

# Zion's Advocate

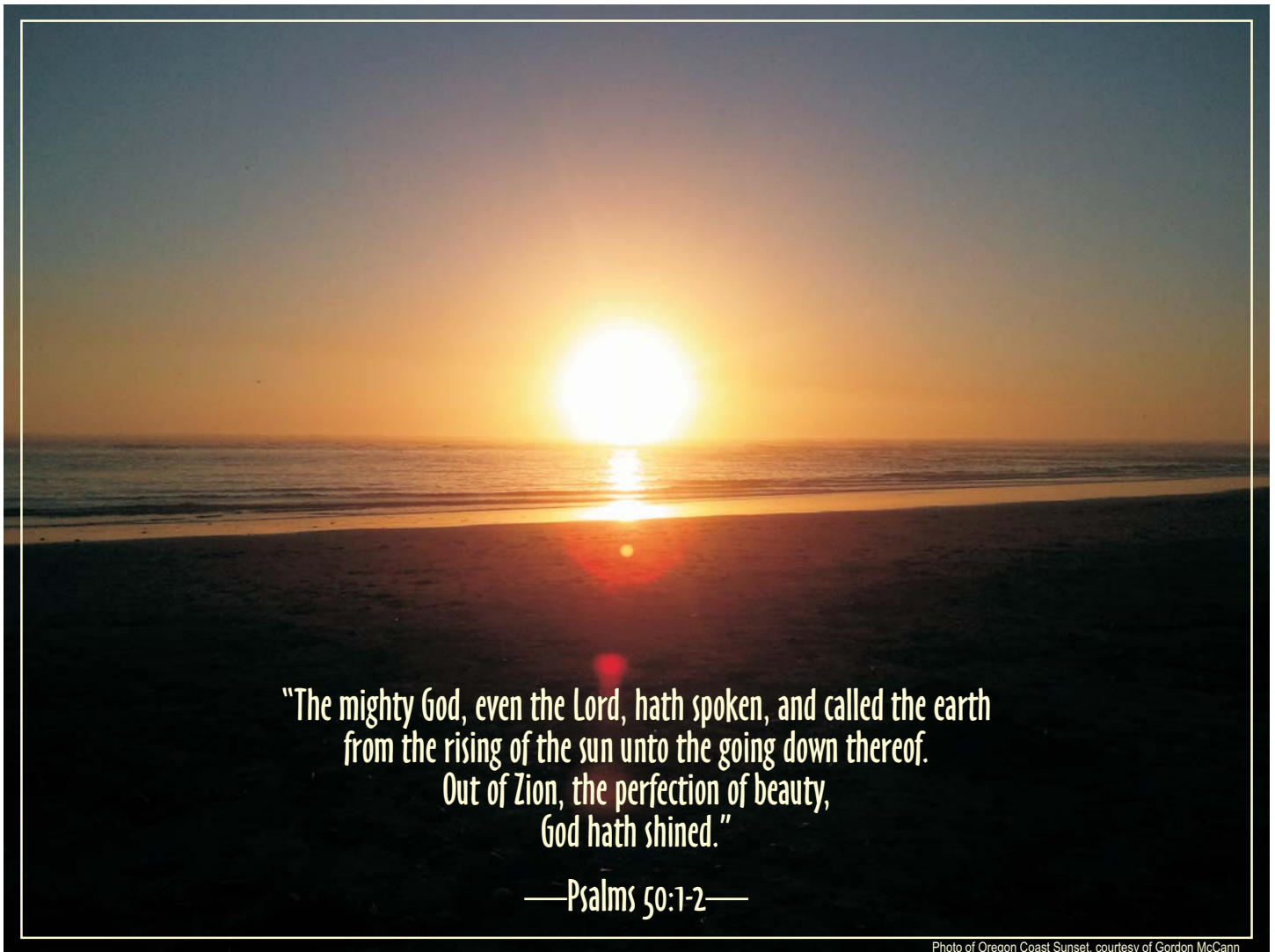
*"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day,  
for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost...."*

*1 Nephi 3:187*

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*"The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth  
from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.  
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,  
God hath shined."*

*—Psalms 50:1-2—*

Photo of Oregon Coast Sunset, courtesy of Gordon McCann

## *~ In This Issue ~*

EDITORIAL—Criticism in the Church - <i>Apostle Roland Sarratt</i> . . . . .	103	<i>Debra Haines</i> . . . . .	111
ARTICLE—The Sign of His Coming - <i>Elder Gordon McCann</i> . . . . .	105	TESTIMONY—Absolute Direction - <i>Pat McCann</i> . . . . .	114
FROM the ARCHIVES—Church History Photos: Temple Lot 1902-07, Early 1900s . . . . .	109	SCRIPTURE LESSON—Fasting . . . . .	115
TESTIMONY—"The best thing I ever did in my life..." -		NEWS . . . . .	116
		OBITUARY—Sarah Elizabeth Brantner . . . . .	125
		NOTICES, POEM—In Memoriam - <i>Sahara Gould</i> . . . . .	126
		INDEX . . . . .	127



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 To promote His Teachings and His Church, the Church of Christ;  
 To be a voice of warning to His people; to be Zion's advocate.

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# Criticism in the Church



By Apostle Roland Sarratt

The word *critic* and its derivatives, *criticism* and *criticize*, are not found in the scriptures. The exception is the word *critical*, which is used twice in the Book of Mormon. We

**Our dislikes can result in a witch hunt, resulting in exposing and humiliating the sinner as a self-righteous act on our part.**

usually think of criticism as being unwanted fault-finding. However, the term *constructive criticism* has been used for a good purpose in bringing about needed correction.

The dictionary says *criticism* is the act of making judgments; analysis of qualities and evaluation of comparative worth. It is also defined as the act of finding fault; censure; disapproval.

Plain and simple, fault-finding can be nothing more than putting someone down. It is an effort to vent oneself of what a person doesn't like. There are many things in this world which we don't like or approve and we have our freedom and agency to express ourselves.

The problem occurs when we focus on someone we don't especially like. Our dislikes can result in a witch hunt, resulting in exposing and humiliating the sinner as a self-righteous act on our part.

On the other hand, we might consider constructive criticism in our personal desires to improve ourselves and our loved ones in righteousness if we do it the right way. In fact, that is what the gospel of Christ is all about—bringing ourselves in line with the commandments of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, our experiences in self-improvements haven't always brought the desired result. For instance the preacher might get a little carried away and

the constructive criticism may turn into destructive criticism. The people end up being offended and tune him out. If he gets too judgmental and chops them off at the knees, so to speak, they go out the door little, short people. In other words, he has discouraged them by an overload of criticism.

Aren't we supposed to give constructive criticism? Yes, but we must edify and strengthen, not destroy. This is actually a two-way matter: the preacher speaking the truth in an effort to bring correction in our lives where we need it, and the willingness of the listeners to hear the truth without becoming offended with the preacher. We are talking about a basic function in the church: speaking the truth and receiving the truth.

It has been said that it is as big a sin to be offended as it is to offend. If we are easily offended we are apt to be offended when the offender doesn't intentionally offend. Or we might say it this way: if a person has a chip on their shoulder they will likely get it knocked off by someone who just happens to get a little careless about how they talk or act. A person can be entirely too sensitive and ready to be hurt at the least remark or act that someone might say or do. Also, if a person is easily offended they will likely hold a grudge and repeatedly relive the incident, justifying their reason for being offended.

In our religious endeavors, we have developed a certain standard of righteousness as our personal

goal. We know it as our integrity or self-esteem. Our fault is in the fact that we think of this standard as good enough, but it has not yet taken us to the perfected state of Zion. As one preacher said, our best is not good enough.

We often depend on our integrity to keep us from falling into gross sin. It is a matter of self-respect more than a conscience based upon being obedient to God. We construct our idea of right over wrong and place it where it might be a convenient guide. We make judgments based upon our own image of right and wrong and occasionally check our views against that which the Lord has given as a moral standard.

As for our personal attitude, we must be able to accept the truth ourselves and stand corrected, even if it offends us. We must realize that we are living in an environment of many evils. We are living in the day of the heathen. We are living in the day of great deception which was prophesied by Jesus himself (Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 23, 24).

We are subject to be influenced by many humanisms, things that satisfy the natural man, which appear to be good and generally acceptable but will lead us into various paths of reasoning which are deceptive. Even our personal right to sin against the law of God is upheld in many of the laws of the nations today, but we must not depend upon them as our guides when they are openly against the teachings of Christ. Nonetheless,

we are subject to the laws of the land wherein we reside or visit.

We as a people have received the fullness of Christ's gospel and we are accountable, inasmuch as we have made a covenant with the Lord in the waters of baptism. Because of the easiness of the way, we are apt to be inheritors of the truth more than defenders of the truth. We obtain a knowledge of the truth and often we think of our understanding as being evidence of personal righteousness. Our own personal defense of the truth may become based upon our personal views more so than upon our personal application of the truth. We may end up fighting a cause for righteousness while our personal lifestyles are grossly deficient in righteousness.

Paul said, *"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another"* (Galatians 6:3, 4).

The evidence of the true knowledge of the gospel of Christ is in our personal lives. When we have accepted the truth by putting it to the test in our personal lives, we know the value of every principle. We cannot be a true light of this gospel unless we obey it to the fullness. We are nearing a time when all who profess to believe in this gospel must defend it with their own lives.

# The SIGN of HIS COMING



By Elder Gordon McCann

After Jesus taught the multitudes, denouncing the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees, He left the temple and went upon the Mount of Olives to pray. His disciples soon came

But Jesus Christ has promised the righteous...that He “will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Malachi 3:17)....

to Him privately looking down upon the city of Jerusalem viewing the temple courtyard and reflecting upon what Jesus had told them earlier in the day that *“There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”* It had been disturbing news to His disciples, since they had lived during the period of time when the work of rebuilding the temple, the complex of courts, and buildings in Jerusalem had progressed considerably from

the time that King Herod had started the work which occurred prior to their birth. Jesus’ disciples asked Him three questions “Tell us...”

- When shall these things be?
- What shall be the sign of thy coming?
- And of the end of the world?

Jesus proceeds to answer His disciples where we can read His words as recorded in the 24th chapter of Matthew. We have an advantage because of the passing

of time where some of the events prophesied by Jesus have come to pass; thus we can have confidence in the words of Christ as we wait for the sign of His coming.

It is the following sign provided by Jesus to His disciples that I would like to focus your attention as it relates to the last days while we wait for the return of our Savior Jesus Christ.

*“And because iniquity <anomia> shall abound, the love <agape> of many shall wax cold”* (Matthew 24:12).

The word that Jesus used for *iniquity* comes from the Greek word *anomia* where a more precise interpretation of the word would be *unrighteousness*.

For the word *love* Jesus used the Greek word *agape* where we can find it defined by the Apostle John as the love of God found in the following text:

“He that loveth <agapao> not knoweth not God; for God is love <agape>.

“And we have known and believed the love <agape> that God hath to us. God is love <agape>; and he that dwelleth in love <agape> dwelleth in God, and God in him” 1 John 4:8, 16.

The phrase *wax cold* is actually the Greek word

*psucho* that was used by Jesus metaphorically in the sense of waning zeal.

Now with this understanding of the key words used by Jesus we can more fully understand the condition of mankind that would exist in the last days. If we apply this understanding along with the Apostle John’s understanding of the word *agape* as Christ taught, the statement made by Jesus could be written today as follows:

“And because of unrighteousness, the zeal for the love of God will wane within the hearts of many.”

Christ’s goal for the believer is to become one with Him as Jesus is one with His Father. Jesus had and demonstrated zeal daily towards fulfilling the will of His Father in all things. This zeal is motivated by the love that Jesus has towards His Father who created Him (Revelation 3:14).

We understand through the scriptures that if we want to become one with Jesus and His Father we must obey the words of Christ, “*If you love me, keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). By keeping those commandments we have accepted the premise that they are words of truth, thus allowing God’s Spirit to work within our

lives. Since we know that the words that Jesus taught were the very words given him of the Father (John 17:7-8), we are assured that by keeping the words of Christ we are also keeping the words of His Father, thus becoming one as Jesus so fervently prayed to His Father, “*that they may be made perfect in one*” (John 17:22-23).

We find in the writings of the Apostles Paul and Peter the word *charity* is used in the translation for the Greek word *agape*, which differs from the translation for *agape* in the writings of Apostle John where the word *love* is used in the text instead of *charity*, as previously referenced above.

Paul makes the case that if he did not have “*charity, I am nothing*” (1 Corinthians 13:2), as he wrote to the churches in Corinth. When he wrote to the church in Colossae he told them that they were to “*put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness*” (Colossians 3:14), and when he was writing to Timothy he told him that “*the end of the commandment is charity*” (1 Timothy 1:5). In the writings of Peter a progressive outline is taught to those who exercise their faith in Jesus Christ. The spiritual journey outlined by Peter would lead them to the

beautiful gift of *“charity”* that would make them neither *“barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Peter 1:5-11).

The word *“charity”* is used in the Book of Mormon when it speaks of the love of God, which brings together the harmony of the teachings in both records, the Bible and Book of Mormon, concerning the commandments of God, the love of Christ, and His relationship with His Father. As can be found in the writings of Nephi and Alma that it is a commandment from God *“that all men should have charity”* (2 Nephi 11:107-8) so that they may *“always abound in good works”* (Alma 5:41). In the words of Moroni, that except we have, or possess and walk in charity we *“can in no wise be saved in the kingdom of God”* (Moroni 10:15), because we *“can not inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father”* (Ether 5:34). Moroni also provides us with a clear and concise definition for the word *“charity”* which is *“the pure love of Christ”* (Moroni 7:52), and that it *“bringeth unto me the fountain of all righteousness”* (Ether 5:29).

Given everything that has been scripturally noted

above concerning *“charity,”* one can safely conclude that charity is something that is not part of man’s nature. Charity is something that must be obtained from a source outside of man’s natural state. Thus we find the admonition found in the following scripture verse:

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen” (Moroni 7:53).

Let us return to the statement made by Jesus to His disciples as to what they should expect to see as a sign of His coming: *“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”* Now the words of Christ can be more readily understood given our review of the word charity. Prior to the return of Jesus Christ the condition of mankind would be that they have lost their desire or zeal to possess the pure love of God, or charity. To understand how pervasive and pervasive this condition would be

we can look to the Apostle Paul as he warned the Roman Christians concerning the folly of men who had *“changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator”* and where *“God gave them up unto vile affections”* because *“they did not like to retain God in their knowledge”* so *“God gave them over to a reprobate mind”* to the extent that they were *“without natural affection”* (Romans 1:25-31). Noting that Paul was speaking of conditions that had taken place and that was prevalent in the Roman society of the day, but he did say *“that in the last days perilous times shall come”* when similar conditions would exist where men would find themselves *“without natural affection”* (2 Timothy 3:1-3).

So, what does it mean to be *“without natural affection”* and how does it differ from the word *“charity”*?

The phrase *“without natural affection”* comes from the Greek word *astorgos* which is the negative of the inborn love for kindred, especially the love of parents towards their children and the love children have towards their parents. This inborn or natural affection is something that we come into this world with

which can be lost, whereas “charity” is a transformation of that natural love to perfection by the power of God through Jesus Christ. This transformation can only be had by praying to God “with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ.”

A day cannot go by without seeing the evidence of the conditions that Jesus Christ spoke of in reference to the final days prior to His coming when He sat with His disciples on the Mount of Olives so long ago. One with a good respect for history could reason that there have been many good examples where natural affection failed the various societies throughout time. But there is one inescapable truth where faith in the Word of God is on the side of those who put their faith in and stand upon. No different from the days of Noah prior to the flood during the building of the ark “they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” and chose to ignore the signs and warnings of the pending destruction awaiting them. I find the same conditions existing in America today where we have become a na-

tion who are “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” fast approaching the time that “because they received not the love of the truth ... God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Jesus understood clearly the calamity that stood at the door for Jerusalem and her people Israel, and with that same clarity Jesus was able to view through the vista of time to our day. The pending warning of destruction and salvation is the same, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,” where we have been instructed sufficiently by Christ to “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come...Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:36, 42, 44).

Jesus Christ’s return will be far different from His first appearance as a babe in swaddling clothes where angels from heaven were heard of men saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”

(Luke 2:14). Jesus will come this time with a “sharp sword to smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Revelation 19:15), when the unrighteous or wicked, in the words of Paul, “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thessalonians 1:9). But Jesus Christ has promised the righteous, those who have believed in Him and have kept His commandments at His coming, that He “will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Malachi 3:17), “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thessalonians 1:10).



FROM the ARCHIVES

# Church History Photos

**T**he Church of Christ and the Temple Lot grounds in Independence, Missouri. This view facing East Northeast looks towards the Jackson County courthouse (center horizon). Photograph was taken by C. E. Miller between 1902, when the Temple Lot church was finished, and 1907, when the courthouse was remodeled (from the Bill Curtis collection).



FROM the ARCHIVES

**W**e believe this photo was also taken in the early 1900s. We have no other information about the group of young boys except that it was taken on the Temple Lot grounds (the buildings behind the group are shown in other photos of the Temple Lot). The photo was discovered not too long ago with a group of old negatives from the collection which belonged to Apostle Clarence Wheaton. It is interesting that although clothing styles change, body language remains much the same.



Vol. 2 Church History Photos on CD available now – for church members only.

As a fundraiser for the Philippines missionary effort the Archive Committee is offering a CD of church history photos. On each CD there are nearly 1000 interesting photos of various church buildings, events, activities and members from 1887-2011. Included is a file with photo information.

If you would like a copy, please contact: Deb Haines at [debruhaines@juno.com](mailto:debruhaines@juno.com).

Please send your Philippine Fund donation (amount to be determined by you) to the Church of Christ, East Local, P. O. Box 2243, Independence, MO 64055-9243.

TESTIMONY

# “The best thing I ever did in my life...”

By Debra Haines

God had a plan, He planted, nourished, and patiently waited.

When I was little, going up the road to Grandpa and Grandma's house (George and Sarah Brantner) for church was very special to me. I have sweet memories of meetings in their basement which was set up for church. Sometime later the Cedar Springs (Michigan) Local purchased an old one-room country schoolhouse to hold services in; it was the schoolhouse I had attended for my third and fourth grades. Grandma was my Sunday School teacher when we went. I have been told it was not very many times, but they were special to me. I remember our family being visited by several of Grandpa's friends. I remember thinking old Brother Welch knew everything there was to know about the scriptures. There was another friend of Grandpa's that I liked a lot too,



an older man named Clarence. I thought he was funny; I learned many years later that he was Apostle Clarence Wheaton. The seed was planted.

My dad, Charles Brantner, began working seven days a week, so we didn't get to church much after that. My grandparents moved to Missouri shortly before I graduated

from high school. I married and started a family of my own. My parents also moved to Missouri and became active in the church once again. Soon my dad was called to be an Elder, and Grandpa passed away suddenly. My parents made trips to Michigan to visit, and we talked of the gospel. The need that I had in my soul was being nourished.

There was one night when I felt the Lord calling me. I stayed up most of the night praying, and asking Him for His forgiveness and for His direction. I gave my heart to God. I asked Him if it was His will, would he grant me a desire—to have a daughter—and I promised I would raise her to know Him. Almost immediately my prayers were answered and God blessed me with a precious baby girl after having two boys...all gifts from God. I knew of a surety that God heard and answered my prayers.

A short time later I began studying the scriptures with my uncle, Gale Brantner, who had once again become active in the church after many years away. I experienced the gospel on a grown-up level and I learned about the Holy Spirit. Before long I attended church at the Bradley Local with Uncle Gale. As soon as I walked into the old church building at Bradley I felt the same Spirit of God as I had when I was a child, and I knew I was home. I studied for some time and grew in faith, and soon I was filled with the desire to be baptized. The Lord had also placed a desire in my heart to have my dad baptize me, so I began to make plans. My baptism took place on a Sunday after church, in my grandparent's pond near

Warrensburg. After I had been baptized, and when the hands were laid upon me for the reception of the Holy Ghost by two other Elders, I felt the Spirit come into me from the top of my head and flowing down to my toes. I learned afterward that my dad had borrowed Grandpa's shoes to wear as he baptized me. I also learned later that my dad had been told by the Spirit months earlier, before my grandfather's passing, that he would fill Grandpa's shoes. He "filled" them, literally. I learned firsthand that God had a plan...and I could see how God's hand had been with me thus far.

Soon Uncle Gale was led to gather remaining church members in the Cedar Springs area for Sunday School classes. Later he was called into the ministry and became the pastor of the Ravenna Local of the Church of Christ. After years of gathering in members' homes we were blessed with a church building of our own. The Lord gave me a "safe harbor" in which to grow in the gospel. I learned how to be strong and rely on God for the next hurdle in my life...my younger son was hurt very badly in a bicycle/truck accident. The Lord gave me another proof that prayers are answered and miracles do still happen. I

was blessed with knowing that God had been watching out for him, and He brought my son back when no one at the hospital thought he would make it. I knew a miracle had taken place.

Some time later, Ken and June Haines started attending the Ravenna Local. June's grandfather was Elder L. E. Welch, who was the instrument of the Lord in bringing my grandparents into the Church of Christ. Years later their son, Bruce, attended the Michigan Church Reunion there in 1995. He had been diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and asked for administration. During that administration, the Spirit rested upon me and I knew he would be healed; I never doubted it. He began to attend occasionally, and the first time I heard him pray the Spirit rested upon me and told me that one day he would be called to the ministry. I did not know him at the time, I only knew who he was. Bruce went through chemotherapy and radiation treatments, still coming to church as often as he felt up to it. I remember being impressed with Bruce's strong faith, even through his illness. I saw another miracle take place in Bruce's healing.

The following year my marriage ended. It was a very

difficult and trying time for me and my children as we picked up the pieces and started over. Bruce became a friend during that time. He began a new life of his own too, being baptized and moving in with his parents to help with his dad's care. We began to see each other, praying to the Lord, asking if it was His will. Happily, it was the will of the Lord, and that is another story, a beautiful one which I will repeat at another time. God had been patient with us, waiting until the right time. God knew all along that eventually we would both turn to Him...and then He could bring us together. We were married in October of 1999, and Bruce was called into the ministry in 2010.

Just a few years ago I learned more about my grandma's story: As she was raising her young family, she began studying the scriptures. God had placed the desire in her to know the truth. She learned in the Bible that there was a true church; it was to be a restored church, and she learned it was to look like the church that Christ Himself established. She knew the one they'd been attending didn't measure up, so she searched. One day in 1941, her brothers excitedly told her they'd found what she'd been looking for.

She and Grandpa went to hear a sermon and met Elder L. E. Welch from the Church of Christ. They began study classes, and later the same year they were baptized into the church. Before long Grandpa was called into the ministry and they worked together doing the Lord's work. Because of Grandma's desire to find the true church of Christ, God leading her to it, and her children learning of it, I was eventually exposed to it. I'm so thankful that when I was ready, it was there!

Last year, I was nudged by God to write Grandma's story to celebrate her 100th Birthday. I asked, "Grandma, what do you want to tell your grandchildren?" She answered, "Don't go to the city, stay in the country." Then she explained why: As a young girl she was sent to the city (Detroit) to live with her older brother; she didn't like it. When I asked her to tell me about how she met Grandpa, her eyes lit up and sparkled! It was so evident she still felt so much love! She went on to tell me how they had seen each other, and they both knew that the other would be "the one." Later on a blind date, being "fixed up" by friends, she knew for sure that he was the one for her. Grandpa told her the first time

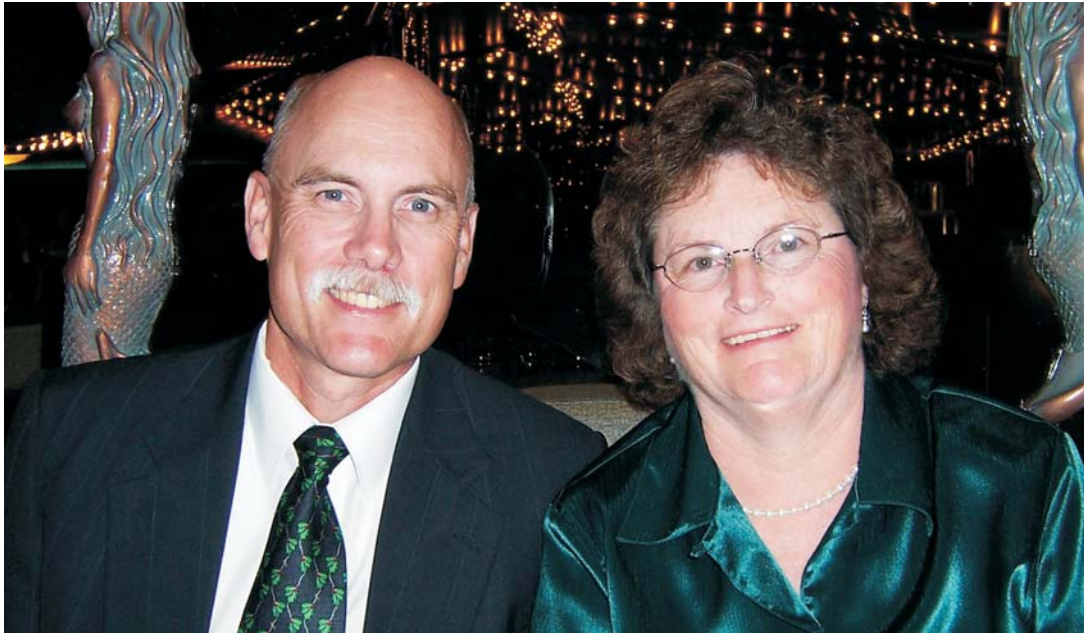
he had seen her that he knew she was the one he would marry someday. It was a wonderful afternoon.... The last thing she told me was—"The best thing I ever did in my life was to hear and accept the gospel."

I have often thought what if certain things hadn't happened, how much different my life would be today. I know the Lord had a plan for our family, for me, and for Bruce and I together. God knew all along what our choices would be; He even allowed us to make errors, so that He could bring us around to the path where He wanted us to be. I'm so thankful for His loving guidance over the rough places and to be right where I am today!



TESTIMONY

# Absolute Direction



—Gordon and Pat McCann—

As I was rereading scriptures from a recent sermon, two words from Isaiah 1:19 flooded my mind. It says, “If ye are willing and obedient....” This brought to mind a testimony I want to share, to give strength to those who are seeking God’s direction as to the path to take in life.

At age thirty-one I had come to a time in my life when I felt I needed God’s ABSOLUTE DIRECTION. I went to the Lord in fasting and prayer, with a heart as described in Isaiah 1:19—willing and obedient. I told God that I wanted to know His will in my life. If I was to marry that was fine; if not, that was fine. I just needed to know how to focus my

life. I fasted from food for many days. I went without radio, television, newspapers, movies and other enjoyments, and spent every moment possible studying and praying. I was in complete and total submission to God, without reservation or fear.

And my direction came, not after one day or one week, but after many months. Then when that still small voice came and said there was an answer for me, the answer was that I needed to make some changes before I received what God had planned for me. So after all that time I still needed to make more changes to show my willingness to submit to His absolute will and di-

rection for me.

This year Gordon and I have shared 33 years of marriage, years of my life that might have been wasted had I not chosen to seek God at a point when I could not see the way.

I want to encourage anyone who is struggling. Look within, seek His help, listen for His voice. Prove by your actions that you are willing to submit to His will. Then God will be able to work with you and direct your life.

In Gospel Bonds,  
Pat McCann

## SCRIPTURE LESSON

# FASTING

**Christian Fast:** is the physical separation from satisfying the desires and requirements of the flesh (the ties to your worldly existence) combined with a spiritual focus of your will becoming the will of your Heavenly Father. You become a living sacrifice or offering to God (Matthew 26:39 / Mosiah 8:34 / Romans 12:1-2).

**Instructions:** Read the scripture reference below and record the important part of the scripture reference that answers the question under each heading.

## Are we commanded to Fast?

Alma 4:6  
4 Nephi 1:13  
Moroni 6:6  
Matthew 9:14-15

## How do we Fast?

Isaiah 58:3-12  
Zechariah 7:4-5  
Matthew 6:16-18  
Luke 18:10-14  
1 Corinthians 7:5  
B of C 60:18-24 (pg.111)

## Use Wisdom in your Fasting

Matthew 15:32  
Mark 8:2-3  
Acts 27:33-38  
1 Corinthians 7:5

## Reasons for Fasting

**Instructions:** Read each scripture reference and match the scripture reference with the "List of Reasons." There can be multiple reasons contained in the same scripture verse or multiple scriptures supporting the same reason.

## Book of Mormon

\_ Mosiah 11:182-198  
\_ Alma 3:76-81  
\_ Alma 8:11  
\_ Alma 12:4-5  
\_ Alma 12:13-15  
\_ Alma 21:1-2  
\_ Helaman 2:29-31  
\_ 3 Nephi 12:14-16

## Bible

\_ 2 Chronicles 20:3-4, 14-17, 22-25  
\_ Ezra 8:21-23; 9:5-15; 10:1-12  
\_ Esther 4:12-17  
\_ Daniel 9:2-5  
\_ Joel 1:13-15  
\_ Joel 2:9-19  
\_ Jonah 3:4-10  
\_ Matthew 4:2  
\_ Matthew 17:16-21 (Mark 9:14-29)  
\_ Acts 13:2-3  
\_ Acts 14:22-23

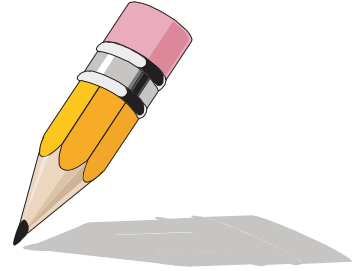
## List of Reasons

- Intercessor: Enlightenment, Repentance, Forgiveness
- Revelation of Truth, Prophecy, Spiritual Understanding & Power
- Bless Endeavors, Bringing Truth to Others
- Thanksgiving
- Sanctification by the Holy Spirit, from Persecution
- Understanding and Spiritual Direction
- Deliverance
- Fellowship with Spirit

*Omni 1:47: "Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth, ye will be saved."*

## NEWS

# Phoenix Local Report



By Rebecca Yates

Officially it's fall here in Phoenix, but the weather doesn't seem to have realized that and still feels a whole lot like summer, but even still we can't complain. Even if the temperature hasn't joined in we've still been able to have some fun Fall activities here lately. In mid-October we celebrated with Kasey Claypole during her bridal shower at church. She received many gifts to help her and Jesse Kidd get started on their new life together, and we look forward to more celebrating at their wedding in December. Our prayers are with them as they begin this new phase of their life.

Another of our activities was a game night hosted by our Program Committee. We met together for



## ► Good Eats

snacks and group games, and had a wonderful time. Everyone appreciated the efforts of those involved for coming up with some great games. For several weeks we had some

funny pictures posted in the kitchen at church and everyone was asked to come up with captions for each of them. The pictures, along with their captions, were part of a slide show that ran during the evening. Other games included guessing the identities of baby pictures of people in our local, and matching random facts to the person in our local they pertained to. Our members have done some very interesting things in their lives! When each team answered a question correctly they got a piece of a photo puzzle. The final phase of the game was to figure out what couple was pictured in the photograph shown in the completed puzzle.

The couple was long time sweethearts Don and Betty McIndoo in a gorgeous photo taken of them when they were first married many years ago.





► Easton Yates

As always one of the activities we look forward to all year is our annual Cider Press put on by the Young People. It seems each year the number in attendance increases, which is such a blessing. We have many friends, coworkers, and family of our members who join us each year for this event. This year we had around 25 visitors and we enjoyed getting to meet each one and are thankful for the efforts of our local to reach out to the community and share with them a little about our church. It is a busy night filled with pressing cider, visiting, and



► Pressing Cider into the night.

bidding in our silent auction for apple desserts. For the past seven years we have used an antique cider press that had several mechanical “issues,” making it quite the effort to crank out cider each year. It always pulled through for us, but we decided it was probably time to retire

our old press and look into purchasing a new one. So this year our new press made its official debut and it worked great! We still have to hand-crank the cider, but that’s part of the fun, and anyone who wants to try it can have their turn at the wheel. All of the young people help out with this effort by arriving early to set up everything for the dinner, make cider, as well as provide the apple treats for our auction fundraiser. The youth work very hard to make this evening a success and we are thankful for the efforts of each one who helps put it all



► Apple Treats to Bid On

together.

It hasn't been all fun and games in Phoenix though. We are coming to the end of a much needed remodel of some of the older, damaged parts of our church building. We are blessed to have had the help of many members of our local on this project, as well as some outside contractors. We have many who are willing to put in their time and effort to maintain and care for our building. As the project winds down, we know God blesses in the temporal needs of the church as well as the spiritual endeavors. We look forward to its completion and enjoying the fruits of our labors in the years to come. We hope to soon also update some of our audio/visual equipment and make our services more accessible to those in and out of our local area.

We are happy to report that two members of our local, Elder Gordon McCann and his wife Pat, were able to make a trip this summer to Oceanside, California, and take part in a baby blessing. Gordon blessed Peter Andrew Stratton, son of Stephen and Amanda (Trudgen) Stratton, on August 21. This beautiful little child was born on July 30, 2011, and has been a joy to his parents since that day. Most of us here have been blessed to see many pictures of this handsome little boy, but two other families were lucky



► Peter Andrew Stratton Blessing

enough to have met him in person already. Gary and Alesha Jacobsen and their children made a trip to California this summer and spent time with the Stratton family, followed not long after by Justin and Holly Bartlett and their children. They all returned to Phoenix with stories of the good times spent with Stephen and Amanda, and of course, baby Peter Andrew.

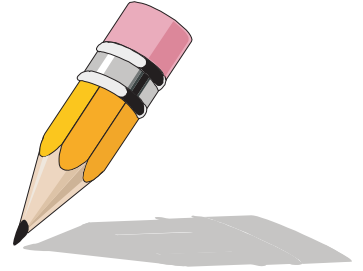
God has blessed us here in Phoenix through both the good times and the trials of life. We have many here who suffer physical afflictions and are in need of continued prayer. Our sister Amy Moser has received many blessings, but is still in need as she deals with her injuries and the difficulties they cause. Melissa Oar continues to heal from a wrist surgery, and although she hasn't fully regained her strength she has been greatly blessed through her recovery. Marlene Oar was recently diagnosed with a type of skin lymphoma that she has been receiving treatments

for. The doctors performed some more extensive tests to see if the cancer was anywhere else in her body and we praise God that everything else is fine; and she will be able to treat this disease with very minimal difficulty. Emma Whitis has been suffering many physical afflictions recently, including a diagnosis of colon cancer. We have been praying for her and are happy to report her most recent testing

showed there is no cancer found in her colon, a definite blessing from God!

We hope that throughout your daily lives each of you are able to see the mighty hand of the Lord working with you, and among all of His people. He cares greatly for each of us. He shares with us our joys and our sorrows. We are never alone when we call upon His name. Throughout the past months the theme of our sermons here has been to be prepared. Be prepared for whatever you may face in life by drawing closer to God through endeavoring to be more righteous individuals. I know this message is not being given only here in Phoenix, but throughout the nation, and the world. Our prayers are for each of us as we strive to draw ourselves closer to God and strive to follow the example set for us by His Son Jesus Christ.

# Bradley Local Report



**G**reetings from the Bradley, Michigan Local of the Church of Christ.

As I look back over the summer, I am surprised at what a busy summer it was. In June we had the Bradley Local State Reunion on the 17th - 19th. Our theme 'On Christ the solid rock I stand,' Helaman 2:75-76:

*"And now my sons remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, which is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation, that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds; yea, his shafts in the whirlwind; Yea, and when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are build, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build, they cannot fall."*

Our guest speakers were Apostle Smith (Buzz) Brickhouse, Apostle Roland Sarratt and Elder Mike Bevaart. We all left spiritually fed from the messages God delivered through them. If you weren't able to make it to this year's reunion, please be sure to go to the Bradley Website to access their sermons, as well as other sermons. Even the children enjoyed joining in the services as the attached picture shows. (Picture provided by Apostle Sarratt.)



► **Caleb Jones & Adalyynn, Clare, Lydia Moran**

We were especially blessed this summer with the birth of Peter An-

drew to Amanda and Stephen Stratton on July 30, 2011, weighing 8 lbs. 3 oz. and 18 ½ inches long. This is their first child. Grandparents are Elder Dennis Trudgen and his wife Betsy. Stephen is stationed at Camp Pendleton; they reside in Oceanside, California. Peter was blessed in California shortly after his birth by Elder Gordon McCann.



► **Noah Nicholas Jones Blessing**

Then on September 8th was the birth of Noah Nicholas to Heidi and Tony Jones, weighing 6 lbs. 1 oz. and 19 inches long. This is their second child, along with big brother Caleb, who is five years old. Grandparents are Elder Adam Porter and his wife

Sue. Noah was blessed on Sunday, September 25th, by Elder Trudgen and his Grandpa Elder Porter.

We were able to come together in fellowship on August 20th for the 5th annual Yost/Lee Fish Fry. The day started with a severe rain storm that turned into a beautiful sunny day, with a softball game to honor our beloved brother Duane Lee, who passed away last August 2010.

In August was the baptism of Ken Porter, the father of our Pastor Adam Porter. Helping to assist with Ken's walking in the water was his other son Daniel.



► Ken Porter Baptism

We again came together on Labor Day weekend at the home of Elder Dennis Trudgen and his wife Betsy in Belding, Michigan. Some were able to camp in their yard for the weekend and enjoy rafting, canoeing, and enjoy time together with the beauty God has created all around us. On Sunday, we had services in their home. With the use of live-streaming we were able to broadcast from their home to those that could not attend. We were even able to access through Skype new

baby Peter and his mother Amanda (in California) after our morning service. What a neat way to have them join our service. Another treat was the visit of Brother Norman Trudgen's sister Joyce with her daughter Angelia and her husband Jeremy, all the way from Lakeland, Florida. (They definitely get the prize for coming the farthest.)

Our Pastor Adam Porter again this year hosted the 15th annual Pig Roast on September 17. Some came from Flint and Alpena, among many other places. After the amazing meal, many took part in a game of softball, as well as the highly competitive bean bag game. This year they must have taken the softball game a little too serious as it ended with a foot injury to Eric Lee. It entailed a chipped bone and pulled tendon. The bone chip is absorbing into his body so no surgery has been needed. With God's help he is doing fine and his ankle continues to heal nicely.

As I conclude, as you have read, it has been another busy year with many blessings from God. With the birth of Peter and Noah, the baptism of our Brother Ken, the fellowship we share when we get together each Sunday or at our study groups, we truly thank God for all He does in our lives. That fellowship we enjoy each time we get together helps to uplift us as we return to the tasks of each day. All of our events are posted on our website: [churchofchrist-bradley.org](http://churchofchrist-bradley.org). We encourage and

would love to have you join us for Tuesday night study at 7:00 p.m. EST, either by Skype or live streaming, and through live streaming for our Sunday services at 11:00 a.m. EST.

Now with the arrival of our colorful fall season, our beautiful winters here in Michigan are just around the corner. How did that happen? When I last reported from our Bradley local, the Snowbirds were just returning from hibernating in warmer climates. Now, as those of us that are preparing to leave for the winter or others that are preparing for the winter months ahead, importantly it is the preparing that we need to focus on. It seems in life we are always preparing for something. But our ultimate goal is preparing for the coming of our Lord that we might be found ready.

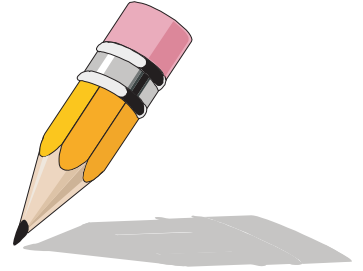
As in Ephesians ch. 6, v. 23, 24:

*"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."*

May God bless you and our love to you all from the Bradley Local.

*Your Sister in Christ,  
Loretta Greig*

# Collins Local Report



By Czerna Kauffman

I send greetings to all from our little group here at Collins. We have had a hot, dry summer, and now are going into the blustery days of fall and winter. Early spring brought too much rain and flooding to a large part of the state, but now we are very dry, in spite of the few showers that pass our way. I watch the changing color of the leaves and their twirling descent to the ground, the wind carrying them to gatherings along

fences, porches and ditches. They crunch under my feet when I go for my early morning walks. It has turned much cooler and I often hear a couple of owls speaking with one another as I go along. I'm grateful to God for His goodness and the way He provides simple wonders for all to enjoy.

We enjoyed a very nice time at our recent Collins Rally, the third Sunday in October. We were blessed to have three brothers come to share the gospel with us: Elders Mark Hill, Albert Leighton-Floyd and Marvin Case. The time just flew by and filled us with hope and determination to continue the race and endeavor to obtain the prize of salvation, knowing that God indeed does have a "plan" for our lives, but we get to make the CHOICE.

Our Brother Paul Liekness has had eye surgery to help correct a problem relating to his diabetes. He was confined to a special chair for 10 days to keep his face down and allow his eye to heal properly. He and

Sharon were at church this past Sunday (Oct. 23rd) and he said he was to visit the doctor again and hear how he is doing. It is almost time for them to migrate back to Texas for the winter and what the doctor has to say will have bearing on when they can go—or maybe they will have to stay here for the winter!!! WE would love that!

Our Brother Jack Martin took a nasty fall a week ago. He was going out (in the dark) with a misty rain falling to check his rain gauge and caught his foot on the edge of the lawn mower sitting in his driveway—and down he went, head first on the concrete. He didn't have his cell phone with him, Betty didn't know he had fallen and couldn't have helped him up anyway, so he wiggled around until he could get hold of the rider mower and get himself up. Poor guy—when he went back in the house he was quite a sight! Betty bandaged him up as best she could and recommended a trip to the doctor, but our Brother

Jack didn't see the need in that. So the next morning Sheala Herd zinged out there with triple antibiotic ointment and fresh gauze to re-vamp his poor forehead. Now for the rest of the story—he preached the following Sunday. Now, to me, that is dedication! He was stiff and sore, had a somewhat swollen, discolored eye and the abrasions on his forehead, etc. If ever you had reason or cause to stay home and let the world just go by, I believe Jack did, but he came! He came to preach the gospel, to share a testimony of his calling to the ministry so many years ago. I am so grateful to our Father in Heaven for His ministry who care so much for us and put themselves out to carry the gospel.

Jack and Betty will be spending a little time with their family in Oklahoma soon. I'm not sure exactly when or for how long. I only know they will be missed.

Curtis Yates had a "slight" heart attack a week or so back and was in the hospital for four days. The doctor says congestive heart failure is the culprit behind his problem. He now has to have a "chauffeur" drive him about. His lovely wife Margarite has stepped right up and is taking charge of all his driving until the doctor says that it is okay for him to drive again.

Marjory Routh continues to hold up, but has back problems and issues, from working too hard on her farm! She is the hardest working individual I know. She raises a big

garden, cans all her vegetables and such, and looks after the cattle, fences, etc., there on the farm. She was talking about cleaning out some closets "when she gets time."

The main point to all the things I have brought to your attention is that our group is getting "older" and life is seemingly more difficult. We would so appreciate an interest in your prayers from time to time. We, though we be few, pray for our brothers and sisters that are scattered all over the world, and count it not only a privilege but a duty to hold them up in prayer to our most gracious Heavenly Father, though we may not know them in particular or their problems, but are confident that our Master is much aware and will bless His people and aid them in their afflictions.

I have a few sermon quotes and quips to share with you. Thank you for letting me visit with you for this bit of time.

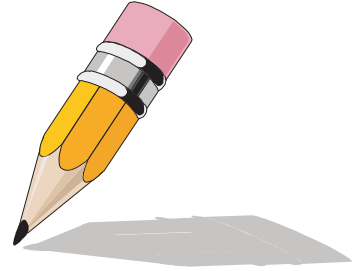
*Your reporter,  
Czerna Kauffman  
Collins, Missouri*

- **WE WANT TO BE "GOOD"—BUT WE WANT TO BE BAD—AND STILL BE "GOOD"!**
- **FAITH MAKES ALL THINGS POSSIBLE—NOT EASY!**
- **WILL YOUR ETERNAL HOME BE SMOKING OR NON-SMOKING?? DON'T**

**DEPART FROM THE RIGHT WAY.**

- **YOU CAN'T HAVE FIRE IN YOU AND NOT BE BURNED.**
- **IT'S NOT MY JOB TO TEACH YOU WHAT TO THINK, BUT TO INSPIRE YOU TO THINK—TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.**
- **I'M NOT ANXIOUS TO HAVE MY LIFE END, BUT AM CURIOUS OF WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE.**
- **SATAN CAN'T TAKE OUR FREEDOM OF CHOICE FROM US.**
- **IF YOU WANT TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF, THEN "DO" SOMETHING GOOD!**
- **SOMETIMES, TO BE A LIGHT, YOU NEED SAY NOTHING AT ALL!**
- **IF YOU DON'T FIX IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME—WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO FIX IT RIGHT AGAIN?**
- **DON'T LET WHAT YOU CANNOT DO INTERFERE WITH WHAT YOU CAN DO! WITHOUT MERCY WE COULDN'T HAVE SALVATION.**

# Temple Lot Local Report



The Temple Lot is indeed very busy. Having just taken over the position of news reporter for our local, I am sure I am going to leave out many wonderful events that have taken place in the last month or so. I ask for your forgiveness and hope in the coming months to hear from those of you that I might have missed, or members who have exciting news they'd like me to include.

Firstly, I have a little historical brainteaser for you. I am always amazed at how so many people in the church know so many facts. I am so horrible at keeping track of dates and such things, so here goes. Dan and I were married in November of which year? Who married us? At our wedding we had a very unusual, but very tasty *something* – what was it?

We have so many members that are in need of our prayers. Br. Ja-

cob Denham and Sr. Loreli Crull are currently going through cancer treatment. There is the Watskey family and Sr. Jennifer Wiley who have been struggling with health problems for quite some time. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Sr. Martha Bruner recently went through cataract surgery and the results so far seem to be very promising. We are thankful to God for His blessings to her. Others that have been blessed include Sr. Irene Case who was finally able to shed her neck brace, Sr. Edith Case who had a scare, but thankfully not a heart attack, and Sr. Nanette Smith, who found out she would not require spinal surgery for a long term problem with scoliosis. God indeed watches over all of us.

Two recent births include a daughter to Sr. Savannah

Sprague-Howell and a son to Br. Jose and Sr. Esmeralda Crull.

The YPCL has been very active. A few of the highlights over the last month include a gym night during the Missouri Reunion attended by about 60 children! There was also ice skating, a pool party, laser tag and of course Bible study – many different activities enjoyed by all.

The United Workers had their annual garage sale. Although initially it looked like we'd have little to sell, and would be rained out, the sale brought in about \$950. Anything can be accomplished with God's help.

The end of August brought new, or shall I say a renewal, of officers to the local. Elder Dan Lawrence – Pastor, Br. Dan Hedrick – Treasurer, Sr. Carrie Geier – Secretary, and Sunday School Superintendent – Br. Gary Welch. A big thanks to all four for serving, and



► Gwenevere Sprague-Howell

for all those who help in all the many other committees and have done so for so many years! What would we do without you?

Jim and Bonnie once again hosted the "Family Picnic." The crowds were not quite as large due to the rain, but it was quite fun watching the children play in the puddles. There was plenty of food and fun for all who attended.

If you'd like to expand upon your knowledge of the Book of Mormon and Bible, there is a Discussion Group that meets at the Temple Lot on Monday evenings. Or perhaps if you are into crafts, you might like to join the Women's Craft Group, which meets every other Monday evening at the home of one of the women. And if that is not enough

for you, and you'd like to expand your Spanish skills, Sr. Manon Lawrence has graciously opened up her home on Tuesday evening to very painstakingly *try* and teach a few of us the basics of this language. I think I can safely say for the group that we sincerely appreciate Sr. Manon's very sweet and patient attitude toward us.

Brainteaser answers: Year – 1995, Elder Gerry Case married us; Sr. Bonnie E. Case made us the most wonderful cherry cheesecake. It was the first she ever attempted. To this day, people still comment on it.

*"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"*

► Jose Mateo Crull

Eccl 12:14.

We all have busy lives that at times can be overwhelming. My hope for all of us is that all of our actions will be good.

*Dios los bendiga,  
DiAnn Hedrick*



## OBITUARY

# Sarah Elizabeth Brantner

December 11, 1910~August 28, 2011

Sarah Elizabeth Brantner passed from this world to be with our Lord August 28th, 2011, at the age of 100, just a few months shy of 101.

She was the fifth of nine children born to John Wesley Hoskins and Fanny (Yates) Hoskins December 11, 1910. She was born and raised in Algoma Township, Kent County, Michigan, near Cedar Springs. The family of 11 lived in a one room log cabin on a modest farm.

As a young woman she happened to see a young man working on the railroad. He caught her attention enough that she thought to herself that he looked like a man she would like to meet. That same young man would see a young woman in the post office wearing a large hat and a new homemade dress, and he thought to himself, "I'm going to marry that girl." Sometime later Sarah was to go on a blind double date with a girlfriend, when the boy she was supposed to meet suddenly cancelled. The 'replacement' date happened to be that young man she had seen working on the train. Sarah and George were married on January 4, 1929, and spent 55 years of marriage together.

George was a truck driver by profession, which took him away from home most of the time, so it was left up to Sarah to raise their children and tend to all the farm chores. Life was not easy in those years, and the hard work caused Sarah to miscarry several pregnancies. Then tragedy struck in 1944 when a kerosene heater exploded, catching the house on fire. Their youngest son was killed in the fire, and Sarah would always blame herself.

Sarah was a woman of faith, attend-



George & Sarah Brantner

ing church regularly with all of the children. Her path crossed with L. E. Welch, and later she would work as his secretary. She followed George into the waters of baptism, becoming a member of the Church of Christ in 1941. Thus began the next phase of their lives, preaching the word of God to the flocks in Michigan and across the country. Sarah and George felt led by the Lord that they should take up residence in Missouri. When the farm in Warrensburg became available they were confident the Lord was providing for them. Sarah and George moved to Missouri in March, 1969, along with their daughter Jeanece and her family. Other family members later followed, including their daughter Jeanette and son Charles. Sarah always took an active part in the Church, and continued to teach Sunday school class until the end.

Sarah and the family quickly assimilated into the new community. She began to work for the District III Area on

Aging, and with her efforts and a handful of people they established the SOS (Senior Opportunity Services) which became the Warrensburg Senior Center. She continued several years of service from being nurse and coordinator, Club officers, and volunteer. In 2008 Sarah was recognized by a proclamation from the State of Missouri and the City of Warrensburg for her more than 31 years of service to the Center.

Like many people, Sarah had many interests, like collecting dolls most of her life, but at the age of 91 she decided to learn how to quilt. She began a mission to make a quilt for all of her grandchildren, which she accomplished, and then some, before her vision became too impaired with macular degeneration.

She was preceded in death by her parents, all her siblings, son Daniel in 1944, husband George in 1984, son Gale in 2001, daughter-in-law Jeanne in 2010, son Richard in 2011, two granddaughters and a great-grandson. She is survived by her daughter Jeanette Cunningham of Warrensburg, son Charles Brantner of Lone Jack, daughter-in-law Char Brantner of Eagle, Michigan, daughter-in-law Alice Brantner of Cherokee, North Carolina, and daughter Jeanece and husband Ross Stephens of Warrensburg. She is also survived by 19 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren and 50 great-great-grandchildren.

She touched and influenced so many lives along the way. She was loved, and will be missed by all.

## NOTICES

## ARIZONA REUNION

## ■ November 25-27

Those who plan to attend or requiring more information please contact the following people:

**Pastor Elder Gordon McCann**

18808 N. 30th St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85050  
(602) 569-2341  
[gpjmccann@cox.net](mailto:gpjmccann@cox.net)

**Asst. Pastor Elder Gerry Case**

19015 N. 28th Place  
Phoenix, AZ 85050  
(623) 234-4684  
[gerrycindy1@gmail.com](mailto:gerrycindy1@gmail.com)

**Asst. Pastor Priest Glenn Orsted**

1327 E. Wescott Dr.  
Phoenix, AZ 85024  
(623) 780-8764  
[gorsted@gmail.com](mailto:gorsted@gmail.com)

## THE HOPE OF ZION

The Board of Publications has made available a copy of the report from the Committee to Study Zion entitled, *The Hope of Zion*. Contact Elder Robert W. Oldham at [rwoldham1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rwoldham1@sbcglobal.net), or any member of the Board.

## AVA WEBSITE

On the Church of Christ AVA web site you will be able to access media such as archived sermons in video and audio formats, past issues of *Zion's Advocate*, searchable Bible and Book of Mormon, studies and Sunday School lessons. Real time live streamed sermons are broadcast every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. central time, which can also be accessed from the site. We invite you to take a look and discover what a useful tool this site can be in expanding your knowledge and faith. The address is [www.cocsermons.net](http://www.cocsermons.net).

CORRESPONDENCE  
COMMITTEE

The General Church Correspondence Committee would like to extend the opportunity for any who wish to communicate through written correspondence to contact one of the following three committee members:

**PAT MCCANN**

(Committee Chairman)  
18808 N. 30th St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85050

**MARLENE COBB**

630 S Pickwick  
Springfield, MO 65802

**JUNE HAINES**

11589 Genuine Rd  
Clare, MI 48617

## OBITUARY

*In Memoriam  
Sarah Brantner*

*By Sahara Gould*

*Lord, in Your infinite wisdom,  
You sent Your Son to die;  
Our sister dear believed this  
And trusted in Your light.  
A hundred years she walked the earth,  
I only saw the last few,  
But trust that we will meet again  
When old things are made new.  
Her joy to meet with all the saints  
I saw each time we met  
To feast and understand the word,  
To hearken to the voice of the Shepherd yet.  
I was privileged to call her friend  
When eyes and ears were dim;  
How much better must our Savior know her  
In the hundred years she walked with him!  
The wind is howling, the rain is lashing  
Even while the sun is shining;  
We mourn the loss of a smiling sister  
But trust that her Lord has given her peace.  
The signs are growing surer;  
The time may not be long  
When Zion sings upon the hills  
And we may join her song.  
There we may see our sister's face,  
But if, after all, the time be long,  
We trust she sings a Savior's grace:  
A glad and joyous song!*

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# Index to Volume 88 (2011)

Title/Author	No. Pg.	Title/Author	No. Pg.
<b>ARTICLES</b>		<b>PATHLIGHTS</b>	
The Absoluteness of God's Will - <i>Apostle Roland Sarratt</i> . . . . .	5 . . . . 83	100 Years of Blessings - <i>Sarah Elizabeth Hoskins Brantner</i> . . . . .	1 . . . . 6
The Blessing Comes by Faith - <i>Priest Aadam Yates</i> . . . . .	5 . . . . 79	A Lesson Learned, A Friend Remembered - <i>Daniel Malone</i> . . . . .	2 . . . . 23
His Mysterious Ways, The Amazing Son of God - <i>Harvey E. Seibel</i> . . . . .	4 . . . . 62	A Long, Hard Road - <i>S Sharon Salters</i> . . . . .	3 . . . . 40
Our Love of God Must Come First - <i>Apostle Roland Sarratt</i> . . . . .	3 . . . . 37	<b>REPORTS</b>	
The Sign of His Coming - <i>Elder Gordon McCann</i> . . . . .	6 . . . . 105	100th Birthday Celebrations for Sister Sarah Brantner and Sister Lois Harris . . . . .	2 . . . . 27
What is God's Plan for America? - <i>Elder Gordon McCann</i> . . . . .	4 . . . . 55	2011 Missouri Reunion Report - <i>Deb Haines</i> . . . . .	5 . . . . 93
<b>EDITORIAL</b>		2011 Solemn Assembly and General Church Conference - <i>Deb Haines</i> . . . . .	3 . . . . 45
The Church of Christ Restored - <i>Elder Gordon McCann</i> . . . . .	3 . . . . 35	Honduras Youth Camp 2010 - <i>Diana E. Carbajal</i> . . . . .	2 . . . . 25
Criticism in the Church - <i>Apostle Roland Sarratt</i> . . . . .	6 . . . . 103	Phoenix Reunion . . . . .	1 . . . . 12
We are to Bear Good Fruit - <i>Elder Gordon McCann</i> . . . . .	2 . . . . 19	Women's Retreat 2010 - <i>Debbie Vogel</i> . . . . .	3 . . . . 41
<b>FROM THE ARCHIVES</b>		<b>POEM</b>	
God's Mercy in Time of Trouble - <i>James E. Yates</i> . . . . .	1 . . . . 10	In Memoriam Sarah Brantner - <i>Sarbara Gould</i> . . . . .	6 . . . . 126
Photo: First Church on the Temple Lot . . . . .	1 . . . . 9	Poem - <i>Hubert E. Yates, Jr. "Ed"</i> . . . . .	4 . . . . 74
Photo: Temple Lot 1888 . . . . .	3 . . . . 44	<b>SCRIPTURE LESSON</b>	
Photo: Temple Lot 1890 . . . . .	2 . . . . 26	Fasting . . . . .	6 . . . . 115
Photo: Temple Lot 1930 . . . . .	5 . . . . 87	<b>SERMONS</b>	
Photo: Temple Lot 1950s . . . . .	4 . . . . 65	The Choice is Ours to Make - <i>Priest Martin Addie</i> . . . . .	2 . . . . 21
Photo: Temple Lot between 1902 and 1907 . . . . .	6 . . . . 109	<b>STATEMENT</b>	
Photo: Temple Lot early 1900s . . . . .	6 . . . . 110	A Statement from the Council of Apostles - <i>Council of Apostles</i> . . . . .	1 . . . . 3
Turn All Ye Gentiles From Your Wicked Ways - <i>Apostle William Sheldom</i> . . . . .	1 . . . . 4	<b>TESTIMONIES</b>	
<b>OBITUARIES</b>		Absolute Direction - <i>Pat McCann</i> . . . . .	6 . . . . 114
Richard E. Brantner . . . . .	3 . . . . 50	"The best thing I ever did in my life..." - <i>Deb Haines</i> . . . . .	6 . . . . 111
Sarah Elizabeth Brantner (12/11/1910~8/28/2011) . . . . .	6 . . . . 125	God's Promises - <i>Ever Jimenez Perez</i> . . . . .	4 . . . . 67
Duane Lee (11/4/1953~8/18/2010) . . . . .	1 . . . . 15	My Testimony in Trial - <i>Amy Moser</i> . . . . .	5 . . . . 88
Elphas Odira . . . . .	4 . . . . 73	Taken Home to God - <i>Janice Welch</i> . . . . .	4 . . . . 68
Hubert Edward Yates, Jr. "Ed" (10/29/1959~6/3/2011) . . . . .	4 . . . . 73	The True Church - <i>Martin Tuyub Cobá</i> . . . . .	4 . . . . 66



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