

Pulse of the Congregation



February, 2011

Important Dates:

- February 12: Youth Activity
- February 15: Youth (under 18) dinner with the Pastor
- February 25: YAG Polar Bear Plunge!
- March 25-27: Men's Fellowship Weekend
- April 8-10: Women's Fellowship Weekend
- April 24: Easter
- May 13-15: Women's Retreat
- Every Sunday Evening: Exodus Class
- Every Sunday Evening: Church History Class
- Wednesday evenings: Prayer & Testimony service

Congregational Camping

Reservations for the 2011 congregational camping trip have been made at D Lake in Lincoln City for August 5-7. Brother Ron Trammell will again bring his ski boat for fishing and tubing. We will have campfire services as in years past, fishing, s'mores, polar bearing, and a morning worship on Sunday. Everyone is invited. There are 12 sites reserved, and they will fill very quickly. If you are interested, please tell Brother Brian soon. Each site has specific restrictions and will be assigned based upon individual needs. The meals will be treated as in years past, i.e. volunteers receiving meal assignments. Full hook-up sites are \$28 per night. Tent sites are \$21 per night. Financial help is available. Bring your family!

Newsletter of the Restored Church of Christ, Salem Branch



Every Word?

by Brother Brian Herren

In measures of grace and moments of peace, the Lord has truly blessed His Saints with understanding and a burgeoning coalescence that will prove His will in these times of trouble. While contention and strife mark every wind and the nations adorn themselves with those corruptible elements which shall fail when tried, the Saints seem peculiar in their surrender of unwise ambition for the merits of lowliness. We have grown together, learned together, struggled together, and come together. Truly the Lord is shepherding us, and the Spirit whispers His good pleasure to those who would hear. We desire to press forward, and the way is made whereby this honest purpose might be manifest. We are given a rod of iron to cling to, and it is the Word of God.

In the vision described by Lehi and Nephi (1 Nephi 2 & 4), we discover that the word of God is given to men that they might find their way through the dark mists and temptations characteristic of our probation. If we should hold fast, we are sure to find ourselves in the presence of our Lord. The word of God, symbolized by a rod of iron, is without deviation, decay, laxity, or deformation. It is solid. The Psalmist wrote of a rod of iron whereby the Lord and His kingdom would overcome the kings of this world: "*Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*" (Psalms 2:9).

This admonition is supported in the Book of Revelation, "*And she [the Church] brought forth a man child [the kingdom of God and His Christ], who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron...*" (Revelation 12:3) (Christ is often considered the groom/husband of the woman).

The scriptures remind us of the value of God's word, and counsel us in adherence. The Lord Himself said, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4). But, we live in a time where even the most sacred elements are discarded too easily and nothing seems safe from the vanity of men. This dispensation finds a generation prone to disposal, where even the most righteous fixtures are quickly eliminated should they prove themselves disagreeable. Marriages suffer, children are put away, and the elderly mistreated. Our contracts, the founding principles of government, and even our sobriety seem at risk of disposal to those who no longer find them consistent with their own pursuits. This assault does not spare the written word of God. It has suffered many revisions, disputations, and ultimately the untimely expulsion of those particular portions that no longer serve one's own interest.

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Quit Fighting This, Everything Will Be OK

by Sister Tricia Livingston



Sister Tricia Livingston

I know God is real because he came to me many times and saved my life before I died. On this particular occasion I was driving to the casino late at night or early morning on March 30, 2008. As I was leaving Salem, the roads were dry. No rain in sight as I started my way on Highway 22. About fifteen minutes into my drive, the early morning began to get very black. I remember I was going the speed limit, no more and no less. Still no rain but very, very black and extremely hard to see. It was so black I didn't notice the color of the faint white on the banks beside the road....Snow. My car hit a slick patch on the road and my car began to swerve for a few seconds. I regained control and slowed down. As I slowed down, I could see snowflakes fall on my windshield. Then I realized the roads were only to get worse and as that thought came into my head it hit me hard because all at once my car started to fishtail all over the road. I hit black ice. I kept thinking don't panic and hit the brakes, just ride through the ice. But, the ice was never ending. It never ended until my car flew off the road, off a fifty foot embankment and rolled several times landing upside down. Before I crashed, my life didn't flash before my eyes like I've heard most people say in near death experiences. I was scared but, only for an instant. The instant I was scared was when I realized my daughter may not have a mother anymore. ...concluded on page 2

Quit Fighting This, Everything Will Be OK

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This thought was instantly put at ease because I felt the spirit of the Lord right before I crashed. I can't really explain how I felt at that moment except for I went from terrified to peaceful in an instant. I felt the spirit tell me to "Quit fighting this, everything will be OK". After being disoriented for I don't know how long, I climbed up the embankment onto the road with the help of a stranger. Once I saw the road, I realized what God meant by telling me to "Quit fighting this" I was fighting the car to not go over the edge but if it didn't and I kept fighting with the car and the ice, the accident would of created a much bigger problem than what already took place. According to where my tire marks were heading before the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me, my car would have gone head on with a steal gate. Right then and there I knew the impact of the collision would of killed me instantly. And the stranger that helped me out of my car and back on the road also would of been dead because he was right in my path if the Lord didn't bring me to an instant peace and let him take control of the wheel (my life) for once.

Men's Fellowship Weekend

March, 2011

Reservations have been made for the Men's Fellowship weekend in 2011. We will be staying in a house at Sunriver, March 25-27. The house is 3800 square feet and will sleep as many as 18. There are 6 bedrooms and 6 bathrooms, a pool table, foosball table, and hot tub. Seven bicycles are provided, including 1 tandem bike. If you would like to attend, please notify Brother Brian as soon as you are able. Brother Ron Trammell will again be in charge of organizing us in our kitchen duties, and overseeing the meals. There is no cost to attend the fellowship weekend, and no church funds will be used. If you are able, please provide Brother Ron with \$20 per person to cover the expense of food for the weekend. If you would like to help cover the cost of the house, you may trust your donations to Brother Brian. We will plan on having a song service on Saturday evening, and a worship service on Sunday morning. A snoring contest may also be held, though there seems to be a perennial champion who cannot be beat. Also, croquet and hillbilly golf will be available. Brother Steve will be ready for laser tag. All are welcome.



Christmas Choir, by Sister Cessaries Galusha

The choir gave ministry in music again this past Christmas by singing "Carol of the Star" by Donald Moore. It was recently published a few years ago, and so was new to everyone. Its original melody is expressive and lyrical, and proved to be a delight to the singers. In three verses, growing in complexity and emotion, this carol described the blessing of the new and mysterious star that appeared at Christ's birth. First, "a shining star led wise men on their way" as they traveled in search of their precious King. This same star "led angels from above to seek a tiny babe, [and] surround Him with their love". In the third verse the music rose to a climax while the "mighty star" proclaimed to all the world "His wondrous birth". In addition to telling the significance of the "new star" spoken of in the scriptures, a Latin refrain expresses our honor and praise to the Everlasting Father: "venite adoremus Dominum," which translates to "come let us adore the Lord" (and can also be substituted for "oh come let us adore Him" in the hymn "Oh Come All Ye Faithful"). The choir progressed in wonderful ways, not the least of which was pronouncing unfamiliar words in a foreign language fluently. The men, though few in number, held their part well even against the compelling forces of the melody,

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Christmas Caroling

December, 2010



Christmas Carolers

On December 18th, the Saints again assembled for an evening of Christmas caroling. Familiar hymns were sung as we traveled from door to door and lifted our voices in praise. We were well received and often thanked. It was

moving to see parents fetch their children to hear the Christmas praises. At one point, several passing by joined in with us to sing. This year, we notified the neighborhood in advance that we

would be collecting non-perishable items for the Marion & Polk County Food Share. Great generosity was manifest, and we collected 139 pounds of food! I trust the Lord was pleased in our worship and service.



Non-perishable items collected for those in need

Oh come, let us sing unto the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise
to the Rock of our salvation.
- Psalm 95:1

Every Word?

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We would do well to remember the counsel of Christ, that man should live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, and not simply those which we find convenient to our conscience, consistent with our understanding, or acceptable to our culture.

Paul wrote, “For *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*” (Romans 15:4) To this he added, “*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*” (II Timothy 3:15).

The authorship and authenticity of the written word is made sure in Peter’s second letter. He wrote, “*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scriptures is given of any private will of man. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” (II Peter 1:20-21)

Paul wrote faithfully, when he recorded that he believed the written word (Acts 24:24), and Mosiah made great efforts to instruct his three sons in the scriptures (Mosiah 1:1-13).

The scriptures are still valuable today. Do we cherish every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, or make our selections by the dictates of our present mind? The Bible, Old and New Testament, contains the law and the prophets, the New Covenant and witness of Christ, the revelation of end times, and the comfort of an unchangeable God. It is the written word of God, but it is not alone in this honorable designation. The Book of Mormon contains the “fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (Doctrine and Covenants 17:2d; 26:2a), and God Himself revealed that it was He who had given the Doctrine and Covenants to mankind. He said that it contained commandments “...which I have given them [His servants] to publish unto you, O inhabitants of the earth” (D&C 1:2a). Speaking of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord said,

“Wherefore I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments, and also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world...Behold, I am God, and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding;...Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled...What I, the Lord, have spoken I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice, or by the voice of my servants, it is the same; for behold, and lo, the Lord is God, and the Spirit beareth record, and the record is true, and the truth abideth forever and ever. Amen.” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:4a, 5a, 7-8).

Let us not abandon the rod of iron for a path of our own making. What He has said we will do, where He has sent we will go, not lining our path with those pieces of iron that best suit us, but reconciling our will with the Lord’s and therein finding the fullness more profitable, even if not immediately convenient to our understanding. We will do well to press forward, surrendering no portion of this word, though the winds of uncertainty redouble their efforts to remove us from that which shall prove our staff and stay. May we endure, beloved brothers and sisters, meeting squarely every demand with love abiding.

Christmas Choir

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...but still struggled at times not to be overcome. The alto section of women performed marvelously from the very beginning, and I was very pleased with their steadiness. The sopranos struggled particularly with being able to sing at all because of illness, but were blessed and strong when the time of ministry came. I hope everyone enjoyed the time we spent together in rehearsing and learning this music, but as we came to the last rehearsal we still felt somewhat unprepared for a performance. Here, I would like to share a blessing that might not have been recognized by others, but was very evident to me. I was a little removed from the singing because I was concerned with listening and helping rather than singing. I prayed, asking the Lord’s blessing upon us so that it may be pleasing to the congregation, but especially to the One we serve.

I confess that I did not feel we were at the point I had hoped we would be, but what a tremendous gift it was to stand before you that morning and hear the offering you made unto our righteous King! Voices sang with hearts full of joy, in a blend that I had not heard in all of our rehearsing. The expression and emotion was wonderful, growing in harmony with the direction of the music. Furthermore, the weaknesses we had struggled with were swept away to be made strengths through toil and labor, yes, but most importantly by the hand of a great God who loves us. My expectations were exceeded well beyond the bounds, and what a beautiful offering it was. I praise our Father for His grace upon us, and cannot otherwise believe but that He was pleased, or He would not have blessed us so. What a Majesty we serve, and what a joyful season to sing His praises!

The Saints to Travel Again

by Brother Brian Herren



There are places upon this earth wherein the gates of eternity were transcended and the souls of men trans-

formed. Because of the eternal nature of the events occurring in these holy venues, they cannot be hid from the eyes of the discerning in the pages of history. They are alive today, just as they were in the moment of their service, and they continue to call upon those who pursue the One Whose presence blesses them still. ...concluded on page 4

The Saints to Travel Again

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On July 14, 2011, sixteen Saints will be traveling to visit sites of spiritual consequence and historical significance in Kirtland, Ohio and Palmyra, New York. Saints from Salem will be joined by others from Vancouver, Washington and Independence, Missouri. They will be staying with members of the local Restoration branch in Kirtland, and plan to worship with them during the Sunday services. The pastor of the Kirtland Restoration Branch and his wife are excited to host us, as they do many of the Saints who visit Kirtland. They have consecrated their home to this purpose, maintaining a house of more than 4,000 square feet that comfortably sleeps as many as 20. The Kirtland temple has also been reserved for a special worship and song service. Our trip will include a visit to Fairport Harbor, where many of the early Saints arrived in Ohio on the banks of Lake Erie. The old town of Kirtland has much to offer beyond the beautiful and solemn "House of the Lord", including the Newel K. Whitney store and home, where the school of the prophets met. Also, the Isaac Morley farm (where the fourth conference of the Church was held and where the earliest High Priests of the Restoration were ordained), the ashery and mill that supported the industry of the Saints, and the graveyard where many Church pioneers were laid to rest. A short drive to Hiram, Ohio will allow a visit to the John Johnson home, where section seventy-six of the Doctrine and Covenants was received, and where other very notable events transpired. Before leaving, the Saints will visit the stone quarry used in the building of the temple. After leaving Kirtland, we will travel to Niagara Falls on our way to Palmyra, New York. In Palmyra, the Saints will stay at the Palmyra Inn (owned by the LDS Church), which is within walking distance of the Sacred Grove, where the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith. Hill Cumorah is also very near, and represents the site written of by Joseph Smith when he described his discovery of the Book of Mormon under angelic leadership. The log and frame homes where the prophet and his family once lived can be toured, and the E.B. Grandin building provides insight into the earliest printing of the Book of Mormon. A short drive to Fayette will allow us to visit the Peter Whitmer farm, where Christ's church was again formally organized upon this earth on April 6, 1830. It is impossible to write about the many important events that occurred at Kirtland, Hiram, Palmyra, and Fayette with any brevity. A church history class meets every Sunday evening at Sister Sue Herren's home to review and learn of the many ways that God has worked in these latter days, and the promise that is held to those who remain faithful. All are welcome to attend. In reviewing my notes from the first congregational Church History Trip, I found the following, which I leave here in closing and in expectation: "We walked where prophets once stood, where solemn Saints once worshiped, where the Book of Mormon sprang forth from the earth with a testimony of Jesus Christ, and where God Himself descended to men of low estate. Let this be our testimony, that these were days never to be forgotten, memories formed in places forever changed by the majesty of our Savior."



Sacred Grove

Ladies Relief Society Update

by Sister Melissa Herren



Sister Melissa Herren

The Ladies Relief Society (LRS) continues their pursuits of service to others and fellowship one with another. In November, we refreshed our fellowship and sewing skills by creating more pillowcases to give away to those in need. They were delivered to the women and children at Simonka Place. Thanks again to Sharon for opening up her home and lending her expertise!

Also in November, the LRS helped organize the donations and deliver a Thanksgiving dinner to two families in need. Special

thanks to Brother Ron Trammell for his behind-the-scenes efforts and delivery help! December was an active month for the LRS as well. On a wet and windy Saturday, a few of us delivered Christmas trees to some of the Saints and helped welcome in the Christmas season. We are so grateful to Brother Ron Herren for helping secure the trees. Next up in December was the

organization of the food and gift drive for two families in need. Again, thank you to Brother Ron Trammell for his help in working with DHS and helping deliver the goods. While the Saints provided food and clothes, a thank you goes to Brother Ron Herren for his coordination with the Salem Fire Department who provided toys for the families. On December 30th, the LRS had its first monthly "Craft and Fellowship Night." The LRS will be meeting monthly (fourth Thursday of each month) to fellowship and use two of the tools that our Lord has given us: our hands. Each of these nights will be opened with a worship. ...concluded on page 5



Pillowcases for Simonka Place



Gifts for families in need



Two Sisters prepare a Christmas tree



Fast and Prayer, Coming Together Oft

by Sister Cessaries Galusha

"And they did not walk any more after the performances and ordinances of the Law of Moses, but they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft, both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.... And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people which had been created by the hand of God" (IV Nephi 1:13, 19). This describes the state of the people

and the changes made to their lives after Christ visited them on this land. They kept the commandments of God as He plainly instructed them, and they continued in fasting and prayer unto Him all their days. In striving to keep the commandments of God and follow the leadings of His Spirit, we too have demonstrated this in our lives, coming together often to pray, hear the word of the Lord, and once a month in joint fasting where we sanctify ourselves and prepare to partake of the sacrament. On this day, the last Wednesday of the month, both young and old alike fast in the name of the Lord, relying on His holy arm to strengthen us as we humble ourselves before Him in prayer and thanksgiving. After meeting for prayer and testimony we rejoice together in His love, and break bread and fellowship with one another.

These days have been fulfilling and rewarding in many ways. Learning to discipline ourselves and to rely upon our heavenly Father rather than our own strength, resources and will is a tremendous blessing that will be enjoyed for years to come. This act of submitting our earthly desires and the needs of our body to the will of God allows Him greater place in our hearts; through our surrender He reigns completely, which is our greatest desire. Our faith becomes stronger when we experience His provision, and prove His promises true. He does not leave us helpless, and through the trial of our faith, great blessings flow. Often we receive strength as if we had been full of nourishing food, and our hearts are drawn out in prayer to God because of our reliance on Him. Specific prayers are answered readily, and small blessings become evident to our eyes. We also receive strength through each other, knowing we fast together with one purpose and one heart. In the services when we have fasted I have seen greater meekness in the countenances of the people, our prayers have been more united, and we grow to be one. Then we break bread together as a family that is strengthened by the bonds of love and common joy in the Lord.

It has been a good work to fast together, in these times, in preparation for the Israel trip and others. We grow together, support each other, and most importantly, glorify our King together. I trust it pleases Him to see our efforts and help us along the way. We are children, yearning to be mature in the ways of God, but we still have much to learn. Praise the Lord that He leads us along, holding our hands so that one day we may live with Him in Eternity!

The Passing of a Beloved Sister

by Brother Bill Curtis

Margie Rennick passed from this life on Saturday, January 8, 2011. Margie and her husband Walt had two children and during her life, she was active in youth camp activities as well as church reunions. She taught Sunday School classes, played the piano for church, and loved to sing. She loved the Lord and will be missed by all that knew her.

Editor's Note: The article about our good Sister Margie would ordinarily have been printed on the first page of this newsletter as a result of our deepest respect and love for her. However, at the particular time of her passing, much of the printing had already concluded. Her family is in our prayers, and we hold her in highest regards.



Sister Margie Rennick

Ladies Relief Society Update

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All women are welcome to join, and do not have to bring or work on a craft. As the LRS continues in its goal to help others and to provide relief where needed, we also seek to tighten our bonds and fellowship one with another. The Lord, I believe, has blessed us in our endeavors, and it is my prayer that He will continue to lead and direct us in all we do. All honor and glory are His forever and ever!

"And then shall it come to pass that the spirits of those who are righteous, are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise; a state of rest; a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles, and from all care, and sorrow..." - Alma 19:44

Wreath Making and Fundraising

by Sister Trina Herren, on behalf of the Youth Commission



Sister Trina Herren

This year the youth gathered together once more to make wreath's for any and all who wanted them. They sold for \$10 and well worth the price for the time, love and creativity that went into the masterpieces they turned out to be. Several comments were given about how beautiful they were, that there are already orders for next year in place. As Robert cut the branches to be used off the trunk, Michael, Travis, and Mary put together bundles to be fashioned together on a 10 inch ring and given to Melissa to decorate. The kids made a total of 80 wreaths and put in 51 hours of hard work and dedication between the six youth. They were able to earn \$702.00 as a whole towards the cost of camp. Sydney was unable to help build the wreath's due to her location but not without notice as she sold the most out of all the kids with a total of 12! Even though it was two days worth of sap stuck to the palms of all who helped, it was a lot of fun as we sang Christmas songs and enjoyed being all together again. Thank you to everyone who decided to purchase a wreath, donate time, or just drop off or pick up the kids. We look forward to serving any and all next year as plans to make more are already in motion.



Sister Melissa Clark

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in

earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

- II Corinthians 4:6-10

The Passing of a Beloved Brother

by Sister Donna Johnson

On January 11, 2011 a dove descended from Heaven to give our Brother Dennie Coburn a lift to meet his Heavenly Father. Dennie joined his father, mother and older brother there. Dennie, age 62, leaves a wife, two sons, a grandson and two sisters missing him very much. He recently had heart surgery, which took him from us before we were ready to let him go. "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you myself, that where I am you may be also". John 14:1-3



Brother Dennie Coburn

Editor's note: The family is planning a memorial service in March. See also the editor's note on page 5.

The Lighthouse

By Becky Jennings

The mighty lighthouse stands secure,
Undaunted by the restless sea;
Ravaged by the changing tides
And buffeted by winds blown free.

Yet, it sheds its beacon straight and true,
Unfaltering in the bleakest night,
Guiding every passing ship
Uncertain of the course that's right.

May we be diligent and true,
Dedicated to the right
And like the stalwart lighthouse stand
A beacon in the darkest night.