

PULSE OF THE CONGREGATION

2020 | 2021

Upcoming Events

LRS choir practice at 8:30 AM in the Shopuary for Reunion MM

July 9-11: Congregational Camping at Foster Reservoir

July 19-23: Youth Camp

July 26-Aug 1: Reunion

July 16, Aug 20: LRS activities

July 8, Aug 13: Youth Nights

Local Officers 2021

Pastor: Brian Herren

Counselors: Jim Clark and Gary Livingston

Treasurer: Jim Clark

Secretary: Dorothy Herren

Recorder: Melissa Clark

Youth Commission: Melissa and Maddy Clark, Michael Livingston

Regional Officers '21

Regional Director: Brian Herren

Counselors: Mike Terry and Gary Jones

Treasurer: Travis Clark

Secretary: Melissa Herren

Youth Director: Kevin Herren

Women's Leader: Suzy Herren

Church School: Maddy Clark

Music Leader: Cessaries Galusha

Youth Activities: Michael Livingston

Blessings Through Tribulation

By Sister Cessaries Galusha

It has been a very dramatic and eventful year for this region in the Lord's vineyard, as well as the United States and the world. In March 2020 the country closed its doors to one and all as restrictions became heavy to avoid spreading the epidemic of COVID19.

In September 2020, wild fires blew out of control by unusually high winds that caused one of the most destructive seasons on record in Oregon. One million acres burned, over 3,000 buildings destroyed, and 40,000 people were evacuated from their homes. The fires affected the entire state by emitting heavy smoke that changed the lighting and made breathing unbearable.

Then in February 2021, the worst ice storm Oregon has seen in 40 years lasting 3 days, caused 350,000 residents to lose power. It was the worst disaster Portland General Electric has ever seen, and many remained without power for weeks on end. Broken trees and limbs can still be seen all around even today. All the while, fear gripped the hearts of many as the pandemic continued to spread, keeping closures and restrictions in place in society at large.

To top it all off, on June 26-27, 2021 Portland, Salem and Eugene saw the hottest temperatures experienced in over 120 years, with Salem reaching 117°! What exciting times!

There are many reasons that cause the hearts of men to fail, yet God does not leave His own, and we can appreciate the tremendous opportunity and gift to witness prophecies coming true from the beginning of time, first hand in our day! Even through our tribulations, sufferings of physical afflictions, and trials of the heart, our hope never fades in Christ Jesus. Whatever becomes of us in this life, we will always rejoice in His glorious name.



Youth Activities Through Covid

This year has been different for everyone since Covid. Each month we have been meeting as a youth group to learn as well as fellowship together. We usually go to Travis and Maddy's house where we either eat, watch movies, play Bible games, roast marshmallows, etc. One of our recent youth days was when we hiked at Silver Creek Falls and had lunch afterwards. I really appreciate the youth nights because we all come together and fellowship and worship.

By Sister Emily Herren



From the Youth Commission

The past year has held nothing but abnormalities for not only the world, but also our congregation. There have been times of distance, but also a great number of opportunities in which we could fellowship together. In those times of fellowship I have felt extremely blessed. It was during such instances where many other places had closed doors that the church did not. Saints were able to come together, and joy always abundantly flowed over as it ran dry in the world. This has been no different in working with the Builders and Lambs. I have been able to witness the power of prayer and innocence with the Lambs. While the world around them has been filled with hate and fear, they have taken heart and prayed fervently for the Lord to bless all men and keep all healthy. They have worked diligently in making yummy treats and cards for distant saints as well. The Builders have worked hard in the yards of saints, volunteering at public parks and beaches, and using their gifts of singing to bless the congregation. I have also been able to witness the Builders and the Lambs grow one with another over the past year. Where once days may have been filled with activities, school work and sports, the pandemic allowed a time for growth physically and spiritually. I have taken such joy in watching the youth mature into young men and women who are lights in the world, who have a solid head on their shoulders, and who take such great pride in a knowledge of their scriptures. Youth night after youth night we have played some sort of scripture trivia game and each time I am amazed at how many stories they are versed in. I know the past year has been challenging for many for various reasons, but I am so thankful to our Heavenly Father that He has blessed us with each other to lean on and grow with. May He continue to add His blessings as we pursue another year together.

By Sister Melissa Clark



Deep Thoughts with Michael

By Brother Michael Livingston

I have been very blessed by serving the youth this year. It has been an interesting past year with the pandemic that happened. In March of 2020 we stopped meeting for church in compliance to the executive order that was in place for the pandemic. For a few months we didn't meet for youth activities. Our first activity was in July of 2020, I believe. I missed the youth sorely through that time.

They are a very special group of kids. They mean a lot to me. I have always desired to have a family of my own and the youth are the closest thing I have to that family. I love them all like they were my own children. They are strong in the Lord and they have a great love for Him, and I saw that this year with all that has happened. They kept their heads up. They came back to those activities and participated with the same vigor they always had. I know this past year has been hard for them with having to do at-home learning for school, not being able to see their friends, and not knowing what was going to happen. They stuck through it and had faith in God that all will be well.

Last February I moved from swing shift to day shift at work. With this change I was able to participate in more youth activities, like the youth nights. I had opportunities to talk with them at the end of the youth night, which I called, "Deep Thoughts With Michael". That time is where we just talk together about topics that I bring to the evening. The first time I did this with them we talked about having our complete focus on God and to pray to Him constantly. I also wanted to be completely open with them about the struggles I might have with the topic at hand, so we all understood that we had to grow together as a body. For me personally, I have been very blessed by those talks with the kids, and I do feel we are growing together in the Lord.

The youth mean a great deal to me. I am so thankful for God allowing me to be apart of the youth commission. God has been very kind to me. I pray for the youth daily that they may grow closer to Him and to learn more of His ways. I also pray that God might help me serve the youth to the best of my abilities.



The Blessing of Reuniting

By Sister Maddy Clark

When things first started shutting down in 2020, I didn't think very much of it. But, when two weeks turned into a month and then one month turned into more than one, I started to get anxious and unsettled. I was surprised at how impacted I felt because of the restrictions, even though for the most part, they did not touch my life. I rely heavily on church activities and services to keep me in a positive state of mind and when I started noticing how that loss of connection was affecting me, I began to worry. In case you didn't know, I am a worrier, and it's something I have struggled with most of my adult life and also something I have found difficult to give over to the Lord.



Then the decision was made to resume normal church services and I was over the moon. My heart had missed seeing my brothers and sisters in Christ in person. Not too long after that we started planning and meeting for activities with the youth. I felt relieved and joyful because I knew that so many other groups had not made this choice, which meant that youth activities would not happen.

We started back up with a Youth Night for the Builders and Climbers, which is something Travis, Cessaries and I started doing in 2019. They don't always look the same--sometimes we have a challenge (blowing ping pong balls through an obstacle course with a straw), sometimes we watch a video lecture and discuss it, or maybe watch a movie, or do Jeopardy! We do always serve them dinner, which has been a great way to get to know the youth better. We will sit around the kitchen table and just chat. The goal is to provide the youth with a small respite from the temptations, trials and stresses they face in their world, as well as a chance to share, learn and fellowship with each other. During our brief time apart, these evenings were something I really missed.

While I saw and felt myself struggling internally during this time, I was able to take joy in the fact that our youth would not struggle the way other kids would. They have God and each other to rely on when they can't see their friends. While the world remained locked down, we opened back up, giving the youth (and others) a sense of return to normalcy.

Now it's been over a year and I can look back and say that I am grateful for the experience of the past year and I truly feel that we have been blessed by this pandemic. ...Continued on page 5



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It has brought us all closer together and closer to God. Thinking about how things were in April and May of last year almost seems surreal, but I know that God was with us. He strengthened my heart and my mind.

On May 22 of this year, Michael, Melissa and I took the Builders to Mary's Peak with Travis and Amos. It is near Philomath and is the tallest point in the Oregon Coast Range. On a clear day you can look east and see the cascades and then turn 180 degrees and see the sun glinting off the sea to the west. When suggesting this activity I had remembered a previous trip to the top, watching the sun set, and thought it would be so fun to sit at the top of the mountain with the Builders and watch the sun drop below the sea while singing camp songs and hymns. When we reached the top however, it was cold and there was a constant barrage of wind which put the temperature in the high 30's. The wind did not cease and there was very little shelter. We were not all very well prepared, so we knew we wouldn't stay at the top as long as we wanted. We let the youth look around at the amazing view for a few moments before we took shelter behind an informational sign at the top. Some of us sat at a picnic table or stood in the direct wind and others stood behind the sign, trying to stay warm. We gathered close together and Michael led us in a few songs.

This is an experience I hope I never forget. As we stood there on top of that mountain with the wind buffeting us, singing praises to the Lord, I felt very strongly the power of the Lord. He was in the beauty of the landscape around us, in the strong, cold wind, and in the setting sun. It was cold and uncomfortable and we could hardly hear each other sing or pray, but despite this, I didn't really want to leave.

This last year has been difficult and different in its own way, but as Saints of the Lord, with Him we need not be afraid, we need not worry. I have been blessed by this time and even more to spend time with the youth, bringing a return to familiarity.

Growing Closer to God through Covid *By Brother Benjamin Herren*

On the second Thursday of every month we have a youth night where we eat dinner, play Bible games, read scripture, and pray. These youth nights have been a good way to bond with other youth and the youth leaders, and to better our spiritual life. At our latest youth night we played Bible Jeopardy and roasted marshmallows on a campfire. Sometimes we have a segment called "deep thoughts with Michael" where Michael leads a serious discussion about different topics and ideas in our spiritual life, like studying our scriptures and praying. Recently we've gone on two hikes as a youth group. The first one was to Mary's Peak to watch the sunset and the second one was to Silver Creek Falls. When we went to Mary's Peak we sang camp songs for a little while, had a couple prayers, and went back to the cars and drove home where we camped in Michael's back yard. When we went to Silver Creek Falls, we got there early and did the hike, and then had hot dogs. Throughout this year these youth activities have been a big blessing because we get to meet with like-minded people and grow closer to God.

God's Plan is a Perfect Plan

By Brother Ron and Sister Dorothy Herren

"...for I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God, shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day." Alma 16:3

In the first part of March 2020, as the gravity of the pandemic increased and the warnings of its critical nature heightened, we made a prayerful, conscious decision to put ourselves into isolation, concerned that we could carry the disease to others and vice versa.



This meant separating ourselves from our family and from our church. It was an exceedingly difficult decision to make and would have been even more difficult had we not turned it over to God. There was a deep ache in our hearts that accompanied our decision but also a peace knowing we were doing what was right, for us.

We discontinued our isolation when on May 10th, Kevin, Trina and our four granddaughters visited us. After that visit we reevaluated our situation and through fasting and prayer we felt safe to begin accepting visitors to our home, attending church, and opening our home to Prayer and Testimony once again.

As we approached the summer season, the time of year when the activities of the church increase, we were facing the reality that many of those activities would have to be cancelled or altered in a way to accommodate the Covid restrictions. Reunion was one of the events that had to be modified. First, it was moved to Salem and secondly, the day's schedule was shortened by starting at 1:30 pm. The messages were not shortened or abbreviated, but were powerful and were presented with strength and conviction.

We were blessed abundantly by an amazing attitude which took place throughout the week. All the women in the church prepared meals in their homes with a single purpose and brought them to the meeting place to share with everyone, which helped to create a rich Zionic feeling that surrounded the Reunion.

We were also blessed by the privilege of hosting the Priesthood in our home every morning for their meeting, prayers, and breakfast. Our home was filled with a calm, spiritual sense that remained even after Reunion was over.

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So, all in all, even with the Pandemic wreaking havoc here and around the world, we know that we have been richly blessed during that time. With all the confusion and chaos sweeping across the nation; the presidential election causing distrust and confusion; the upheaval and violence in our cities; the turmoil brought on by the media; and the emotional weight of the devastating wildfires, it was impressed upon us with great power to continue in fervent prayer and to trust in the Lord. We felt and continue to feel an inner peace knowing that God's plan is a perfect plan.

"O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm.

Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss: therefore, I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness.

Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God. Amen."

II Nephi 3:61-66

With a Steadfast Faith, United Let us Toil

By Sister Melissa Herren

In the past 15 months many of us have felt a full spectrum of emotions and feelings; fear, uncertainty, disappointment, cautious optimism, hope and joy to name just a few. What I have found to be the greatest blessing to me in this difficult time has been the hope and assurance in my Lord and Savior and the ability to spend time with fellow saints. The women of the Salem branch have remained active (after a short period of inactivity during the beginning stages of shut down) and their fellowship and presence in this time has been incredibly uplifting to me.

We meet monthly for fellowship, alternating between creative activities and a study of biblical women. We continue to have meetings to plan service opportunities and to pray. Many of us also are blessed to meet with Cessaries and prepare ministries of music.

In January we met at my home, packed up sack lunches along with some hats, scarves, blankets, and first aid items and headed to a local homeless camp. We were met with very appreciative campers, who let us pray with them before we left.

Many sisters have been visiting those in our congregation that have not been regularly attending services and I know that this has been a blessing to both the women and those they visit.

I wish to thank my Heavenly Father for his abundant blessings. The fellowship of His saints, health of mind and body, peace, love and the trials that increase my faith have been such a blessing unto me and help me to remain steadfast in my walk with Him.

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor 15:57-58