

The Gospel News

Why Joseph?

A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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Joseph!
 Why do they always talk about Joseph?
 Who is Joseph?
 What does Joseph have to do with Jesus Christ?


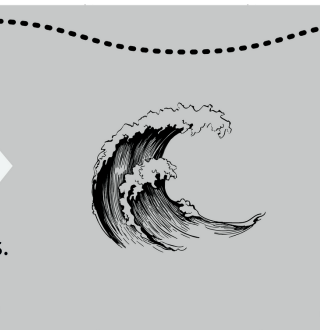
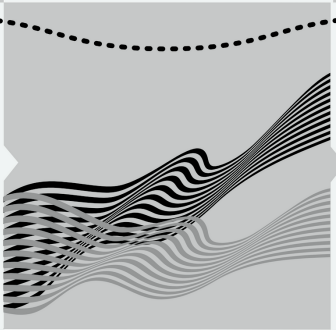

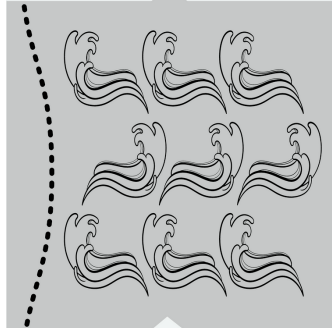

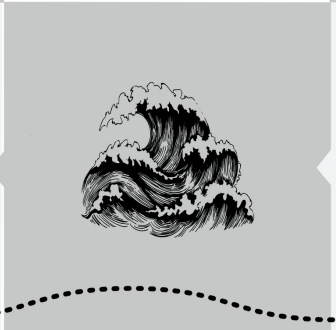
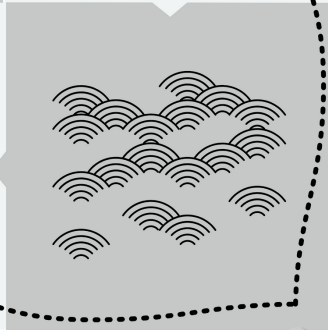
Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob (Israel), and it is prophesied that his descendants will play an essential role in bringing the whole House of Israel to Christ in the latter days. We know that we are commissioned to first bring Christ's Gospel to Joseph and then, with those of them who will believe, to work to the completion of God's plan.

Through faith and repentance, each of us can access eternal salvation—God's purpose in His plan. Realization of this grace is a profound individual experience, unlike anything else anyone might encounter in this life. But every person in this world—past, present, and future—is the reason for Jesus's love and sacrifice for redemption from sin. Stop for a minute, and contemplate that this involves billions of souls, no one being omitted from the binary sorting under the great plan of God which will result in eternal life in heaven for as many as will serve Him, but in perdition for those who will not. Knowing what we do, how can we not fully engage God's great work?

Some have asked: "When will God's plan begin to unfold?" In truth, this plan has been under way since Adam and has passed through several eras. Today we are standing on the inside threshold of the era when the prophecies concerning Joseph will intersect with the restoration of Jesus's Gospel in the hands of believing Gentiles—His Church—linking indivisibly to fulfill God's plan to restore the House of Israel and to expose all nations to Christ. As amazing as our individual salvations are, we ought to be equally impressed to know that God wants each of us to play our parts as His plan rolls on.

Scriptures testify of God's great work through the ages. Think about those who have been chosen by God to fulfill their given roles during every era of time. They have all been instruments in His plan. Many were given prophetic windows to the future which we are blessed to read today, being encouraged both by prophecies that have been fulfilled as well as by others which remain as promises. The gifts of the Spirit behind those blessings are still among us as part of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through all of this, people have always had free will to choose obedience or not. We read of poor choices leading to detours, temporary domination by agents of the enemy of our souls, even disappearance of whole nations. But throughout scriptural history, we encounter faithful individuals who never doubted the Lord's omnipotence and commitment to fulfill His plan. We can be today's faithful ones. A review of scripture from the beginning is the best way to gain perspective on Joseph and where we stand today. Doing that completely would be a bigger task than can fit into this message, so let's briefly remember a few of those who God chose and the roles they played in His great work.

(Continued on page 4)

	<p>When the waves of death compassed me... ..In my distress I called upon the Lord,... and he did hear my voice out of the temple, and my cry did enter into his ears. 2 Sam 22:5,7</p>		<p>He alone spreads out the heavens, And treads on the waves of the sea; Job 9:8</p>
<p>And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. Mark 4:37</p>		<p>And he was in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? Mark 4:38</p>	
	<p>And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Mark 4:39</p>		<p>O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandment – then, had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. 1 Nephi 20:18</p>
<p>But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. James 1:6</p>		<p>But I am the Lord thy God, whose waves roared; the Lord of Hosts is my name. 2 Nephi 8:15</p>	

BFTP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck



One hundred and thirty-eight years ago this month, born out of wedlock on March 4, 1885 in Casalordino, Italy, a poor orphaned boy named Antonio Molisani was born.

Antonio had a hard existence as a farmhand made worse by beatings from cruel foster parents that didn't allow him to eat at the table or sleep in the house, but in the stable with the animals. He didn't own a pair of shoes until he was 16 years old. A neighbor seeing his sad state gave him enough money to emigrate to America. So at sixteen years old, he made the 22-day trip, alone, in the bottom of the ship where livestock was slaughtered to feed those on the upper deck. The stench sickened him and he didn't see daylight until arrival. Scared and lonely with no parents or relatives, skills, friends or money, he boarded with an Italian family. Working a few meager jobs he saved enough money and moved to Detroit where the wages were better.

"Is it any wonder that I became an atheist? Many times I cursed the day I was born and kept telling myself that there was no God in heaven because, if there was a God, why was life so cruel to me from the time I was born?" Though he returned to Italy several times, World War I stopped him for fear of being drafted into the Italian army, so he did not return. At this time he became friends with the Frammolino family, who invited him to church. He didn't attend but sat in front of the house, mocking them to passersby and saying, "If you want to see a real sideshow, come in the house."

(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.

Wordup



"I Do Still; But He Still Does Even More"

By Brother Doug Obradovich

"Greater love hath no man than this" (John 15:13)

1976 and 1977 were the two most impactful back-to-back years of my life. In '76 I met my eternal life-partner. In '77 I met my natural life-partner. Both changed me. Both enhanced my life.

On April 25, 1981, I said, "I do" to Candace Joy Ross. I realize now a 22-year-old could not possibly have understood all that was involved in such a commitment. 42 years later, having a much more robust perspective on all that defines marriage, I would still say, "I do." On July 27, 1976, I said, "I do" to Jesus Christ. I realize now an 18-year-old could never possibly have comprehended all that is involved in such commitment. 45 years later, having a much clearer knowledge of all this entails, I would still say, "I do."

As the main benefactor of these covenants, I would give myself to both with even more enthusiasm today.

However, the much greater extension of love was made by Jesus Christ. He was the only One of all involved who entered into agreement with eyes wide open. He knew me intimately, seeing my flawed character and multiple weaknesses, confirming them time and time again since. Yet, He would still vow to me, "I do." My experience affirms, "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Without such commitment to the Savior, our lives are exposed to complete failure, "All things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise, men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them" (Moroni 7:24). With such commitment to the Savior, the lions' mouths stay unexplainably shut throughout our lives, "Servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" (Daniel 6:20). His love invites, His protection follows, and the reward of His salvation awaits, "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

My many missteps have created the very vulnerabilities that have provided access to my heart for the lions in my life. Yet God

has never let them consume me. I have been safeguarded in the den of my life. Jesus' vow on the day we covenanted with each other has been consistently purposeful, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). Salvation is the ultimate "Wait for it!" moment.

40 years ago, Candace had printed on our wedding invitations: "In this world of uncertainty and confusion, we have found each other." I said, "I do" to Candace with some degree of "uncertainty and confusion." I said, "I do" to the Lord with similar questions and unknowns. Today I would joyfully commit to both with clearer understanding. As He covenanted with me, the Lord saw and knew everything about me through His insight and offered unconditional love and forgiveness to seal our union.

The "good work in you" will continue until the day we cross from this life to heaven.

Yes, Candace, I still "do."

Yes, Lord, I still "do." But I realize You still "do" even more, for all of us.

Why Joseph? ***A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles***

In Adam, God set up mankind's special status, giving him dominance with only a single obligation. While Adam's fall changed that status, it also triggered God's entire plan to have men consciously serve Him, winning their salvation instead of living a very limited existence of blissful ignorance. Adam fell that men might be... (see Genesis Chapters 1-4; 2 Nephi Chapter 2). Because of Adam's fall, Jesus Christ became mankind's hope to be restored to God's presence.

With Noah, it was established that man could find God's grace even while His disappointment in man's wickedness was so great that He repented of ever having created man on the earth. He chose Noah to build an ark whereby a remnant of the earth's species would be preserved to repopulate (see Genesis Chapters 5-9).

God promised Abraham that his posterity would be the source of blessing for all the families of the earth. This blessing, of course, refers to Jesus Christ who would be born as the son of Abraham's descendants. The development of Abraham and his posterity through his son, Isaac, and grandson, Jacob, is a story of God's Spirit in action. The promises were repeated both to Isaac and later to Jacob—who became known as Israel. In a dream, God promised Israel: "... I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Genesis 28:13-15). Exactly the promises God made to Abraham (see Genesis Chapters 11-28).

Israel (Jacob) had twelve sons and one daughter. As this family grew, the House of Israel became significant. In Jacob's eyes, his eleventh son, Joseph, stood out and was loved more than the other children. Meanwhile, God revealed to Joseph that he really was a person chosen by God. He saw in dreams that his siblings and his parents would make obeisance to him. Even his father took pause at that revelation, but his brothers, who were already jealous, became intensely resentful and sold him into slavery. Nevertheless, Joseph, while in Egypt enduring slavery, temptation, imprisonment, and abandonment, remained a true man of faith endowed with God's gifts. Ultimately, the prophetic dreams of his youth were fulfilled. Some key points that are important in setting the prophetic template that matches latter-day prophecies to be fulfilled (See Genesis Chapters 37-48):

- Joseph became separated from the rest of the House of Israel.
- Joseph suffered greatly having lost everything and being imprisoned in a far land.
- Through it all, Joseph remained faithful to God without compromise.
- God's spiritual gifts to Joseph led him to become second only to Pharaoh in Egypt.

- Meanwhile, Israel and family fell into desperation during famine, unknowingly appealing to Joseph (whom they believed had died) for natural salvation.
- It was Joseph who saved the House of Israel and became reunited with them.

The House of Israel remained in Egypt and thrived there. However, as generations passed and the memory of Joseph faded, they were no longer welcome friends but were forced into servitude under rigorous conditions, including the Pharaoh's attempts at genocide. God chose Moses to lead Israel back to the land that He had promised to Abraham. God treated Moses like no other prophet in that he spoke to him directly and knew him face to face. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and the Laws under which Israel was commanded to live. Under these laws and Moses's inspired leadership, Israel grew to become the great nation that God promised to Abraham. No external obstacles could hinder their progress. Their army numbered over 600,000 and marched in the strength of the Lord over all the peoples who stood in their way. However, internal murmuring and rebellion among the people provoked the Lord greatly, causing Him to lead them in a very circuitous route to the promised land. (See Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.)

Let's pause our review for a moment. At this point (Moses), it has been roughly two and a half millennia since Adam fell, including almost 500 years since God spoke to Abraham, and it will be almost another one and a half millennia before Christ is born. As observers, we might say that God's plan is unfolding very slowly. Yet, upon looking closer at important details, we will agree that there are points where things move very fast—even instantly. For example:

- One day immortal Adam dwelt in Eden without a care in the world; the next he is out, destined to die, and left to provide for himself from ground which has been cursed.
- One day the earth was corrupt and filled with violence; a few months later only Noah's family remains along with the animals he has saved on the ark.
- One day Abraham's wife Sarah was a near-centenarian who had never borne a child, struggling to believe the promises God made to her husband; the next day she has conceived the son who will inherit those promises.
- One day Joseph was a forlorn prisoner with no earthly hope of release; the next day he is overseer of all the wealth of Egypt—second only to Pharaoh himself—positioned to save the House of Israel from perishing in famine.

We might conclude that key turning points in God's plan tend to occur suddenly and rapidly, not necessarily without prediction but nonetheless catching many by surprise. Keep this thought in mind.

During the next eight centuries, the House of Israel faced external enemies while continuing to waver between faith and faithlessness before the Lord. God chose men—prophets, judges, and even kings—to try to keep them faithful.

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New Things

By Brother Anthony Scolaro

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We see renewal all around us at this time of year as winter gives way to spring. Again and again we've watched the seasons change: Seeds sprout and trees put forth new leaves and branches as the weather warms and the days lengthen. The times and the seasons give us a glimpse of God's creative and restorative power. But the scriptures compel us to look beyond the mere temporal, and prompt us to seek a deeper understanding of His ability to bring about His plans for the world as well as our own lives. Strewn throughout the word of God are passages and verses that indicate that God's creative work is ongoing. Key to God's renewing Spirit and power is the ultimate goal of moving His fallen creation to a state of righteousness.

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." These words come at the end of John's amazing vision (Revelation 21:5). The new heaven and earth in the beginning of this chapter mirror Genesis 1:1, where heaven and earth were first created. Six times in that chapter, God saw that it was good; very good, in fact (verse 31). Yet John saw an even better heaven and earth coming. The scriptures remind us that even after we (mankind) mess up the good things that He created, He is able to transform them into something better. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

"Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19). We tend to look at challenging circumstances using only our natural senses, and try to reason whether, or how, a solution could be devised. The word of God makes it clear that His creative and regenerative ability is not dependent on our natural surroundings. Testimonies of individual homes being spared in devastating storms, and gardens flourishing when the neighbors' crops failed, remind us to look with an eye of faith toward the things that God can and will do for His children.

"And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest" (Ezekiel 37:3). What we see with our eyes can sometimes get in the way of believing in God's creative, restorative power and His ability to make something mighty out of what seems to be nothing. "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" (John 6:9). We have to believe, when our senses tell us things are beyond hope, that God is able to bring a good outcome to an impossible situation.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalms 51:10). Relevant to each of us, and perhaps most important, is the fact that the Lord is able to renew our souls. He can lift us from despair and fill us with hope. He can turn our ragged, sinful garments into gleaming robes of righteousness. God's renewing power isn't a matter of just recycling old things; He is able to "give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3).

God is in the business of renewing, reviving, and restoring. If we're looking to the world to supply our needs, we're looking in the wrong place. Jesus can and will supply us with what we lack, and make us feel full when we're feeling empty. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The renewing of our mind, the making of a new creature in Christ, is the ultimate expression of God's renewing power. It's a miracle He can work in every soul that will let Him.

Letting God Take the Lead

By Brother Ben Draskovich

What better advice is there to give? Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." How basic of a concept yet how challenging it can be in our daily lives! In my life, especially in the big decisions, I have found this verse to be so important. As I'm sure most can relate, I am the type of person that is comfortable when I know exactly what is happening and I have control over a situation. Everybody loves to know what's going on, and I'll be honest, it can be really hard to let that natural mindset go, and to focus on God whether it is a time of need, or just in general. We should strive to reach a point in our lives where, when faced with adversity, God is the first thing on our minds, and not only that, but even when we are at our highest, thank him for all He's done. We can think that's such a hard thing to do, yet when we do it, can you remember any time when He let you down?

At this current moment I find myself in this critical stage of my life, in college and onto adult life having to find a career, find a spouse one day, figure out where to live, and just all of life's important questions that can be very overwhelming to think about. Can anyone reading this say to themselves that they have got

everything planned out in their lives down to the smallest detail? I'd be lying if I said it wasn't scary sometimes to think about, just the uncertainties of what lies ahead. Certain decisions feel so far away until they are right around the corner, and new situations can be uncomfortable and difficult to adjust to. But God says, "lean not unto thine own understanding, but acknowledge HIM and he shall direct thy paths." It's easy to want to solve and figure out things on your own right away, but God wants us to seek Him out in every opportunity rather than rely on ourselves.

I am now almost halfway done with my second year of college, and I am still learning and figuring out how I can implement God more into my life. I know in the near future I will be faced with some big decisions and things I cannot do alone. Yet, I know who has brought me to where I am today, and I know who to rely on. If you put your faith in God and you learn to let go of the worries and things that are out of your control, God will bless your life. We must first acknowledge Him, and He will lead us down paths that will benefit us and lead us away from paths that will bring us down. There will be challenges and obstacles to everything we do, but learn to acknowledge Him in everything and you will see the results of His blessings.

We Are More Than Conquerors

By Sister Lydia Zaino

It was so great to gather for an Area MBA campout after 2 years. We had a wonderful turnout and two very special guests, Brother Joel and Sister Ruth Gehly. We thank them for their support and a chance to get to know them even more. The Spirit of God was there when we arrived.

There was an orientation meeting Friday night and Brother Ken Lombardo opened with Mark 6:30-31, "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." He encouraged us to leave the world behind and come to camp. Brother Ken's message was followed by an interactive team trivia game on the Songs of Zion.

Saturday morning began with a fasting & prayer meeting followed by breakfast and chapel. Brother Eric Darr opened our chapel meeting, talking about our theme. He opened on Romans 8:37 "Nay in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Paul was trying to teach us that God is bigger than anything. Conqueror means winner—overcomer. The enemy of our soul constantly tries to win but we are the children of God and have been chosen, and are more than Conquerors with Christ. He continued with verses 38-39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, or principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." We need to have God with us to overcome. He shared a testimony with us of how he called for his baptism and how God rescued him with the love of God. Brother Eric finished up by reading John 10: 27-30. He said that only God can help you overcome the adversary when things try to take us away out there, jobs, friends, drugs, alcohol, etc. To be more righteous and prepared is a daily struggle because we are human, but when you keep God in your forefront you cannot go wrong. God loves us and wants to use us.

Following chapel, we went into our seminars. Sisters Terri Bravo, Donna Rios, and Joan Longuillo planned a seminar for children up to 12 yrs. Brother Ken Lombardo took care of the adult seminar, and the scripture he used was in Revelations Chapter 2. He divided us into 7 groups to represent each of the 7 churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. We had a few questions to answer, so we had to pick a Presiding Elder and Secretary of the group. We met with our groups and then met together and Brother Ken had each representative of each Church answer a series of questions. Example: What are you doing wrong and what are you doing right? Did Jesus give you any advice? We saw a pattern in these churches. For the one that overcomes, God made promises, The Church of Philadelphia is the one that we resemble the most.

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But the overall spiritual condition of Israel continued to decline. The kingdom of Israel divided into two kingdoms: Israel, comprised of 10 tribes, and Judah, comprised of Benjamin and Judah. Because of continuing disobedience, two huge events resulted in the House of Israel losing control of their promised land and suffering again under other oppressive nations:

- During the 8th Century BC, the Assyrians carried off the people of Israel northward to Assyria as slaves. Eventually, they were dispersed further. Those ten tribes became lost to humanity. Only God knows where they are today (see II Kings Chapter 12). It is noteworthy that the same Assyrians could not prevail against Judah at that time as their good King Hezekiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. The angel of the Lord slew 185,000 men of the Assyrian army in one night, thereby ending the siege of Jerusalem (see Chapters 18 and 19).
- Judah remained intact, but after Hezekiah passed, his son became king and reigned for 55 years, leading his people back to rampant pagan religious practices as had been in place before Hezekiah. The people of Judah offended the Lord so greatly that He determined to let Judah fall into the hands of their enemies. Many prophets, including Jeremiah and Ezekiel, foresaw that God's wrath would render Jerusalem desolate, the people to be carried away. This transpired early in the 6th Century BC (see Chapters 20-25). (Eventually, a remnant of Judah was allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild, but the domination of other nations continued. By the time Jesus was born, the Romans ruled over Judah and the land of Israel.)

Meanwhile, Lehi, another prophet, was also given to warn Jerusalem of the pending destruction. Lehi was a descendant of Joseph. God led Lehi to take his family and escape the demise of his homeland, thus preserving a remnant of Joseph separate from the rest of the House of Israel. Lehi's youngest son (at the time), Nephi, believed all the revelations God gave to his father and began to receive his own experiences. God led their party to His choicest promised land—the Americas. We read of their journey, their establishment in the American continents, and the development of their people over the next 10 centuries in their record: The Book of Mormon.

From the destruction of Jerusalem forward, God's works are recorded in two records. In the Bible, we read of Jesus' birth, ministry, death, and resurrection. We read of the hope of salvation He brought. We read of the works of His followers. Eventually we read that the Gospel spread from Jerusalem to the Gentiles in surrounding lands. In the Book of Mormon, we read of the establishment of Christ's church among the Seed of Joseph in the Americas even before His birth. We read that His followers were made aware of His birth and His death. We read that Jesus visited the descendants of Joseph in the Americas after His death and presented His entire ministry and Gospel—setting up His Church among them as He had in Jerusalem. Both records tell of the apostasy wherein God's authority would be removed from the earth, and foretell the restoration that would occur in the latter days when the Gentiles would bring Joseph back to Christ.

As of today, the Restored Gospel is in the hands of believing

Gentiles: The Church of Jesus Christ. That restoration occurred on this land, where the remnant of Joseph remains—their traditions include apostate religions as well as vestiges of spiritual history reflecting the time when Jesus visited their ancestors telling them of their promises.

When Jesus visited the remnant of Joseph after His crucifixion, he told them of the latter days, the Gentiles' role, and their restoration. For example, see 3 Nephi 20:1-7: And ... I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place—that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion; ... when these things which I declare unto you, and ... which shall be given unto you of the Father, shall be made known unto the Gentiles that they may know concerning this people (Joseph, the native peoples of the Americas) who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, and concerning this my people who shall be scattered by them; Verily, verily, I say unto you, when these things shall be made known unto them of the Father, and shall come forth of the Father, from them unto you... that these things might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed, that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with his people, O house of Israel; Therefore, when these works and the works which shall be wrought among you hereafter shall come forth from the Gentiles, unto your seed which shall dwindle in unbelief because of iniquity; For thus it behooveth the Father that it should come forth from the Gentiles, that he may show forth his power unto the Gentiles, for this cause that the Gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that they may repent and come unto me and be baptized in my name and know of the true points of my doctrine, that they may be numbered among my people, O house of Israel; And when these things come to pass that thy seed shall begin to know these things—it shall be a sign unto them, that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel.

We can see that the Lord has never turned His eyes away from mankind, and that He has kept a remnant of Joseph to be used again in His great work. Throughout the ages, the great plan of salvation has been grinding forward. Can you grasp the "Great Work of the Lord?" Can you form a mental picture of progress through the centuries leading to our time? Can you see why Joseph is so prominent in the work of the Church today? As He did in eras past, the Lord continues to reveal His will to the Church to encourage us and to direct us so that we can fulfill our roles in His great work and share in the inheritance of His promises to Israel. We can trust that He will bless us as we endeavor to remain sanctified and to focus upon Jesus Christ and His plan for all.

In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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

“What’s That You Say?”

“The tree is known by his fruit.” (Matthew 12:33)

It’s not always just what you say, how you say, when you say, or even why you say. It might just be all of the above, because once you say, you can’t erase what you say...or the way you say. As it’s said, “It may be forgiven, but not necessarily forgotten.” Once you say you follow Jesus Christ, you have to make certain your mouth supports your declaration, because your words matter. Many people subscribe to the phrase, “Presentation is everything,” emphasizing a clear understanding to the importance of how words are communicated and the impact they carry. Often, they are the only means for you to represent yourself and/or the organization for which you stand.

Paul understood, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29). Who are the “hearers” of your words? Your words are intended to be a salve to them. James recognized, “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (James 1:26). Your words must absolutely align with your commitment to and your love for Jesus Christ. More importantly, Jesus knew, “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man” (Matthew 15:11). Your words are more harmful to you than your diet. He also said, “Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit (Matthew 12:33). Your words define you.

Posturing defensively, people often state, “I’m only speaking the

By Brother Doug Obradovich

truth.” To whose truth they are speaking? Furthermore, how, when, what, and why was this truth spoken? Note: the same question can be sourced in 2 completely separate intentions. “Why me, Lord; what did I ever do?” can be asked by the self-justifying individual questioning why they deserved such poor treatment and why God would punish such a good person as themselves. “Why me, Lord; what did I ever do?” can also be the inquiry of a humble, unassuming person wondering what they ever did to deserve God’s mercy, goodness and/or grace.

Your loving communication is one of your most important representations of Jesus Christ, regardless of who you are addressing, which includes spouses, family members, co-workers, friends, strangers, store clerks, etc. Each dialogue provides opportunity to reflect Christ-like kindness, gentleness, and care. Please consider:

- 1) What can you lessen or eliminate from your negative communication?
- 2) What can you increase or add to improve your communication?
- 3) Who can you positively impact this week through more loving communication?
- 4) Specifically, how will you accomplish this?

You can effectively spread Jesus Christ through one-on-one interactions. When you become more cognizant of how you are being received, your heightened awareness improves your opportunities. This results in becoming more effective magnets to draw others to Jesus Christ, and ultimately their salvation. When they ask, “What’s that you say?”

Ladies’ Uplift Circle News



History of the Penn Mid-Atlantic Area Ladies’ Uplift Circle

By Sister Karen L. Progar, Historian



What a privilege to look back on the history of the PMA Area Ladies’ Uplift Circle, which is relatively young in comparison to some of the Area Circles that have been active since the 1960s.

Even before we were an Area, our sisters have always been eager to participate in the work of the Circle, but on March 31, 1985, as our sisters were on their way home via bus from a General Circle Conference held at Detroit Branch #1, a discussion arose regarding Area Circles and it was suggested that we form an Area Circle. The common thought had been that the Pennsylvania sisters had the opportunity to attend and support all GC activities because of our proximity to most of them, and there was no real need for an Area Circle. The sisters debated and voted to organize an Area Circle.

On May 11, 1985, our organization meeting was held at the McKees Rocks Branch. Sister Mabel Bickerton reviewed the organization procedure and the role of the Chairman was to work with the Local Circles. Sister Elsie Gehly became the Chairperson (since 1988, President), Sister Diane Ciotti was elected Secretary, and Sister Eva Ondik was chosen as Treasurer. In the beginning, the local presidents were to act as advisors to the President.

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A full roster of officers was elected in March of 1994, with changes in the Ladies' Uplift Circle by-laws. The PMA Circle held its first Area conference on November 2, 1985. It is interesting to note that Sister Mabel Bickerton did our seminar that day with the topic, "Search the Scriptures", something that is a basic precept of the Circle. Our first retreat (currently, Fellowship Weekend) was on August 22 and 23, 1986 at McKeever Environmental Center, near Fredonia. The sisters wasted no time getting the Circle up to speed on activities. In the 37 years since its inception, the PMA Area Circle has held 28 weekend events for the sisters and over 70 conferences. Our Area was the first to use the facilities of Antiochian Village in Ligonier (July 1987), which later became an important venue for our Area MBA and several GMBA Campouts.

It is difficult to write a brief history of the Area because the sisters have been so active. Following are a few events and activities that have defined our Area:

May 5, 1990 - First Mother-Daughter Banquet (Monongahela)

March 20, 1993 - The first Joy Box was sent from the Area. A Joy Box is seven small gifts with a scripture verse to be opened every day for a week, given to someone who is sick or for encouragement.

March 21, 1998 – The Area voted to create a committee to make travel communion sets for Missionary work.

February 16, 1991 – The Area held a special activity to see the Plants of the Bible at Phipps Conservatory in Pittsburgh.

April 29, 2000 – Hosted the General Circle 80th Anniversary



Spring is coming! Plants and flowers start growing again. What tips do you have to continue to grow your relationship with God and your brothers and sisters?

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"My flowers will grow with fasting and praying for my brothers and sisters. This is how they will blossom into the most beautiful bouquet. My service to God will grow by studying the word of God daily, so that His word will be planted so deeply, that it will spring forth new blooms and fresh blossoms in the beautiful bouquet of flowers." -Sister Sharon Sloan, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"I always joke that if I called people as often as I thought about calling them, then I'd actually have friends! But a quick call or just a text message is like water and sunlight for our relationships, and it only takes a second. I'm always glad to get a text from a sister at Church who is thinking about me or praying for me. Sometimes we text scriptures or songs to the young people when we feel God's prompt." -Sister Michelle Watson, Pinetop, AZ Branch

"Constantly be in His word, have daily talks with Him. Fellowship often." -Brother Michael Zaino, Edison, NJ Branch

meeting at the Monongahela Local.

June 11, 2003 – Visiting Sisters program began with a visit to the McKees Rocks Local for a lesson and fellowship.

September 2005 – The PMA Area took on the responsibility of updating the Songs of Zion at the World Operations Center.

April 28, 2007 – a committee was formed to develop activities for the girls in the PMA Area.

2014 – Gift Cards were sent to college students in a Program called SOS, Support our Students and Soldiers.

In addition to all of those activities, the Area has supported the missionary work of The Church, sponsored numerous Vacation Bible Schools, developed many Church leaders, and met every need presented to the group. In 2021, special donations of \$2,500 each were made to the IMOC and NAOC.

Presidents throughout the years have been: Elsie Gehly, Sara Vancik, Karen Progar, Jan Cornell, Linda Ottavian, Joyce Ross, Becky Tarbuk, Jacqui King, Connie Frankenbery, Robin Burns, Marty Jumper, Angela Yoder, and Joyceann Jumper

Our secretaries included; Diane Ciotti (Giannetti), Nancy Gehly, Dorothy Schaeffer, Marty Jumper, Mary Buffington (twice), Jan Cornell, Jacqui King, Sandy Bittinger, Sherri Wasik, JoAnn Niehl, Jessica Painter, and Karen Progar.

This rich history fills us with joy and represents outstanding accomplishments.

"Spend more time in prayer. Visit and host the brothers and sisters for more fellowship time in my life." -Sister KarenJo Pandone, Farmington Hills, MI Branch

"Hablar con Dios a través de la oración, leer las escrituras para poder recibir las respuestas de Dios, escucha himnos cuando puedas, congregarnos constantemente en la iglesia, intenta llevarte bien con los demás hermanos, pide perdón a los hermanos que has lastimado, empieza cada día pidiéndole al Espíritu Santo que te guíe y te dirija para bien en todo." - Hermano Carlos Rodriguez Jr., Tijuana, Mexico Branch

TRANSLATION: Speak to God through prayer, read the scriptures to receive His answers, listen to hymns when you can, gather with the saints at church, develop positive relationships with your brothers and sisters, ask for forgiveness, and ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your paths for good."



Let God Take Control

Maybe it is even truly scary, like when someone is hurt or needs help right away! So what can we do?

The Bible gives us the answer. The Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not unto your own understanding." This means, don't just think you have all the answers. "In all thy ways (everything you do) acknowledge Him." Include God and give Him credit for what He has done. (See Proverbs 3: 5 & 6)

Then God is like a dear member of your family; Jesus is your friend and you can ask Him right away for help.

He just helped me find my lost, dead cell phone that had slid out of my purse and fallen along the car seat.

God will show you what to do in every emergency or send you help. He can inspire your teacher and your boss to get along better with you. He can guide you on what to do in every scary decision, large or small. You can have peace and joy instead of fear and shame.

Let Jesus help you. Let God take control of your decisions and show you what to do. He cares for you. You are loved. With the Lord, when we make mistakes, big or small, we can be forgiven and things can be made right.

With love
Your friend and Sister in Christ,

Sister Jan

Dear Friends,

Do you ever have times when you feel like your life is out of control? Like when you have lost something so important that there will be a big problem? Or when people expect you to do so many things that you do not know how you can get them done, or do them correctly? Are you ever afraid that the person in charge—a coach, teacher, older brother or sister, or person in charge will be mad at you?

Years ago at Church, I heard a little four-year-old come up to another child and she said to him in a worried voice, "My Daddy is mad at me and I don't know why!" Since I was standing there and heard her fear I was able to get a little involved. I said a small prayer to God to help me figure out what to say. Then I asked her young dad if I could help. He said that he was not mad. He was just busy and sounded mad. Everything got better for her.

Sometimes we all are stuck in places like that. Maybe we just need to wait a minute and find out what is really going on. And what we can do is pray in our hearts. We can ask God for the right words to help. We can ask God what to say or do. Or maybe we just need to be quiet and leave the upset person. If we ask God, in our hearts, in the name of Jesus, we will know what is best. Yes, God will guide us.

The truth is that God is not a stranger. He created us; He knows us and what we are going through. He truly loves each of us and wants to help us. All we need to do is ask Him for help. Be sorry for whatever you have done wrong. Thank God for all He does for you and pray!

F U K	X K L
G R V F X C	W M B U X O
W V E C R R A D V	I N M T B K A E Y
J N C L E V Y U V	Y B D O D H N J O
D G K X S A G V Y I	L J N R O L H D F U
D C I W H C F A O S	A X D I I D I I R L
C E U U O S G N I H T	J F G X F V N U P J W
O R C I K H N T F J V V	C W E N V P G T Z U
A H W X P K X S R V L	M O J B K W Q S D
G I K B O J X S F V E V S U H	
N Z A Q U V L O A	
I X O M L N B B K V M H T	
U O A A E X N N T G K W J E J	
N V H V N F X E V S S T E P S J T E S	
I Y F E D O Q A N P T T B P O D E I A S I	
K N S L S X C Q L R S J R H Z G Q G Q J U	
B U E E P C T E B U X M H N A W Y U D X X Y S	
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Y T T P X A E S H N Q G P B S W F Q C X N	
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SPRING
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(continued from page 2)

One day, in his mind, to get Sister Anna Frammolino off his back, he joined the meeting where they were discussing Lehi's dream. "The words struck me so forcibly, especially the part where Lehi saw the great and spacious building where people were pointing their finger and mocking those who did come forth to taste of the fruit. I became convicted immediately and said to myself, 'I don't care who mocks me or points their finger at me, I too, want to taste the fruit.' I declared my intentions to Brother Ishmael D'Amico and I was baptized that Sunday, September 10, 1921." Soon after, his wife and daughter, still in Italy until then, joined him in Detroit.

"Oh Father just when were you with us? The question, it seemed, brought a smile. His kindness shone through when He answered, "My children, just every long mile! My children, just every long mile!" (#201 in The Songs of Zion, "Every Long Mile")

Testimony and photograph of Antonio Molisani from "A History of The Church of Jesus Christ" Volume 2 page 186 Michigan-Ontario District.

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We closed our seminar in prayer, then had lunch followed by several activities including adult and kids' crafts and a piñata for both the kids and adults!

After some fun time, we had a question and answer session with Brother Joel, who was very accommodating in answering questions. They ranged from his favorite color to his favorite part of the Church service, favorite scripture, tithing, and many more. Brother Joel shared some experiences with us as well about how the Lord is opening doors. He acknowledged the Youth in Action and the work they do. He was asked what the first missionary trip he took was, which was to Italy. He did not understand or speak the language, but after every meeting, the Lord gave him understanding.

During our Saturday night meeting, Brother Sal Rios and Brother Jim Sgro spoke. Brother Sal spoke about the difficult times in life where we get pulled in so many directions and it becomes hard to prioritize. As believers in Christ, what do we put first in our life these days? What is the Number One thing that you would put above and before anything in your life? It's Jesus Christ. As conquerors, we must prioritize Jesus in our lives.

Brother Jim followed, continuing with the theme of prioritizing situations in our lives. He told a story of when he was 14 years old in New Brunswick traveling with his Uncle Carmen in 1974. He asked us to think back the day of our baptism. He spoke about Peter and told us to put our name in Peter's place: Lovest thou me more than these? Feed my lambs and my sheep. Peter said yes. Jesus asked him three times. Peter said you know that I love you. The last thing that Jesus said to Peter was to follow Him.

Brother Jonathan Olexa was asked to testify of how God is taking care of him during this difficult time, then the young people came up to sing and testify. The over 60 age group also came up to sing

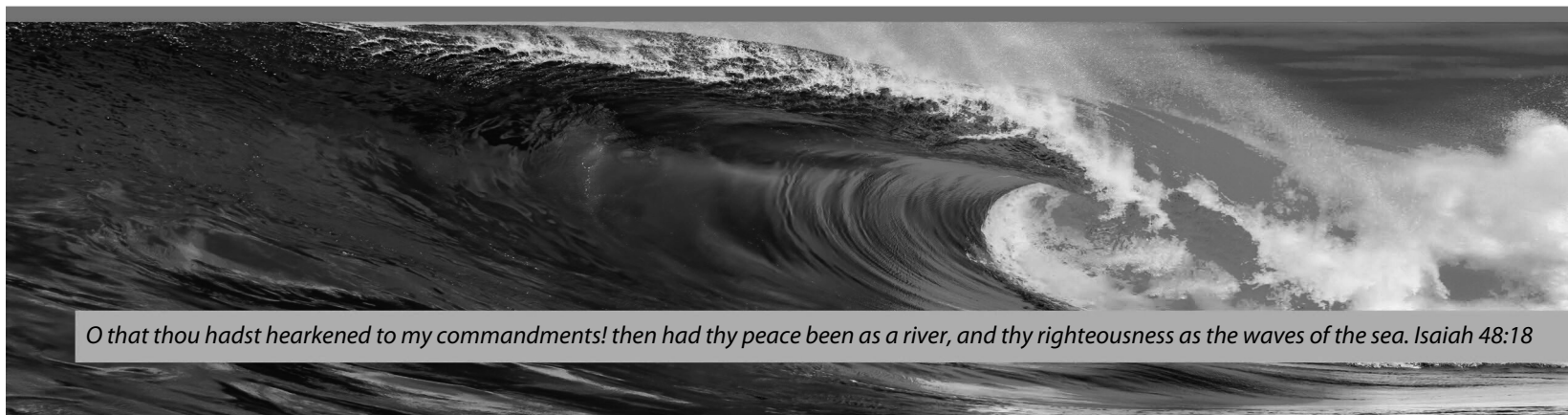
a song, and then were asked to give one or two sentences of advice to the young people. As everyone spoke, there was a beautiful love felt for the young people.

In our Sunday morning Service, Brother Joel opened the meeting, saying it was such a joy and how blessed they have been being with us. He commended the Region, the Area MBA, and young people for all their efforts. He spoke from Romans Chapter 8. "As I look back on yesterday and the teaching, I believe the Lord put everything together. Does anyone know what Paul was talking about? He was trained and educated, but the Lord touched him and gave him a different purpose. Paul the man—was converted to do missionary work. In all these things we are more than conquerors and persuaded.

"My desire is that everyone leaving this camp be persuaded. Offer a little prayer that God will touch your heart and that you are persuaded, and I invite you that you would accept Jesus Christ into your heart. The earnest expectation of the creation is waiting for the manifestation of God. Paul understood—the word of God is not in vain—Paul had a vision of the plan of God. I believe the Lord Himself directed Paul. Paul had a tremendous insight into the future. Paul understood that God's creation was waiting for the day that the men and women of God would rise up in righteousness."

Brother Jim Calabro and Brother Rick Calabro followed. Brother Rick recognized all the work that went into the camp and what the young people did. He asked the young people if they were happy being here and serving the Lord? He said that if they are happy, the parents are happy, the grandparents are happy and most of all, the Lord is happy.

Brother Jerry Valenti shared a few words with followed by Brother Jim Sgro. We then had Communion with the Lord and ended the weekend.



O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. Isaiah 48:18

Blessing Bits

BB A Time of Prayer and Communion with The Lord -

One night I was praying before bed. I shared my thoughts and cares with the Lord, but I was getting tired and thought I would end my prayer and head off to sleep. Suddenly, the thought occurred to me that I was shortchanging the Lord. It's as if I knew there was more I could say—more that He wanted me to share—and I was trying to wrap up my prayer so I could sleep. At that thought, the Spirit of God filled me and I humbled myself, opening my heart and giving myself more quality time to commune with my Lord. I was so overcome with His Spirit; the words of praise flowed through me and I felt God surrounding me with His love. After some time passed, I ended my prayer and lay in bed. I felt a level of peace and contentment like I'd never felt before. My mind was at perfect peace to the point that I felt like I was floating. I can't describe it any other way. My burdens were lifted, and I was lighter than air. If we would only choose to spend that quality time with the Lord, He is so ready and willing to bless us. It's a lesson I continue to learn, and one I hope others will consider in their communion with the Lord.- Sister Mandy Griffith - Forest Hills, FL Branch

BB **Dinnertime Blessings** - I recently made some chicken nuggets for my children's dinner. Both kids prefer their nuggets cut up for dipping. After filling their plates, I had one last nugget, so I decided to cut it up for when (I knew) they would ask for more. My final cut left only a small piece of chicken on the knife, so I took that piece off to eat myself. I quickly realized that something was not right: This

piece of "chicken" was hard and completely unchewable. When I took it out of my mouth, I discovered it was actually a piece of chicken bone. I immediately checked all the other pieces already on my children's plates, but there was no issue with their food—just that last, one little bite I had decided to eat instead of serving to my babies. I cannot thank God enough for constantly watching over us. This is an experience I will share with my children of God's goodness and grace in our lives!- Sister Jennifer Bertolo - Detroit 1, MI Branch

BB **Stepping Out on Faith** - Seven years ago, I worked three days a week while my mom babysat my 2-year-old daughter. I was pregnant with my second daughter and near the end of my pregnancy, my mom found out she had breast cancer. I knew babysitting two kids under the age of 2 would be too much for her. Every daycare I researched cost MORE than my income. My husband and I met with a financial advisor and were told if I continued working part time, there was no way we could afford it. Quitting was not even an option. I was so discouraged. I made it a matter of prayer and asked my branch to pray that I would be directed by the Lord. He knew my desire. I discussed it with my husband, who is not a member of the Church, and we decided to step out on faith. I quit my job. I wanted to raise my babies and spend as much time with them as I could. Our expenses were more than our income, but the Lord provided and still does to this day. When my youngest turned one, I was offered a part-time with the flexibility to work from home. God is so good!- Sister Leah Ochs - Monongahela, PA Branch

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



Question for this month:

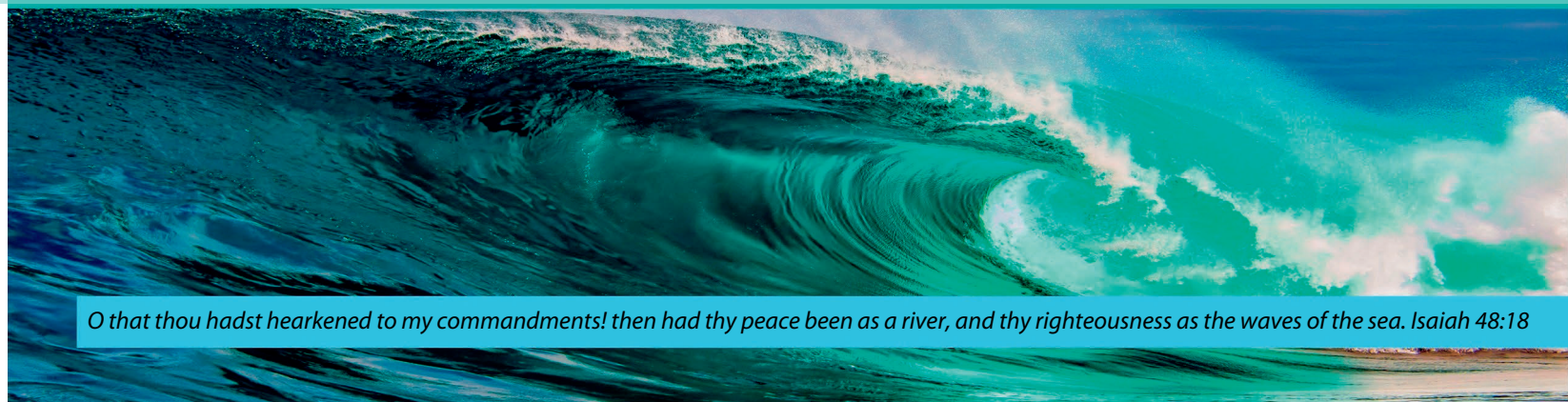
What is your resurrection story? How did Jesus touch your life and ultimately cause you to be baptized in The Church of Jesus Christ?



Answer from last month:

Spring is coming! Plants and flowers start growing again. What tips do you have to continue to grow your relationship with God and your brothers and sisters?

"Prepare the soil (purify your heart and mind), plant the seeds (tell others of Jesus), water the plants (feed and visit the poor and lonely), then enjoy the blooms and crop (reap your reward!)."-Sister Dienna Rogers, Irvine, CA Branch (continued on page 9)



O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. Isaiah 48:18