth, FL 33462.

# Called to Be a Servant

Continued from cover

that's because we had amazing ministers. We were connected with our ministers, and the Church was filled with the love of God."

In September of 1978, Brother Pete was married to his high school sweetheart, Wendy Smith, who was introduced to the Church during their courtship. Newly married, Brother Pete continued to pursue his worldly ambitions and was completely satisfied that Sister Wendy was attending church. Sister Wendy, however, was not happy with just attending, but was feeling the call to give her life to Christ, and she became the catalyst that would bring Brother Pete to the conclusion that he needed a Savior. This realization came to Brother Pete one evening as Wendy asked him a very simple question, "How come we don't talk about the Lord anymore?" Pete, whose thoughts and ambitions were far from the Lord at that time, could give her no answer. The very next week, on a beautiful Sunday morning that has long been remembered in the Aliquippa Branch, Brother Pete and Sister Wendy felt the call of repentance along with 6 other souls, and went into the waters of baptism on March 23, 1980.

In the years that followed, Brother Pete was ordained a deacon in 1982, a teacher in 1988, an elder in 1995, and an evangelist in 2005. He has served multiple times as Southwest region president and presiding elder of the Mesa, AZ Branch, Vice Chair of the work in Mexico, and Vice Chair of the Domestic Operating Committee (DOC).

Brother Pete has been on missionary trips to the Philippines, visited missions in Mexico, and has supported the Native American works in the Southwest Region. As the DOC Vice Chair, he also traveled throughout the domestic Church to foster a spirit of evangelism and develop plans to help revitalize and grow our established branches and missions, which is a passion of his. Throughout all of Brother Pete's labors, the Lord has always been his guiding companion.

About 15 years ago, when Brother Pete was an evangelist, he had a short dream. "In the dream, we were going into a seminar that Brother Paul Palmieri was teaching. It was a beautiful lesson, and I felt like the lesson was very personal to me. When the class was over, Brother Paul went to the doorway to greet every brother that attended. When he got to me, he looked at me with that 'Brother Paul look,' hugged me... and said, 'Brother Pete, are you going to be ready now for your new work assignment?' and I answered, 'Yes, Brother Paul. I'm ready.'" Brother Pete had completely forgotten the dream over the course of the last 15 years. However, back in April of this year, when he was contacted by the Quorum of 12 Apostles, that dream was immediately brought back to his memory and the Lord spoke to Brother Pete's heart that this was the day that that dream would be fulfilled.

Like many others who have been called into the office of apostle, now begins a new chapter for our brother. This new chapter will require much of him, and comes with tremendous responsibility. He has been called to oversee the body of Christ and sacrifice his time and energy in service to its members. How will he accomplish the task that is ahead of him? Firstly, through the prayers of the saints, and secondly—and most importantly—with the help of God every step of the way. The hymn our

brother quoted in his address ends with these words... "There is nothing I can't do, doing it with You. Lord, stay step by step ahead of me."

## Preparing Our Hearts

By Brother Jason Genero

**Q:** We often refer to those who grew up in the Church as "born and raised" in the Gospel, but when did you have that personal revelation that brought you to the point of repentance?

**A:** I rendered obedience to the Lord in November of 1990. I had been struggling with the decision and asking the Lord to give me a tremendous experience of conversion so that I knew He was calling me. In doing this, I failed to realize He was already speaking to me through that still, small voice. At 20 years old, I then stepped out on faith and was baptized. I have never regretted that decision since.

**Q:** Since your baptism, you've held other ordained offices. Were there any particular experiences you'd like to share regarding how the Lord called you to any of these greater responsibilities?

**A:** Once I gave my life to Christ, my desire was to be a willing servant for Him. Through the years, when a calling would come upon me, there was always some type of confirmation through experience or complete unity of the ministry. I recall one experience associated with my calling to the office of deacon: I was attending a Southeast Area MBA campout 6 months after I was baptized. During the Sunday Service, late Apostle V. James Lovalvo was preaching. During his preaching, he kept looking at me and moving towards me. After the service, he approached a brother elder from my branch and inquired about me. Unbeknownst to me, the brother elder stated that I was being considered to be ordained a deacon. Brother V.J. then proceeded to tell the elder that during his sermon, every time he looked at me he saw a radiant glow about me. The aura was so strong that he was being drawn towards me. He likened it to the account of Stephen, the deacon in Acts the 6th chapter, when he sat before the council, "...the council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15). I was ordained a deacon shortly thereafter.

**Q:** Prior to any personal experiences or revelations God gave you, did you ever foresee yourself being called into the role of an apostle?

**A:** I cannot say that I saw myself as an apostle. Realizing my unworthiness and the grace of God in my life, I was compelled to be a servant to God for all He did for me. I was willing to take on any responsibility that was asked of me by the Church, and did so to the best of my ability with the help of God.

**Q:** Can you share an experience you had that was directly related to your being called into this office?

**A:** The most recent experience I was given in preparation for this calling occurred the week of the apostles' meeting in April 2021. I was in prayer for the leaders of the Church, that God would give them His blessing and

(Continued on page 11)

# Dedicated to the Work

By Sister Sydney Lovalvo

The weekend of September 25, 2021 was a big weekend for Farmington Hills, MI Branch #2. That weekend, our beautiful building was finally dedicated to the Lord... 10 years in the making! While the journey was long, tiresome, and sometimes discouraging, the Lord's timing is perfect and, in the end, everything led us to where we are now: Farmington Hills.

To give some background, 10 years ago Detroit Branch #2 sold their building in Allen Park, Michigan with hopes to find a new place of worship. In the meantime, the Redford Mission graciously opened up their



home to us and we worshipped with them until eventually, we merged into one branch. Prior to the sale of our building in Allen Park, the Saline Mission had merged with as well. Our branch is truly a melting pot of different people from different places, with a total of 126 members, and we could not be more grateful.

Finally, in 2018, we purchased what is now our building in Farmington Hills and sold our Redford property. Our dear Sister Jean Zaranko had a dream about our new building and location. When she pulled up to our branch, she explained that this in fact was the building in her dream. We met in our unrenovated building for a few months and then, while the renovations took place, we met at a community center until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. For over a year, we had blessed meetings on Zoom, but were anxiously awaiting to meet in our new place of worship. In March of 2021, after over a year of not meeting, we finally met in our renovated building, a true blessing; however, we were

anxious to have a dedication when the time was right.

This weekend was the right time. On Saturday evening, our presiding elder, Brother David Lovalvo, led a meeting that had a jam-packed agenda. Our meeting touched on the history of our branch, but mostly focused on the aspects of the Building Project and all the work that went into getting to this point. It was a perfect opportunity for our congregation, as well as our many visitors in attendance from other branches around the county, to learn about the process. Branch Historian Brother Anthony Gentile gave

a moving presentation of our branch's history along with where we are now, focusing on the fact that this building is for our future, and will be the place where we will love and serve God for generations to come.

General Church President Brother Joel Gehly addressed the congregation, talking about the laying of the foundation in the book of Ezra. Brother Randy Ciccati, General Church



Finance Chair and Brother Paul Vinsick General Church Trustees Chair, were introduced to the congregation and spoke on their experiences working on our building project. Additionally, Brother Del Rau, Great Lakes Region Trustee, Brother Joe DiBattista, the building's real estate agent, Brother Phil Buffa, the branch's Head Trustee, and Jason Arlow, the building's architect, gave their experiences on working

on the project. All of the speakers spoke about how much of a blessing it was to finally be celebrating this amazing, joyful time. In between our speakers, young people from the branch read quotes from our members expressing their



excitement for this new chapter. The choir also sang a beautiful rendition of a song called "This Is Your House" by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. Brother David ended the meeting by thanking everyone who had worked on committees to help finish the project. After our meeting, we had a wonderful dinner and were able to fellowship with our many visitors.

Sunday was the day we had all waited for: the day we dedicated our building to the Lord. With almost 200 people in attendance, our beautiful new sanctuary was full. First Counselor Brother Jordan Champine delivered the Dedication sermon, reading out of 2 Chronicles, talking about Solomon finding a place where he can dwell forever and how God will now dwell in our new place of worship forever. After the sermon, Apostle Brother Leonard A Lovalvo gave a touching dedicatory prayer, the moment our building was finally and officially dedicated to the Lord who has blessed us so abundantly. Additionally, Evangelist Brother Bob McDonnell spoke about how blessed he was to attend the dedication and how he and his wife, Sister Diane, feel like a part of our branch because they had been watching our meetings through Zoom. After the choir gave an encore performance, Apostle Brother Frank Natoli spoke about how to use our new building as a place to welcome new people in and show love to others. Brother David spoke of the excitement of the future: sharing the light of Christ to everyone we meet. Our new home is a place to worship and share the light of the Lord. It was the perfect ending to a perfect weekend that had been so many years in the making.

(Continued on page 8)

# New Year's Resolution: I Will Replace Worry with Belief

By Sister Christine Martorana

**W**e all have things we worry about. Some of these worries are small, daily experiences. Like when the traffic is bad on our way to work or school, and we keep looking at the time, worried we will be late. Or when we have a test in school or an evaluation at work, and we worry that it won't go well. Other times, the worries we have are big and critical. Like when we receive a scary diagnosis from the doctor, and we worry about how, when, and if we'll get better. Or when we get laid off from our job and we worry about the bills that are piling up.

All of these worries—big and small—are valid. They are legitimate reasons to feel uncertain, scared, and anxious. However, it takes energy to worry, and when we use our energy to worry, we are actually engaging in a counterproductive cycle. This is because worrying consumes our minds, causing us to run through what-if and worst-case scenarios in our heads. As we play out all of the potential outcomes that we can imagine, our worry increases. We become worried about all of the ways in which the situation could continue and get worse, and so we continue worrying—using our energy to cycle through worry and more worry.

But, what if this same energy could be better used to believe? What if we recognized the moments when we boarded this unproductive worry carousel and instead chose to get off, opting for belief instead?

If you're willing to refocus your energy and replace worry with belief in 2022, I invite you to read the following new year's resolutions and scriptures on cultivating belief, and select one that resonates with you:

- **I believe my God will work in my stillness.**
  - When worry consumes our minds, we are not being still. We might be physically still, but our mental worry carousel is moving round and round as we worry about what we should do, what we shouldn't do, what might happen, what it could mean, on and on. Yet, when we choose to be still, when we choose to calm our minds and step off that carousel, even if just for a moment, God can speak to us and He can work. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).
- **Worrying zaps my energy. I choose to believe.**
  - Worry is an energy-draining practice. Worry spirals and snowballs, becoming bigger and bigger. Scripture tells us that nothing productive comes from worry: "Which of you by taking thought [aka worrying] can add one cubit to his stature?" (Matthew 6:27). On the other hand, belief is a calming practice. It reminds us that God loves us, sees us, and cares for us.
- **I choose to believe that God is working all things for my good.**
  - Worry causes us to be concerned about what could happen. However, scripture tells us that God will work all things for our good—not some of the things, but all of the things. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God..." (Romans 8:28).
- **I believe my God can because He always has.**
  - Our God is unchanging. The same God who parted the sea for Moses, who raised Jairus's daughter from the dead, who gave the blind man sight at Bethsaida is the same God who sees and cares for your life. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Replacing worry with belief is easier said than done—but, it IS doable. As we plan for this new year, and think about making new year's resolutions, I hope that we can resolve to turn worry into belief. This doesn't mean that the worry-causing situations will stop showing up in 2022; but what it does mean is that we will commit to facing those situations with belief rather than wasting our energy on worry.

## Dedicated to the Work

Continued from page 7

The members of Farmington Hills Branch #2 are so extremely thankful to have a beautiful new building to serve the Lord in and make new memories. We all have such a spirit of thankfulness and gratitude, knowing that the long wait was worth it and the Lord has blessed us abundantly. We invite you all to come and worship with us if you are ever in Michigan. Meanwhile if you ever find yourself on a Sunday unable to attend Church, please join us on Zoom!

Use QR code for a link to previous meetings (including Dedication):

Weekly zoom code: 531-608-2181

Editor's note—We would love to hear about and share the blessings and events at your branch. Please send articles to [gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org](mailto:gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org).





## God With Us *By Brother Jerry Valenti*

Christmas is the time of year set aside to remember when Jesus Christ came to earth, initiating the period of time when we of the human family would have God with us. Here are 5 amazing facts that identify passages of scripture associated with the various phases of the concept of "God with us".

**1 The Problem** – "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). When sin entered the world (at the time of Adam and Eve), it created a barrier between man and God. "The Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance" (Alma 45:16) so, by necessity, God was in His home and we were here.

**2 The Solution** – In order to come from His high place to our low place (an act of condescension), God sent His son to live among us. In Nephi's vision, the angel allowed Nephi to see Jesus Christ coming to earth and interacting with the people. As Nephi viewed this scene, the angel said to

him, "Look and behold the condescension of God" (1 Nephi 11:26).

**3 The Signs** – Several prophets shared signs that the people could look for to indicate when Christ would be born. Here are a few of them: "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son" (Isaiah 7:14). "There shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign. And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you" (3 Nephi 14:4-5).

**4 The Name** – One of the names given to Jesus literally meant "God with us." "Now

all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:22-23).

**5 Making it Permanent** – Having God with us on earth is just a temporary arrangement, since we are only on earth for a finite period of time. However, God's plan to be with us extends beyond this life into eternity. As Jesus told His disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you... that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3). When we leave this life and resurrect, it's no longer God with us on earth—it's us with God for eternity.

## Ladies' Uplift Circle News



### There Is Something About That Name *By Sister Luann Carson*

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus; there's just something about that name.  
Master, Savior, Jesus, like the fragrance after the rain;  
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, let all Heaven and earth proclaim  
Kings and kingdoms will all pass away,  
But there's something about that name.  
(There's Something About That Name - the Gaithers)

What is it about the name of Jesus?

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

Jesus: the name chosen by God. But there is a multitude of other names for Christ that are found throughout the scriptures.

"And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:7

"I am that bread of life." John 6:48

"I am the good shepherd." John 10:11

"The king of all the earth." Alma 5:50

Alpha and Omega, King of Kings, Lamb of God. The list goes on and on.

We pray through His name because He is our advocate. (1 John 2:1) We worship Him because He is King and Lord of all. We follow Him because He is the Good Shepherd. (John 10:11) We build upon Him because He is our Rock. "That Rock was Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:4) There are so many more examples of names for Jesus in

scripture. (Almighty, Amen, The Gate, The Door, Lamb of God, Lion of Judah, Light of the world.)

Why so many names?

Jesus is given so many different names because He plays so many roles in our lives.

Is Jesus all these things to you and more? Does He function in all these different ways in your life?

Can you recall times when Jesus has been your counselor? Your rock? Your shepherd? Your door? These are all testimonies to His multitude of names.

When we celebrate Christmas, let's celebrate the name of Christ, all of His names, and mostly the many amazing roles He plays in our lives.



## Who Saw the Christmas Star? Who Knew Jesus Would Be Born?

Dear Friends,

Two thousand years ago, God sent His Son Jesus to this Earth to love and teach us humans. Hundreds and hundreds of years before baby Jesus was born God told His prophets that this was His plan. His Son Jesus, who was with Him in heaven, was willing to be born to a loving girl named Mary and her husband Joseph. Jesus would grow up and teach us how to live, please God, love others, and have everlasting lives with Him in heaven when our bodies die. But who was waiting for this amazing child's birth? Who had studied the ancient prophecies? Who saw the star or met the infant Jesus and knew the Messiah was here?

Our records, the Bible and the Book of Mormon, are also ancient. They tell us what happened. In the Americas the prophet Samuel the Lamanite came and told the Nephite people to stop being bad! He told them that the Savior would be born soon in far away Israel and they needed to get right with God's laws. He said they would know the night of Jesus' birth by a huge star that would shine so bright that for a day and a night it would not get dark! The sun would go down but the shining star would make the night that Jesus was born look like daylight!

Many believed and got baptized by the minister Nephi (who was the grandson of Helaman. See Helaman 16th Chapter), yet others tried to kill Samuel the prophet of God as he preached from a high wall. Their arrows and spears could not touch him. He escaped and left. Then the evil people decided to kill all the believers in God and made a tricky plan to do so. They even planned which day,

Nephi the Godly believer, cried out to the Lord, praying for hours. (See Third Nephi Chapter 1.) Jesus spoke to him and told him, "Be of good cheer. The time is at hand. This night the sign will be given! . . . In the morning I come into this world and will fulfill all the things spoken by the holy prophets." And that night, even though the sun went down, that huge star was so close to earth that it shone as bright as the sun. The evil people were afraid when they saw this message from God. They believed the warning words Samuel the Lamanite had spoken to them. Thousands of amazed people were sorry and were believers now because of this star!

In the far away land of Israel there were wise men that were following the new star in the sky. They had studied the ancient prophecies and knew that a baby would be born who would be the Son of God, the Messiah. When they travelled to the capitol to ask evil King Herod, where this baby was, Herod was mad!

He had his wise men search the old records. The old prophets said that this baby would be born in the city of Bethlehem. As the wise men travelled on to find the baby, evil King Herod started planning how to kill all the babies of that city. He hoped one of them would be Jesus.

But the beautiful star which they saw in the east went before them. It came and stood over where the young child was. (See Matthew Chapter 2.) When they saw the star they rejoiced and went into the house where the baby was. They fell down and worshipped Baby Jesus. They gave the family gifts of great value; gold, frankincense, and myrrh (very valuable sap used for medicine and perfume). In a dream, God warned them not to go back to King Herod. An angel also came in a dream and told Joseph to take Mary and the baby and leave immediately for a land called Egypt because Herod was looking for them to kill the baby! Joseph listened!

(Continued on page 11)

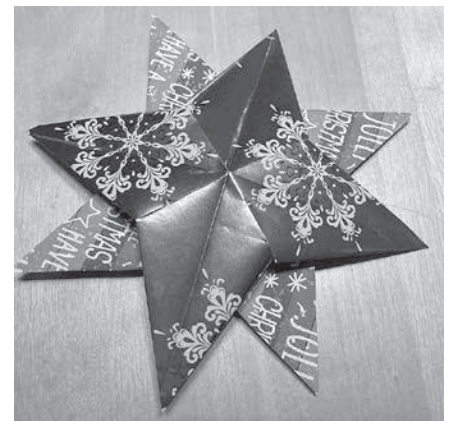
### KID'S CRAFT

#### You will need

2-4" or 6" squares of wrapping paper or construction paper • String • Tape or glue

1. Turn the paper over (pattern side down) and fold into 4 quarters
2. Turn the paper back over and fold diagonally in both directions.
3. Use a pencil to mark the middle of the folds that are creased towards you. These are the horizontal and vertical creases that you made in step 2.
4. Cut with scissors from the edge to your pencil mark on all four sides.
5. Fold sides down and adhere with liquid glue or tape
6. Repeat the previous steps to make another star
7. Place glue on the backsides of two stars and adhere together
8. When the stars are done the pointed 3d sides should be facing out on both sides
9. Poke a hole in the top and loop string through to hang

Need more help? Scan the QR code (place your smart phone on it as if you were taking a picture of the QR code and a link will appear) to see Sister Sophia teach you how to make it.



Take a picture and send it to us at [gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org](mailto:gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org) to show us the stars you made!



Touch the Nailprints. Know for certain. Feel the pain He felt for you. He can save where none deliver. He can do what none can do.

See the angel there beside you, hear the message he relays, Jesus Christ will reign forever. Heaven and earth will sing his praise. Fall before Him crucifiers, all who nailed Him to the tree. With His blood He seals your pardon, with His grace He makes you free.

Star of David, what a wonder in the heavens has been shown. Such compassion, such great splendor, bringing mercy to His own. Tenderly His arms encircle, Israel's tears begin to fall. Fall before this Lamb of Glory, King of Kings and Lord of All.

## Who Saw the Christmas Star? Who Knew Jesus Would Be Born?

Continued from page 10

Don't forget, there are twelve tribes of Israel. The descendants of the tribe of Judah saw the star up high in the sky. Wise men followed it. And Jesus speaks in the Bible saying that He has "other sheep." (See John 10:16.) He meant other followers, which we know, include the Native Americans, the descendants of Joseph. They saw the star so close that the night before the baby Jesus was born it was as light midday all night long. Who else saw this star??

We do not know yet what God may have revealed to the other ten tribes who were scattered around the world. Jesus talked about them in 3 Nephi 16:1. He said, "I have other sheep, which are not of this land, neither of the land of Jerusalem, neither in any parts of that and round about where I have been to minister...they shall hear my voice." Did they also have the words of Isaiah and other prophets telling about the birth of Jesus? Did they see the incredible star and wonder what it meant? We won't know until we are more righteous and the Lord gathers those hidden ten tribes again. The scriptures promise that God will gather them all back again. Then we will learn what they have recorded from their ancient days about our Savior, Jesus.

With love, Your friend, *Sister Jan*

## Preparing Our Hearts

Continued from page 6

direction. While in prayer, I was given a vision: I saw a large, pure white table. There were twelve chairs around the table. One chair was moved out to allow someone to sit in it, but I could not see anyone moving the chair, as if it were done by the Spirit. I saw myself appear and sit in the chair, and the Spirit moved me up to the table. The vision ended. The Gift of Tongues came forth immediately following the vision confirming the experience. The Word of the Lord then was given stating: "I have chosen you, thus saith the Lord!" A day later, Brothers Paul Palmieri and Jerry Valenti approached me, informing me that I was being considered for a calling into the Quorum of Twelve Apostles.

**Q:** With each ordained office, the Spirit gives us a new focus or direction that guides us in fulfilling that office. What would you say is the most significant focus God has placed upon your heart in this new role thus far?

**A:** For the past 9 years, the Lord has been speaking to His people. He has been asking us to prepare our hearts. I believe we are in a great time period, the establishment of Zion.

This Zion Era will provide a time of perfect peace, without sickness or sorrow. It will be the time when the House of Israel will come to the knowledge that Jesus Christ is their Lord, starting with the House of Joseph. For us to be part of this, our hearts must be pure, without malice or jealousy, and full of the love of Christ. This is the focus that is upon my heart and mind, that we as a people would purify our hearts to be ready for this great and glorious happening that we have dreamed of for so long!

**Q:** The Apostle Paul of old gave us many encouraging letters to strengthen the saints of the Church in his day. In short, if you could give one message to the saints of today that would give them encouragement, or be something we should focus on in the present, what would it be?

**A:** If I was tasked to write a short letter to the church today, in the Spirit of God I would write: "Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed is the name of our God for His love in giving us His Son, Jesus Christ, who died for each and every one of us. We, as God's creation, are so valuable to the Lord that He was willing to die for us. In recognizing such a great and marvelous sacrifice, let us strive to be a living

sacrifice for Him! Let us strive for perfection through Jesus Christ. Let us rid ourselves of those things which burden our hearts and minds. Let us be the people of God that reflect His great love; not given to anger or hatred, jealousy or envy. Let us be a support to each other, striving together to reach the mark of perfection and eternal life! Let us not value ourselves higher than our brother or sister. Let us have faith in the Lord that He can take care of all our needs. Let us live faithful lives, truly trusting in Him and embracing our trials, knowing that God is refining and perfecting us. Let us not think the great fulfillment of God's promises are far off but are so close that we serve God with excitement and joy, waiting for the next horizon to see what God will do! May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with each of you!"



Brother Pete Giannetti



Brother Scott Griffith

# Blessing Bits

## Christmas Blessing Bits

by Sister Elizabeth McDonnell

**BB** Blessed be the name of the Lord, for I have seen His power unfolding in the most miraculous ways here in Bethlehem! What a marvel to be near as Mary, under the strain of childbirth, brought this heavenly angel to Earth—the Redeemer of the world! As she rests beside me, my heart is overwhelmed with love as I hold this precious child, Jesus, in my arms. My love for Him is immeasurable, and yet, how much greater still is my Heavenly Father's love for me? It is as vast as the starry night on which this babe was born...and when I consider that, I realize that I have only begun to comprehend all that has transpired this night. – *"Brother" Joseph*

**BB** My soul doth magnify the Lord—wherein all of the things which the Angel revealed to me from the very beginning

have come to pass! My Son, the Son of the Highest, Almighty God, born in a lowly manger. How will one so small, and from such humble beginnings, fulfill such a marvelous work among the house of Jacob? I cannot say, but I am certain that God has already prepared a way. How many lives will He touch? How many souls will He make whole? I know this: The glory of the Lord shall go on for generations upon generations, and the name of the Lord shall be glorified forever! – *"Sister" Mary*

**BB** Glory to the Lord on high! Mine eyes have beheld the salvation of the Lord, and for one miraculous moment in the temple, these arms held the consolation of my people, Israel! Oh, Lord! All of these many years I have waited, and still! Your ways are perfect, and your word is truth! This child shall be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Amen. – *"Brother" Simeon*

**BB** Thanks be to the God of Israel!! To all here who look for redemption, look no more! For today your Redeemer has come into this place! See the child in His parents' arms, and know that your Deliverer lives! Hallelujah! – *"Sister" Anna*

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Elizabeth McDonnell at [eksanchor@gmail.com](mailto:eksanchor@gmail.com). [in approximately 150 words].

Answers to Question of the Month to [gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org](mailto:gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org).




**Question for this month:** Pick three words that best describe 2021.



**Answer from last month:** Food is always a big part of the Christmas Celebration, especially desserts. Share your favorite Christmas dessert or a favorite Christmas tradition or memory about food.

"Since I was a little girl I always remember Aunt Isabella Bologna and/or my Mom making what we referred to as 'Holiday Soup.' It's now known as Italian Wedding Soup. It was served at the beginning of our Holiday Dinner and I always felt the love and warmth they lovingly put into the making of it each year. That's when I knew it was 'The Holidays!'" – *Sister KarenJo Pandone, Farmington Hills, MI Branch*

Turn back to page 4 for more answers to this question.



Use hospitality one to another... As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another. 1 Peter 4:9,10