

The Gospel News

IN THIS ISSUE:

*Moving
Forward*



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

5 Amazing Facts
Page 9

Children's Corner
Page 10

Blessing Bits
Page 12

Sweeter As the Years Go By: A Look Back Over the Past Ten Years

By Sister Leona Buffa

Throughout the years the Lord has called many of our brothers and sisters to do work in various parts of His Vineyard. One of the works of the Church has been the Native American work on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario, Canada. During the past 10 years, since Brother John and I have personally been going to the Six Nations Mission, the Lord has showered us with blessings and gifts many times over. God is so good! We anxiously await for our borders to reopen so we can continue this GREAT work.

It is said that our children are the Church of tomorrow. At Six Nations we have seen many of our young children grow into beautiful, responsible, and loving adults—many of whom have given their lives to Christ and we now call our brothers and sisters. There are those who trusted in the Lord to pursue a college degree in their chosen profession and have been successful in that endeavour—they realize that the Lord put all the pieces of the puzzle together for them so they could have the desires of their heart. Through the years they would come to Church week after week and fall under the sound of the Gospel in attending Sunday school, witnessing the preaching service, testimony, singing, feet washing, anointings etc. They have on many occasions seen the miracles of the Lord made manifest for various individuals. The small children also fall under the sound of the Gospel by being there and I know that even though sometimes it may seem as though they're not listening to everything that is being said or done, they are in the presence of God's Spirit and we pray that someday they will know the Lord as we do!

Then there are seasoned brothers and sisters who are members of the Six Nations Mission and have been faithfully coming throughout the years—the familiar faces we depend on seeing each week. Their presence alone gives you a sense of their dedication and desire to serve the Lord and to keep their feet rooted and grounded in the Gospel. Each and every soul has a testimony of what the Lord has done for them. Many of the members and young people have experienced healing through anointing and the fervent prayers of the saints! God has also given dreams and visions as He saw the need. There are those who have been given beautiful gifts from the Lord as He speaks to us in these latter days.

After each of our Sunday services, we always enjoy fellowship with one another during a luncheon that has been prepared. Many sisters contribute to our little feast! Afterwards, we clean up and load the church van with the children of the saints and bring them safely back to their homes just before we begin our journey back to the States

Every summer the first week in August is designated for Vacation Bible School at Six Nations so the children know to reserve that week and have the opportunity to invite their friends along for the adventure. We have covered a wide variety of topics over the past 10 years and the Lord gave us the inspiration behind every one of them! Praise His

(Continued on page 7)

	<p>In light of the church still abiding patiently through the coronavirus, let's use God's Word to "THINK POSITIVE" about 2021.</p>		<p>Isaiah 43:18-19 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old... I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.</p>
<p>Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.</p>		<p>2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.</p>	
	<p>1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.</p>		<p>2 Nephi 22:2 Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song...</p>
<p>Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing;... And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.</p>		<p>2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.</p>	

BFTP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck

Thirty-five years ago, on January 27, 1985, Bro. Matt and Sis. Pat Collison were baptized in Windsor, Ontario.

Before being baptized, Sister Pat had a dream where she got onto a tour bus that had been chartered to find the true church. There were many denominations on the bus, and they were told they would recognize the true church by a wooden monarch butterfly on the building. The bus travelled through the city to all of the churches and past the church she had attended as a child, but no butterfly. She then saw the little white church, The Church of Jesus Christ, that Matt had been bringing her to. The Church had not only one butterfly, but it was covered in them. This dream removed any doubt that Pat had. Pat whispered her desire to Brother Ken Wright as he passed sacrament. Brother Tony Lovalvo, who was visiting, asked Matt if he wanted to join his wife. Matt asked Brother Tony if he felt the Lord would accept him. Brother Tony said He surely would have him. Matt stood up and said, "If you feel the Lord would accept me, I would like to be baptized then." Soon after, Brother Matt began visiting the Saugeen Reserve in Southampton, Ontario. For the next several years they met in homes, a schoolhouse, and a community center until they could afford their own house in 1994. Brother Matt was ordained a teacher in 1987 and an elder in 1997. They now have a little Church in the woods on the Saugeen Reserve.





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.



“Is Your Vision Improving?”

By Elder Doug Obradovich

“Receive thy sight” (Luke 18:42)

I always know when the year is ending, because my iPhone calendar alerts me that my annual eye exam is coming up. Like Pavlov’s bell, I trade salivation for nervousness, as the sound takes me instantaneously to the Non-Contact Tonometer (that irritating air-puff blower). This year, after surviving the billow’s abusive force, along with the other multiple forms of minor torture, the results were processed and presented: “Your vision has improved over the past 12 months.” What? After turning 40, 20 previous visits brought news of diminishing eyesight. This seemed a strange turn in my natural trajectory.

I have wondered since whether my eyesight has truly upgraded, or the doctor just misdiagnosed something. The questionable report notwithstanding, her words have morphed into a spiritual application, as I have begun considering our spiritual eyesight and whether we can experience great improvements in this area. Does our

“vision” improve as we age, seemingly in direct opposition to the effects of age on our natural vision? In Proverbs 29:18, the writer says, “Where there is NO VISION, the PEOPLE PERISH.”

This verse becomes a reminder of my first year head-coaching high school football. Before I ever stepped onto the football field or shared time with my players in the locker room, my first task involved compiling a playbook. When hiring new financial consultants, before I ever granted them permission to interact with any prospective clients, I required their compiling a Business Plan. To this day, I revamp my physical activity commitment sheet each year before January 1. When Candace and I make any type of long drive, prior to leaving the house, we have the trip mapped out. Why is all of this necessary? Because it makes no sense to expect to arrive somewhere without preparing in advance.

This preparation involves vision, and when such vision is applied to your spiritual life,

it can determine where, when, and even whether you will arrive. First, let’s assess your spiritual VISION:

- What do you see clearer today than you did 5 years ago?
- What do you view as better (ex: improved) than you viewed it 5 years ago?
- What do you enVISION accomplishing over this next year?
- What do you enVISION accomplishing over the next 5 years?
- What do you enVISION accomplishing over the next 20 years?

It’s January, and time for your spiritual eye exam. Is your VISION improving? See if you can read these letters on the wall: DO GREAT THINGS OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS. If you could read all of those letters, then your spiritual VISION is clearly: 20-21! God love you all!

January 1996

By Brother Don Ross

"Don't turn back. Don't look back." That is what Apostle V.J. Lovalvo stated in his sermon at the General Church Conference this past October.

A new year is here. We cannot go back, we cannot look back. We must go forward. It is imperative that we go forward, press forward for our spiritual welfare and for the welfare of the Church.

The dictionary describes forward as, "belonging to the front; located in advance." It is not always easy to press forward. Many obstacles are placed in our path to detract us or throw us off course. They can be overcome. They must be overcome. There is no reason we cannot prevail and persevere.

How is it possible? By putting on the whole armour of God, not just part of it. We read in Ephesians 6:14-17, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Please notice that the front of the body is completely covered and protected. Why the front? Because when soldiers go to battle, they go forward, not backward! Their goal is forward, not backward. Their goal is in front of them, not behind them.

Have you ever tried to walk backward? It is awkward, uncomfortable, and unnatural. Have you ever tried to run backward? It is almost impossible.

Our commitment to Jesus Christ is to go forward, not backward. Do you remember the question you were asked at the water's edge the day of your baptism? It was, "Do you promise before God and these witnesses to serve God all the days of your life?" The response was yes! Your response was a commitment to go forward, not backward! Nephi confirms this commitment is to go forward. In 2 Nephi 31:20, he states, "Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life."

Consider the story of David when he met the challenge of Goliath. Saul armed David with his armor. David said to Saul in 1 Samuel 17:39, "I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them." David was familiar with the whole armor of God, and it fit! David had proved the whole armor of God. He had it on when he met Goliath. The whole armor of God made David invincible against a giant and proven warrior. David took his sling and five stones. All he needed was one! That one stone was the stone of the Lord!

Samuel the Lamanite was untouchable. Arrows were shot at him. Stones were thrown at him. In spite of his antagonists' excellent marksmanship, no stones or arrows hit him or found their intended target. Why? The Book of Mormon in the sixteenth chapter of Helaman tells us the Spirit of the Lord was with Samuel. He had on the whole armor of God!

David and Samuel were used by God for His honor and glory. We can be used by God for His honor and glory. We can be, should be, and must be that forward motion for The Church of Jesus Christ. We can and should be a positive influence in The Church of Jesus Christ. We need the Church. The Church needs us. The world needs us. The world needs The Church of Jesus Christ and it needs it now, not later! Look around you. The world is in turmoil. The world is in darkness and sin. We have the key to overcome the world, the condition of the world. We have

(Continued on page 7)



GOSPEL NEWS FACTS 1990S

Did you know...

1. In July 1991, the Maine Mission dedicated their newly acquired church building, which was originally built in 1799. They are still meeting there today.
2. In 1993, several hand-drawn ads appeared in the Gospel News promoting GMBA Camp. The theme was "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee."
3. The Sardinia, Italy branch was dedicated in 1993, and an ad was placed in the Gospel News inviting people to attend.
4. The Church hosted a World Missionary Conference in July 1999 at Olivet Nazarene University.
5. The Church's first missionary trip to Peru occurred in 1995.
6. The entire September 1999 issue was filled with pictures of the World Missionary Conference. Not a single article was printed.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Carolynn O'Connor
carolynn@xelapack.com
734-260-0213

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Chuck Maddox, Jr.
chuck.maddox.jr@thechurchofjesuschrist.org
937-266-2506

CONSULTANTS

Alex Gentile
Paul Liberto
Leonard A. Loyalvo
Anthony Scolaro
Cathy Gentile

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Dianne Maddox

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Ken Lombardo

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
komjathy@wowway.com
248-371-9208

MIDWEST

midwest@thechurchofjesuschrist.org

PACIFIC

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

PENN-MID ATLANTIC

Ray Inrieri
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

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: 5465 3rd Road, Lake Worth, FL 33467.

The prospect of a New Year inevitably leads to talk of new beginnings. Certainly after what we experienced in 2020, people are especially hopeful about making a fresh start. In connection with this idea, we may have heard on more than one occasion references to “going back” to the way things were before the health crisis, political battles, and civil unrest interrupted our lives. Compared to what we’ve had to endure for most of last year, resuming the lifestyle we enjoyed prior to the COVID pandemic sounds like a welcome change. However, in reality, going back to what was wouldn’t be a change at all.

The scriptures support the idea that God’s plans for His people involve moving forward, rather than backward, in nearly every instance. In the handful of cases when the Lord allowed His followers to return to their homelands, they came back changed in some way by the things they experienced in the interval. The Church has been given numerous inspired messages in the past year indicating that “going back” is not what God has planned for our lives.

Whether we welcomed it or not, the events of 2020 put many aspects of our lives on hold. As a Church, both at the general and local levels, we were presented with the necessity, the opportunity really, to capitalize on the unexpected need to gather and fellowship remotely, resulting in many branches and missions of the Domestic Church suddenly carrying the Everlasting Gospel outside of our buildings to reach our homebound congregations as well as others—some familiar with our Church and many who up until now were not. While assembling to worship and fellowship with the saints in person wherever and whenever we can is not to be forsaken (Hebrews 10:25), the enhanced outreach that has resulted from broadcasting our messages can be seen as a change for the better, and we hope that it will continue.

Members of recent generations could understandably consider the year 2020 to be the most disruptive thing they’ve ever experienced. Truthfully, in the last six or seven decades, we in North America have had it relatively easy, enjoying an era of consistently increasing prosperity in relative peace. However, if we extend our perspective to view a larger span of time—to include World Wars I and II, and the intervening Great Depression; or broaden our horizons to look at what day-to-day living is like for the average person anywhere else in the world—we would soon realize that despite the “speed bump” we experienced in 2020, we’ve been extremely fortunate to be able to achieve, possess, and enjoy so much of what the world has to offer. While there’s no denying that temporally speaking, things could be better, they could also be so much worse.

Of course the perspective we all should have—the one that the Lord has been prompting us to cultivate for quite some time—is that our relationship with Him and our eternal destiny are infinitely more important than any ups and downs we may experience in the brief time that we’re on this Earth. A little over a year ago, two dreams were submitted to the Church carrying a common message concerning distractions in our lives. The human histories recorded in the scriptures demonstrate that people can allow temporal conditions—prosperity as well as difficulty—to interfere with their spiritual development.

Each of us might have a different answer to the question of what lesson(s) we learned in 2020. As 2021 offers everyone a blank page to start the next chapter of our lives, I think the Lord would be pleased if He saw us applying whatever spiritual wisdom and insight we may have gained last year as we continue on our mortal path to eternity.

...when the Lord allowed His followers to return to their homelands, they came back changed...

Aspiring and current writers and editors
are invited to join the Gospel News Team for a

Writers Workshop

Saturday, January 23rd • 2-part Zoom meeting • 2:00pm

(Zoom meeting ID and password available on your Region Announcements)

Part 1

Whether you consider yourself novice or advanced, this workshop will be a fun, low-stakes way to learn more about writing strategies and your potential as a writer. Throughout the workshop, we will experiment with different writing genres, brainstorm together, and share strategies for producing compelling and effective writing.

Led by Sister Christine Martorana —
GMBA Editor and Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at
Florida International University in Miami, Florida

Part 2

All Branch and Region Editors are encouraged to attend part two of the event, **“How to be a Branch or Region Editor in the 21st Century”** where we will talk about the changing role of an Editor and ways to contribute to the Gospel News and other communication formats throughout the Church.

Led by Sister Carolynn O'Connor — *Gospel News Editor-in-Chief*
& Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr. — *Gospel News Assistant Editor*



Gospel
Guidance

What should I do about a coworker who wants to know more about my faith and my church, but has unknowingly disagreed with many of my beliefs in previous conversations? Should I tell him even though I know

he will disagree? Should I not tell him and avoid a potential disagreement that would change our working relationship?

This is a great question, and it's good that you do not want to cause an unnecessary disagreement with your coworker. If this person is requesting information about your faith, you need to be honest about what you believe, even if you think the person will disagree. You shouldn't misrepresent this information to the person or give only part of the story or twist your words to make your friend think that you believe something you don't. Alma told the people they needed to be witnesses of God at all times, in all things, and in all places (Mosiah 18:9) and I'll add with all people. All solid relationships are built on

honesty. If this person wants to know more about you, they need to know you for who you really are. If you misrepresent yourself, they don't really know you. The fact is you aren't always going to see eye to eye with your friends or coworkers. You never know, your conversation may bring you closer in the end. Ask God to prepare you and pray that He gives you the words to say. If your coworker is a Christian, focus on the common ground you share. If your coworker tries to argue with you, answer with soft words. Like Ephesians 4:15 says, speak the truth and speak it in love.

Did you enjoy this article? Some of you may be familiar with the Student Support Program, which years ago would occasionally feature a column titled “Solomon says”. Young adults would submit anonymous questions that the mysterious “Solomon” would prayerfully answer.

My dear brothers and sisters, if you've got something on your mind, please ask. Things are confusing out there in the world, and we want to support you by showing you what the Word of God has to say about things in your life. The brothers and sisters at the Gospel News realize that it's often easier to ask authentic questions when nobody knows who you are. If you want to ask an anonymous question, please send them in to gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Sweeter As the Years Go By: A Look Back Over the Past Ten Years

Continued from cover

name! We have lessons, singing, arts and crafts, lunches, picnics, games, and an occasional excursion, much to their delight! Each child receives a generous goodie bag of useful items for the upcoming school year along with some fun items for their enjoyment. Being an elementary school employee has given me many opportunities to obtain new or very slightly used items for the children of the mission to receive and enjoy for years to



come. The teenagers, young adults, and members all play an active role in our VBS, along with the saints from the States who come along to help in various ways and contribute their musical talents. So many Precious Memories!! So many precious children!!

On occasion we have visited the nursing home on the reserve. We currently have a sister who is a resident there and we go in with our guitar and have a season of singing. They love to interact and join along. Some have even testified. They bring us such joy! Throughout the years we have seen many baptisms, ordinations of an elder and a deaconess, and many baby blessings! We also enjoyed a beautiful summer wedding for one of our mission members. We were able to organize a Ladies' Uplift Circle—and that amazing group of sisters has held many garage sales in the church parking lot to raise funds. I cannot count the many sleepovers we have had with young teenagers—those were some sleepless but fun times!! So many unforgettable blessings! On a very sad note, we lost Brother Marvin Green after lengthy illness. He was a Native American minister living there, and was a tremendous blessing to those of us who knew him, a faithful man of God, and a counselor to all. He is greatly missed.

In addition to myself and Brother John, who is Presiding Elder, Brother AJ and Sister Tracey Cuerrier and Brother Kerry Carlini and Sister Jan Bork support the mission. There are also other brothers and sisters from the states and from Canada who visit on occasion. We typically leave early on a Saturday morning and stay on the reserve until after lunch on Sunday. On the 3 1/2-hour drive we talk about the agenda for the weekend and the blessings of God in our lives, and occasionally sing a song or two! We arrive at the church building, which has bedrooms and a kitchen, and unload our belongings for the weekend, along with any food and supplies we have with us. We have a word of prayer before going to visit the saints of God and the young people at each of their homes Saturday afternoon and evening. What a blessing it is to see them and share in the blessings of what God has done in their lives!



The saints of God, young people, children, and friends that attend the Six Nations Mission are more than just people we got to know because we travel there every month, they are our family—the family of God! We share the good times, the bad times, the low times, the high times. We carry each other through our prayers and fellowship as we commune with the Lord on a daily basis, looking for Him to be our constant guide and company in a world of pain and uncertainty.



Most definitely the work merits the title, "Sweeter as the years go by." The Lord always does His perfect work and His Handprints are all over the Six Nations Mission. May the Lord bless and keep each and every one of us as we strive to do His will each and every day.

Editorial Viewpoint (January 1996) Continued from page 4

The Church of Jesus Christ.

We cannot change 1995, it is past and gone. It will never return. We can influence our future, we can influence and change the direction of the world. We can make 1996 the greatest year in the history of The Church of Jesus Christ. Through our diligence, our persistence, our perseverance, we can make the world a better place.

By the love we show towards one another, the whole world will know that we are His disciples. By the love we show to our neighbors, our friends, the world, everyone will know that we

are His disciples. By serving God in total spirit and truth, we can make a difference. We are different and we can make a difference.

Be bold but not overbearing. When people ask you what church you belong to, be forward, step forward, and tell them you belong to The Church of Jesus Christ. Tell them what it means to you. Humbly tell them what it can do for them. Invite them to your meetings. Tell them to come and see! Tell them how God moves in mysterious ways. Tell them of the gifts in The Church of Jesus Christ. Tell them of the miracles in The Church of Jesus Christ.

The Church of Jesus Christ is not a stagnant organization. It is not a passive organization. The Church of Jesus Christ is constant and sure in its beliefs. The Church of Jesus Christ is dynamic. The Church of Jesus Christ is exciting. The Church of Jesus Christ is moving forward. We must help it move forward. We must press forward, for the prize is in view for us and for The Church of Jesus Christ. The prize is in view for the whole world. The prize is The Church of Jesus Christ.

Let us be soldiers for The Church of Jesus Christ. Let us be warriors for The Church of Jesus Christ. Let us put on the whole armor of God. It is invincible!

I am alive in Christ! Looking back on our GMBA November virtual Conference

On Saturday, November 14, 2020, 159 screens joined together for our first-ever GMBA November virtual Conference. The virtual meeting was filled with inspirational music, inspired preaching, prayer requests, and praise reports. Although not the same as gathering in person, we are thankful that our GMBA leadership organized this event.

Speaker #1: Brother Randy Ciccati

- Memorable quote: "It's a great day to be spiritually alive, considering the alternative."
- Take-away points:
 - We are spiritually alive, because Christ is alive in our lives.
 - What are we doing daily to keep Christ alive in our lives? Are we reading scripture, attending weekly meetings, praying—and doing all of this regularly?
- Guiding scriptures: Romans 6:11 and Alma 37:37

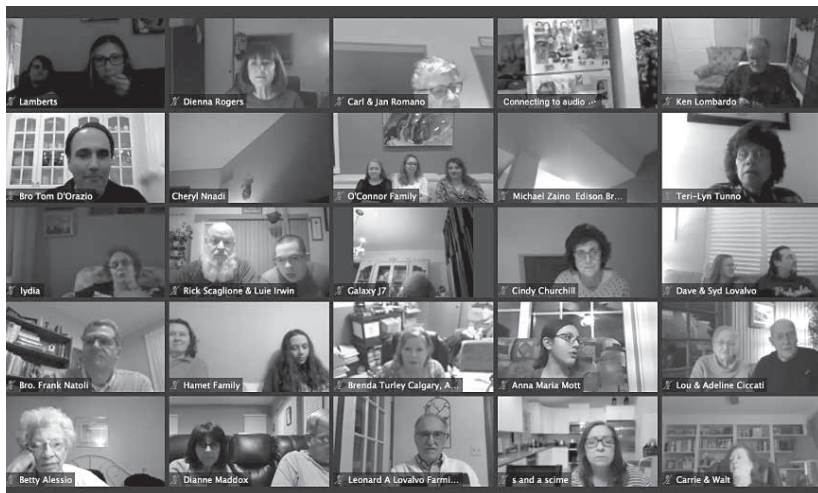
A sampling of the praise reports shared in the Zoom chat:

- My sister gave her life to Christ last week and was baptized in The Church of Jesus Christ. All honor, and glory, and praise be to our Savior!!!
- I want to thank God for helping me with my college exams!
- Battling COVID-19, but my GOD is bringing me through!!
- I'm thankful for the willingness of our youth to share their talents and gifts.
- I praise God for bringing salvation to my life.
- My husband was healed of COVID and no one else in the family got it. The Lord protected us. Praise and honor and glory go to my Jesus Christ.
- I thank God for being raised in this church
- My praise report is having my husband watching the Irvine sermons with me via YouTube/Zoom. He doesn't attend church with me, so this has been a blessing for me.
- I want to thank God for my father's recovery from COVID. He is doing great! All the honor and glory to God!
- We are thankful for Zoom and the opportunity to see everyone that we miss!
- I blindly chose choir as a class in school and the teacher is a very kind Christian man that has our class singing Spiritual songs. It makes my day.
- I thank God for life, health, and strength to make it through the tough times in life as well as being able to experience the great times.
- God spared my life and has afforded me the chance to LIVE for Him!

(Continued on page 11)

Speaker #2: Brother Tony Ricci

- Memorable quote: "He, Who is the greatest, loves me, who is the least."
- Take-away points:
 - People who love the Lord don't just talk the talk, but they walk the walk.
 - To be people of God, to be alive in Christ, we must love God, always do good, tell others of Christ, and build our lives upon His foundation.
- Guiding scriptures: Philippians 3:7-10 and 1 John 4:10



Brothers, sisters, and friends gathered together on Zoom



Sister Kenia Ochoa singing "Faith, Hope, and Charity" in Spanish



Farmington Hills young people singing "It's My Desire"

5 Happy New Year

By Apostle Jerry Valenti

As the calendar turns from December to January, we celebrate the beginning of a new year. Considering what we dealt with in the year 2020, we're certainly hopeful of a better year in 2021. The scriptures describe many things that are new. Here are 5 amazing facts that identify ways that we can focus on being "new" in the new year.

1 New Star – Having just completed the Christmas season, we may have heard about the new star that appeared that led the wise men to Jesus. In our lives, there are things that lead us toward Jesus and things that lead us away from Him. In this new year, let's do our best to follow only those things which lead us to be closer to Christ.

2 New Testament – In the new year, let's focus on reading and living by the words of the New Testament. Or the Old Testament. Or the Book of Mormon. We need to be familiar with and willing to live by the Word of God to be the people God wants us to be.

3 New Commandment – Jesus told His disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another" (John 13:34-35). Want to stand out from others in the world today? Be the one who shows love for others. It's sadly not very fashionable today, but we can do it. Jesus set the example—we just need to follow it.

4 New Man – "Put off...the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And...put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:22,24). When

we were baptized, we laid to rest the "old man" and became the "new man" or "new creature" in Christ. Let's resist any urges to bring the old man back to life. In the new year, let's say, "Good-bye Old Man! Hello New Man!"

5 New Jerusalem – Ether 13 describes the building of a city known as New Jerusalem. This will be the principal city in a place known as Zion during an era of time referred to as the Peaceful Reign. New Jerusalem may or may not be built during this new year but we certainly appear to be a lot closer to it than we were a year ago. Let's keep our latter-day hopes alive in the new year and continue to prepare ourselves for future events by living close to God.



Ladies' Uplift Circle News

Maybe I'm a dreamer

By Sister LuAnn Carson

Growing up I had two friends who dreamed of being attorneys. One worked hard through high school, got into a great college and law school, and is now a practicing attorney. My other friend made mediocre grades in high school and college because she focused more on fun than school. Ultimately she relinquished her lifelong dream and dropped out of school.

In January we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. His last speech, titled "I Have a Dream," is familiar to most of us. The often-quoted phrase, 'I have a dream,' is actually repeated throughout the speech as King presents an image of a united, peaceful

The good news for every dreamer is that each stage or obstacle along our journey is intended not to block our dream, but to help us break through to the fulfillment God promises.



Bruce Wilkinson
The Dream Giver

country.

'Maybe I'm a dreamer
But could this be the day'

'Maybe I'm a dreamer
But I see mountain tops'

'Only God can bring about the things that I
have seen'

These lines come from a hymn called "Maybe I'm a Dreamer," written by a sister in our Church.

As King dreamed of the dawning of a new era, we as a Church have a dream. In his speech, King quoted Isaiah 40:4&5 "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain

(Continued on page 11)



For the New Year—Fear Not!

Dear Friends,

What do you fear? Is it a mean person in your life? Is it some problem in your family? Is someone you love sick and you fear they will leave you? Or is your fear something more common—like afraid to talk in front of a group, or tell someone you like them, or not get picked for a team that you really want to join? Do you fear not having enough money or making the wrong choice? Pray! Tell God your fears and your problems!

This year, let's talk about tools you have to fight fear!

The first tool is knowledge—knowledge that God will truly help you! Once, when I was facing a terrible health problem I was praying and begging God on my knees to help me. I felt like I would go out of my mind with fear. I cried and told God I couldn't handle this alone. Then the phone rang. Brother Rick Elzby, an elder and old friend far away north in Canada was calling.

"How are you Sister Jan? This is Brother Rick Elzby."

I was shocked. I had not seen him and his family for many years. "I'm fine." I lied. I was trying to get under control of my emotions.

"Really?" he asked. "Because I was working on my tractor outside and the Lord told me to call you." He went on, "I said, 'I will Lord. Just let me finish cutting this last row of my crop.' But the Lord thundered at me, 'Call her now!' So I quit working and am calling you," he went on.

He said that on his way to the house, God told him to tell me two verses. The first was Isaiah 41:10. "Fear thou not [don't be afraid]. For I am with you: be not dismayed [don't be worried or discouraged] for I am your God;

I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you: Yes I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness!"

Can you imagine my astonishment and hope? Stop fearing! God was sending me word that He knew my great fear. He knew me! He would make me strong. God would help me and support me!

Then Brother Rick told me the other verse from 2 Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

I was not going to go out of my mind. God had given me the spirit of a sound mind! (a steady mind). It did not matter what happened. I felt such a beautiful spirit of peace and joy. God knew what was going on in my life and had alerted his elder to reach out to me! Somehow I would get through this. I did not have to fear anymore. My terrible worried thoughts stopped. I had peace.

The x-rays of my next tests showed that there was no problem left! God had changed things! That bad growth never came back.

And I learned some things...like when I have a terrible problem, never fear I was going to be so worried and scared that I'd go "out of my mind." Plus, even though I was in my house crying and praying alone to God, He heard me. God heard my cries and He answered me! He sent another servant of God, our Brother Rick, to reach out and help me bear my burden of terror, fear, and huge worry. He saved me once again.

And our God will save you, too. God will walk with you, listen to your cries, and reach down and help you.

Trust Him. Go to a quiet place and call out to Him. Ask another believer to pray with you. Have an elder anoint you and pray too. You do not have to carry your problems alone in The Church of Jesus Christ!

Our God truly is a living God, not just a statue. He sent Jesus to walk this earth and teach us to pray, love God, and help and love others. It is a beautiful way to live. It is the best way to live!

With much love, your friend, *Sister Jan*

H E V O L
 O A B B F V Z V
 W I T H G D I C
 Q U P L E H L O B
 J S P I R I T V J Y
 A N L Q L O F S P W G R C S
 I Z L O Q N Q J U S F L O G R K Q V P X
 E I Y U O J O E M I N D F F S O U N D V G
 H W O E P E B I F C I S T R E N G T H E N R
 I U M P W I I E I S T I E H T E D I E D J F
 M K U X F A F P R D S K I X X H Y Z V C L R
 L A N D E R H E U O K A D L I B V J R E T S
 C B U A P W E I G T N H E N U L C J M N
 O B R O T D W X
 K P B H

GOD	US	FEAR	AND	MIND	WITH	HELP
HAS	THE	BUT	LOVE	HE	YOU	STRENGTHEN
NOT	SPIRIT	POWER	SOUND	IS	WILL	PROTECT
GIVEN	OF					

What is one thing you have learned in 2020 that has helped you grow closer to God

Continued from back

"No matter how grim a situation may seem there is always something to be thankful for." – *Sister Sarah Baldwin, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"Wait on Him and He always comes through." – *Sister Dianne Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"God is not inside a physical church building. He is in our hearts, and so when we gather together anywhere — even on Zoom — He can be there. I look forward to meeting in person, but I have been blessed this year in our virtual meetings." – *Sister Christine Martorana, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"To actively cultivate my relationship with the Lord. Spending time with Him, in His word and in prayer, which I've always done, but in 2020 I learned to meditate on Him more and listen actively to what He is teaching me. He's always wanting us to move up to the next level, as the song says, climb higher." – *Brother Anthony Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch*

"I learned that He is consistent even when the world is constantly changing. I have grown closer to Him by relying on His constant presence in my life." – *Sister Alyssa Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"I learned that the more you read scripture and hear the word of God the closer to God you will get than you could ever imagine. I learned

to surround myself with positive people in my life. Stay away from the negative. God says to keep the faith! He will reduce your anxiety. It is so very true and He has carried me through many trials in my life. He is my Father, my Best friend, and my saving grace." – *Sister Dottie Pineda, Irvine, CA Branch*

"I learned that no matter what happens, God doesn't just stop loving you anymore. He is always there and will not stop trying to mold you and fix you." – *Brother Giovanni Lind, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"Well, so much. But in a nutshell, that His thoughts are higher than my thoughts, and that His time is different than my time. To trust that He gives us challenges for a reason—to build our faith stronger and stronger—and that he cares for us on a deeply personal level. That nothing happens to us without His permission. And that if we put Him first and do our part, He will take our worries away. Lastly, that I need to focus my energy more on the positive, no matter how small, and if I do, He will magnify the good in my life." – *Sister Charity Lombardo, Metuchen, NJ Branch*

"I learned, and am still learning, to find joy and gratitude in exactly where my life is at this moment and to rely on God for what the future holds with a level of acceptance that I did not previously have." – *Sister Carolynm O'Connor, Farmington Hills Branch #2, Detroit MI*

GMBA, praise reports shared in the Zoom chat:

Continued from page 8

- 10 months seizure free!
- Thank God for sparing my life after a complication during the birth of my daughter and for my healthy baby!
- Thank You Lord for clearing out the distractions in my life this year and allowing me to hear Your voice calling me to the water's edge. I was baptized

last week and I am so thankful to be a part of the family of God! Love you all!

- Thank God for the message tonight, for keeping healthy, and leading me through college
- I praise God for my new grandson, born a week ago!

Ladies' Uplift Circle News

Continued from page 9

and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

This prophecy is not only a part of King's speech; it is a portion of 'our dream.' What else do we as The Church of Jesus Christ dream of? The restoration of the house of Israel, the building of Zion, and the return of Christ are a few of the things of our dreams.

Hebrews 11:1 tells us, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for..." "Through our faith in God and His prophecies, our dreams become more than dreams. They become hopes.

Our dreams become like Lehi's and Joseph's and many other prophets' dreams. They will grow to be a reality. Our dreams, as long as they align with God's dreams, will come to pass.

But like my friend the attorney, we too have to work toward our dreams. Although alone we accomplish nothing, when we work for the Lord we can help bring to pass our dream.

The scriptures admonish in I Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

We often sing the following inspired words, written by a brother in our Church:

"And we shall sing on the mountain of The Lord, and give Him praise and glory for His love.

And every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess,
that Jesus is The Lord.

We not only sing these words, but we work toward this prophecy coming to pass.

"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 40:5).

Blessing Bits

BB TAKE IT TO THE LORD

For two weeks, I'd had an ongoing headache, and I could not figure out the source. I wasn't sure if it was my teeth or my sinuses, but it was a nagging pain that I was dealing with on and off. I decided to get prayed for at Church on Sunday, and after that, the headache never returned! I want to praise God for taking care of me!
– Sister Rachel Cotellesse, Lakeside, AZ Branch

BB GOD'S TOUCH

In June, during breakfast one day I couldn't taste my cereal or my coffee. Hmmm-that was strange, so I proceeded to taste something with more flavor-the peanut butter. Much to my dismay, I couldn't taste that either. My mind naturally stirred, "don't tell me I have 'IT' (COVID)." With that in mind, I opened the new bag of face masks and proceeded to clean every surface I had touched. My father-in-law Brother Sam (92 years old) would be getting up soon and I had to exercise even more caution about our surroundings.

When my husband came in from his morning bike ride, he knew something was wrong. I walked into the office and expressed to my husband, "Please anoint me. If God can heal me instantly as He did in Italy, and my heart, He can heal me of COVID."

Jim proceeded to get the oil, and then handed me a Hall's cough drop. I popped it in my mouth and could feel the effects of the menthol but could not taste it or the lemon flavor! He anointed me with the blessed oil and then poured his heart out to the Lord. In my heart, I knew God could heal me. When he finished praying, I took the last sip of coffee in my cup. I could taste it! I went downstairs and tasted something stronger; I could taste that as well! God healed me of COVID. Brothers and sisters, the Lord protects every one of us. I know He will see us through this and whatever else comes our way. I thank God He heard our prayer and answered quickly. I humbly give God all the honor, glory and praise! – Sister Lynda Sgro, Mt Laurel, NJ 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: February is a month full of love. Describe a time you felt the love of God in your life.



Answer from last month: What is one thing you have learned in 2020 that has helped you grow closer to God. "I've experienced more of God's peace than ever before. I knew He could give peace beyond understanding but this year I have truly felt it more, especially with two small children, during a pandemic. I know God has been with us every step of the way." – Sister Jennifer Bertolo, Detroit, MI Branch #1

Turn back to page 11 for answers to this question.



Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Isaiah 26:3