

# ZION'S

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"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

# Table of Contents

- 91 Lord of the Heavens -  
*Elder Chris Moran*
- 97 The Peace of God -  
*Elder Gordon McCann*
- 99 This Is Why I Sing -  
*Elder Aadam Yates*
- 102 Michigan Reunion 2019 -  
*Sr. Kelli Moran*
- 105 2019 Missouri Reunion Report -  
*Sr. Deb Haines*

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If you would like to become a member of CCEG, or if you are an existing member and are not currently receiving emails as expected, please email the CCEG manager at:

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## 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 Oldham at [rwoldham1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rwoldham1@sbcglobal.net), or any member of the Board.

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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

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# LORD *of the* HEAVENS

Elder Chris Moran

NGC 7635, The Bubble Nebula, September 2018, Photo: Chris Moran

***“Even the stars praise His name.”***

**I**n the fall of 1993 I entered into my first year of college. I took an astronomy class that first semester and found myself greatly intrigued by the topics we discussed and studied. Over the course of that first year I found myself becoming more interested in astronomy. Later, at the start of 1994, I received my first refractor telescope as a gift. I also purchased my first reflector telescope during that subsequent summer. After that time, I would spend many

nights out under the stars, and astronomy would compete with the various other interests I had at that time.

One year I attempted what is called the “Messier Marathon.” The French astronomer Charles Messier catalogued and numbered 110 nebulae, galaxies, and star clusters. These are now known as the “Messier objects.” During certain times of the year, one can stay up the entire evening and view all 110 objects through a

telescope. I didn’t make it through the entire night, but it was a fun experience. I plan on doing it again sometime.

In the early 2000s I sold the reflector telescope. I found that it was difficult to transport and handle, and I became reluctant to get it out. It wasn’t until a few years ago that I decided to get back into the hobby. I also thought it would be something the family would enjoy. I purchased a reflector telescope that comes apart in pieces and is much

more manageable than my previous telescope. I have enjoyed looking at objects under the night sky with it; some of you have looked through it at various church events. I also enjoy taking long exposure photographs with another setup I have.

In the summer of 2017 I went to my first 'star party'. People bring their telescopes, camping gear, and stay up all night looking through theirs and other people's scopes as well as taking photos. There were two 30-inch telescopes at that particular star party and it was marvelous to look through them!

I find that many people are amazed when they look through a telescope for the first time at the rings of Saturn, the great red spot and horizontal bands of Jupiter with its moons, the craters on our moon, or a large star cluster or galaxy. I find that others are less interested, and the objects seen through a modest-sized telescope aren't that impressive to them. That's okay, we all find wonder in different things. To me, it's always been the things in the night sky, even though many of these objects look like no more than dim fuzzy white objects through the telescope I own.

According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate

Dictionary, Eleventh Edition, astronomy is "the study of objects and matter outside the earth's atmosphere and of their physical and chemical properties." Astronomy should not be confused with pagan astrology: (astrology is the wicked practice of determining human affairs based on the stars, planets, and celestial events according to their positions and various other aspects of their behavior).

Some other definitions according to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition are as follows:

**Solar System** - "the sun together with the group of celestial bodies that are held by its attraction and revolve around it"

**Milky Way Galaxy** - "the galaxy of which the sun and the solar system are a part and which contains the myriads of stars that create the light of the Milky Way"

**Universe** - "the entire celestial cosmos" (This includes our galaxy plus all others.)

People see God in different ways. The evidence of His existence is made clear through His creation. The hymn "How Great Thou Art" speaks of this:

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder

Thy power throughout the universe displayed

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Romans 1:20 - *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:"*

Alma 16:54-55 - *"The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion; Yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form, doth witness that there is a Supreme Creator: and yet do ye go about, leading away the hearts of this people, testifying unto them there is no God? And yet will ye deny against all these witnesses?"*

Hebrews 11:3 - *"Through*

*faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."*

The night sky is a great and it conveys to me how powerful and great our God is. The universe is vast and it's beyond our comprehension.

The book of Genesis explains that the earth was created first, followed by other celestial objects that we view in our night sky:

*Genesis 1:14-19 - "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."*

The fact that the Lord placed the sun in the sky after the earth was created does not conflict with the fact that the

earth also revolves around the sun. Because the Lord placed the sun in the sky after the earth was created does not mean that there must be an earth-centered solar system or universe. Placing the sun in the firmament is equivalent to creating the sun and placing the earth in rotation around the sun. To someone watching creation from the earth's point of view, the sun would appear to be placed in the sky. Note also that the earth's tilt with relation to the sun was put in place at that same time since Genesis 1:14 mentions "seasons".

Scripture tells us that our Lord Jesus Christ was the Creator of these things and did these things under the direction of the Father:

*Hebrews 1:1-3 - "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"*

*Colossians 1:12-17 - "Giving thanks unto the*

*Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."*

*Psalms 33:6 - "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."*

*Jeremiah 32:17 - "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee."*

The power that our Lord has emphasizes His majesty and might as well as my weakness and insignificance. How these things can be created from nothing is something I do not understand.

Scripture sheds light on the nature of our world and the universe. From ancient days, scripture revealed that the

earth was round and suspended in space:

Isaiah 40:22 - *"It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:"*

Job 26:7 - *"He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing."*

We also know that our God created a star to guide those to Jesus Christ in the town of Bethlehem. A new star is also mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

Matthew 2:1-10 - *"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he*

*had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."*

Helaman 5:58-59 - *"Therefore they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; nevertheless the night shall not be darkened; and it shall be the night before he is born. And behold there shall be a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you."*

3 Nephi 1:24 - *"And it came to pass also, that a new star did appear, according to the word."*

Some use science to try and explain the star that appeared at Bethlehem. I believe that this was a miraculous supernatural event and not something that can necessarily be explained through natural science such as a comet, planetary conjunction, or supernova (exploding star).

Our Lord even has power to change the behavior of celestial bodies even after their creation. According to the Bible, the position of the shadow of the sun was modified by 10 degrees during the time of Hezekiah:

2 Kings 20:8-11 - *"And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz."*

Even before this, the Lord made the sun and moon stand still for a day:

Joshua 10:12-13 - *"Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and*

*the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."*

The Lord is able to modify the rotation of the earth with supernatural means if desired.

The Book of Mormon states:

*Helaman 4:61-62 - "Yea, and if he saith unto the earth, Move, it is moved; yea, if he say unto the earth, Thou shalt go back, that it lengthen out the day for many hours, it is done: And thus according to his word, the earth goeth back, and it appeareth unto man that the sun standeth still: yea, and behold, this is so; for sure it is the earth that moveth, and not the sun."*

The Lord also created the universe with variety, just as there is diversity among people:

*1 Corinthians 15:40-41 - "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory."*

In addition, scripture tells us that every single star in the sky was named by God:

*Psalm 147:4 - "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names."*

Scripture also tells us that God purposely created the constellations and star formations that we see in the heavens:

*Job 9:2-9 - "I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south."*

*Job 38:31-33 - "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?"*

Note that the "Mazzaroth" has been interpreted to be associated with the zodiac constellations. The sun passes through this circle and the associated constellations over the course of one year. Arcturus is a star. Orion is a constellation and the Pleiades a small group of stars.

Some believe that the zodiac constellations actually reveal the gospel story, and that their meaning has been corrupted into pagan representations over time. A few of the various interpretations of the zodiac constellations are as follows:

#### Interpretation #1:

Virgo - The Incarnate Son  
Libra - The Redeemer  
Scorpio - The Sufferer  
Sagittarius - The Conqueror  
Capricornus - The Sacrifice  
Aquarius - The Living Water  
Pisces - The Liberator  
Aries - The Crowned Lamb  
Taurus - The Judge  
Gemini - The King  
Cancer - The Protector  
Leo - The Victor

#### Interpretation #2:

Virgo the Virgin - Virgin Mary  
Libra the Scales - Sin must be paid for  
Scorpius the Scorpion - Sin brings death  
Sagittarius the Archer - Demonism  
Capricorn the Goat-Fish - Earth corruption

Aquarius the Water Purer -  
 Living water or Noah's flood  
 Pisces the Fish - God's remnant  
 Aries the Ram - Sacrifice  
 Taurus the Bull - Resurrection  
 Gemini the Twins - Christ's dual  
 nature  
 Cancer the Crab - Gathering of  
 redeemed  
 Leo the Lion - The King

I'm not sure about these interpretations, but it's interesting to consider. I would not be surprised if these constellations are indeed representations of concepts related to God or His plan of salvation. It is also interesting that there are 12 constellations in the zodiac. We know that 12 is a significant number in scripture.

Even though the things in the heavens are beautiful, we are to not worship the things of creation. There are warnings in scripture about worshipping creation rather than the Creator. I often look in awe at photos people have taken of various objects in the night sky. One evening as I did so God noted something to me with this phrase: "Even the stars praise His name."

Psalm 148:1-5 - *"Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon:*

*praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created."*

God is of much more significance than His creation...God even uses the objects in the sky for signs:

Matthew 24:29-30 - *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*

Luke 21:25-27 - *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."*

Isaiah 13:10 - *"For the stars of heaven and the*

*constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."*

We are told that present day earth and present day heaven will be replaced in the future, as even these things are temporary:

Revelation 21:1 - *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."*

One day perhaps we'll be able to travel throughout the heavens after the end of the millennium. I don't know. What I do know is that the Lord has blessed us with His amazing creation. Even more so, the Lord has blessed us with His gospel plan, and we are able to participate within it. We owe everything to the Lord, and that we can personally know the great Creator is an amazing thing. I hope that you give our Lord the glory that is due whenever you look up at the night sky in the future. ■





# The Peace of God

Elder Gordon McCann

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14: 27).*

As I considered what to prepare that would be appropriate and timely for this day we are living in, I was drawn to the topic titled, “The Peace of God.” My thoughts took me where, in my mind’s eye, I could see my surroundings and identify many of the sources of contention and strife that can distract our hearts and minds: our hurried pace of life, social media, politics, failing relationships, society’s ever-changing values, and life cycle changes, to list just a few I

thought of that have a potential to invoke or bring contention and strife into our lives.

We must keep in mind, when we consider the root source of contention and strife, the words of Christ:

*For verily, verily I say unto you, He that hath the spirit of contention, is not of me, but is of the devil, which is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger one with another; Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away (3 Nephi 5:30-31).*

Satan uses contention and

strife as tools to take our focus off Jesus Christ in an attempt to destroy “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” within us. The plan of God was designed for all generations, no matter what trials may be placed before them, to have power over Satan through the strength of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Each generation must confront their trials with faith, putting their trust in the words of Christ when He said, over 2,000 years ago:

*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).*

I am reminded of the great

trial of faith that the disciples of Christ had to exercise at the time of His death. Jesus tried to prepare His disciples for when He would no longer be with them in the flesh. Jesus told them that they should not allow their hearts to “be troubled,” to “believe also in me” as they believed in God, and that His “Father’s house” had “many mansions,” where He would be going soon “to prepare a place” for them to be together again. Those words of Christ were spoken to bring comfort and peace to the hearts of His disciples during that great trial of their faith when Christ would be offered up on the cross according to the plan of God for the redemption of all mankind.

Moroni also spoke of the trial of faith his forefathers went through, as an example of that same faith it takes to stay true in our belief in Jesus Christ.

*Wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith, for it was by faith that Christ shewed himself unto our fathers, after that he had risen from the dead; (Ether 5:7).*

Jesus continued by reminding His disciples that if they loved Him they were to “keep my commandments,” with the promise they would receive “another Comforter” that would be their constant companion, to “abide with you forever.” This “Comforter,” or “Spirit of truth” would not be given to “the world,” but only to those who would keep the commandments Jesus had given them and taught by example,

such as baptism with water, “to fulfill all righteousness.” This “Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,” would be sent by the Father in the name of Jesus Christ to those who would enter into a covenant with God; through repentance, then by entering into the waters of baptism for the remission of sins, and through the laying on of hands (Acts 8:16-17; Moroni 2:2), thus obeying the commandments of God. The specific purpose of this “Comforter” would be an integral (essential, or necessary for completeness) part residing within you to “teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance” that Christ had taught; things you have read and studied in the Word of God as found in the Bible and Book of Mormon.

The “Comforter” or “Holy Ghost” that resides in us, is what settles our soul or spirit, where we can experience the peace of God in our everyday walk of life, no matter what the trial or circumstances we face. We are able to walk in confidence that, no matter the outcome, if God is with us we can overcome all the trials that life can throw at us.

*Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest (Joshua 1:9).*

The definition found in Miriam-Webster for “peace” is the state of tranquility or quiet: as a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom keeping peace. The

Greek definition for the word “peace,” as quoted in John 14:27, is “eire<sup>ne</sup>” (*i-rah'-nay*),” which is a verb to join; one, peace, quietness, rest, set at one again. Both definitions describe the plan that our Father in heaven has provided for each of us to enjoy, and to be a recipient of through our faith in His Son Jesus Christ, the “Only Begotten of the Father” (John 1:14, 2 Nephi 11:21).

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

*The plan of God is for us to become one with the Father and His Son, and that by doing so we can have peace in this world. The peace of God comes only with having that close relationship with our God through Jesus Christ. Again, this does not mean that we will be free from the trials of this life; however, the Holy Ghost that is abiding within us reassures us, “with our spirit, that we are the children of God,” thus “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:16-17).*

*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (1 Peter 1:7). ■*



## This Is Why I Sing

### Elder Aadam Yates

Isn't it interesting the extent to which music affects our life? Every culture throughout history has had their own music, from basic to advanced in composition, lyrics and instruments (or lack thereof).

I remember many years ago I began a new job working in the emergency room at a local hospital. During orientation there was a presentation from a music therapist, where she had the class take their resting heart rate, then played a song and, afterward, had us again check our resting heart rate. The first heart rates varied wildly, but nearly all had an identical heart rate after the song was finished (if I remember correctly, the song was set to 70 beats per minute). The music united

our hearts...

I was reminded of this recently when reading an article about the best songs to listen to during a workout. The researchers listed out several songs which had a beat that helped you get to a good target heart rate. They also mentioned the subconscious effect of music in a workout, that most people underestimated their effort over 10% when listening to music. The music helped them to forget the difficult effort they were putting out.

All this led me to think about music and how it affects my life...

I often am asked - how does God talk to you? For me, while I have experienced times where I have had a voice interjected into my mind or knowledge presented

so strongly that I couldn't think of anything else, God often speaks to me through song. And while that may seem strange, if you consider what our church songs are, it really isn't so odd. Many songs we sing from our hymnals are derived from scriptures, often from Psalms, but also numerous other places in God's word. The songs we sing are prayers, admonitions, exhortations, encouragements, praises, petitions and so on.

Not long ago I was struggling with some of those stresses we all face that often seem nearly unbearable. I woke up singing a song, got ready for church and was singing this song as I shaved and got dressed. As I was walking to our morning ministers' meeting

I realized I was singing a song I had never heard nor sung before, and yet I knew it. The words were answers to the turmoil I was feeling and brought me comfort. As the day began and busyness of it continued, I found that I totally forgot the song. Desperate, I searched through the two songbooks we use in our local, *Zion's Hymnal* and *Saint's Hymnal*, hoping that I would find it there. But I couldn't. It brought up a recounting of a story a sister shared in Phoenix many years ago: one night at a service they had some visitors, and during the service they sang a song which this sister said, "We had never sung before, and have never sung again."

I consider that story and also my experience, and I am awed at God. I am amazed that He knows what is perfect, for the perfect time and the exact need....

As a singer and musician, I love reading through the Psalms. As I read through the passages I can see David writing and singing the prayers of his heart. Some were joyous, and some came from places of near despair; from sickness of sin and from gratitude for forgiveness.

There is one small verse in Matthew (26:30) and Mark (14:26) which says, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out to the mount of Olives." This brings the thought to my mind, "What was it like to hear Jesus sing?" Did he sing lead or did he blend in a perfect harmony?

While there are many songs I love, there are three that recently I have held to the words of, for their comfort, for their expressing where I was, and then lifting me

up. The first is a song by Matt Maher, titled, "Lord I Need You." The lyrics that particularly touch me are:

Lord, I come, I confess,  
Bowing here I find my rest. With-  
out You I fall apart,  
You're the One that guides my  
heart  
Lord, I need You, oh, I need You,  
Every hour I need You.  
My one defense, my righteous-  
ness,  
Oh God, how I need You. So teach  
my song to rise to You  
When temptation comes my way.  
When I cannot stand I'll fall on  
You,  
Jesus, You're my hope and stay.

I have prayed this same prayer, long before I heard this song. I remember working in my shop, struggling with the trials that, truthfully, were insurmountable for man, and decided to turn on some music to stop my mind from trying to solve the unsolvable. This song came on, and as the words fell line upon line, I felt as if God was telling me He heard me and my confession that I needed Him to guide my actions, and especially to guide the feelings of my heart.

Psalm 139:1-4 **To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.** O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it

*altogether.*

Another song that has touched my soul recently:

When my hopes and dreams are far from me  
And I'm running out of faith,  
I see the future I picture slowly fade away.  
And when the tears of pain and heartache  
Are pouring down my face,  
I find my peace in Jesus' name.  
In the eye of the storm  
You remain in control.  
In the middle of the war  
You guard my soul.  
You alone are the anchor  
When my sails are torn.  
Your love surrounds me  
In the eye of the storm "Eye of the Storm," Ryan Stevenson.

This song hit me when I was giving into frustration over changes in my life that were out of my control and not in my plan. Maybe you are like me, that sometimes your mind gets stuck on the broken record of failures, disappointments, unwanted changes of life and the fears they bring.

For me, this song and this verse in particular drew my mind back to a wonderful testimony of God providing for me: we read how Christ sent out His disciples, instructing them to take nothing but the clothes on their backs. Then, just before the events that led to His death began, He reminded them of that time -

"And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing (Luke 22:35).

God knows how to bless us...I am continually reminded of this.

I have found myself singing as I watched a thunderstorm roll in, or the sunrise over beautiful canyons:

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder Consider all the worlds thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed (How Great Thou Art).

As we gathered in my in-law's home on the day my sweet mother-in-law Marlene passed on to her reward, I couldn't help but sing:

Come, thou Fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing thy grace; Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise (Come, Thou Fount).

I sang these songs, because for me, I couldn't express my feelings to God in simple words; I had to try to acknowledge the beauty and gratitude with the best thing I could offer. Perhaps that sounds odd, or maybe you have felt it too.

I remember a testimony many years ago that I have always thought about: A man was standing next to two others in a choir, and within himself was frustrated that the two next to him could barely carry a tune. As the song started, he heard beautiful music from them. He then was told by the Lord - "But this is what I hear." I know God sees our heart, our desires and our efforts. Our offerings are beautiful to Him, regardless of the value we put on our own abilities.

So, what is my point in this arti-

cle? Song is just another way we bring ourselves before God, but sometimes we don't consider how important it can be. When the words resonate within us and reach us in where we are, it amplifies our praise, or our petition, or our confession to Him. Song is something that even science shows is able to unite (remember the heart rate story above), and can often make us forget the weight of our burdens (how it can affect us when we exercise).

The last song that has been on my mind is a beautiful song by Audrey Assad, "I Shall Not Want:"

From the love of my own comfort,  
From the fear of having nothing,  
From a life of worldly passions,  
Deliver me, O God.

From the need to be understood,  
And from a need to be accepted,  
From the fear of being lonely,  
Deliver me, O God,  
Deliver me, O God.

And I shall not want, no, I shall not want.

When I taste Your goodness, I shall not want.

When I taste Your goodness, I shall not want.

2 Nephi 3:33-39: *"I am encompassed about because of the temptations and the sins which doth so easily beset me. And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted. My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep. He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my*

*flesh. He hath confounded mine enemies, unto the causing of them to quake before me. Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the night time. And by day have I waxed bold in mighty prayer before him; yea, my voice have I sent upon high; and angels came down and ministered unto me."*

I think of the words of this song in relation to this psalm of Nephi. We are encompassed by trials, by fearful things and difficulties of life. But when God moves, it is perfect. When He blesses, it is right. His gift of peace is beyond understanding; to those unacquainted with God it would make no sense. And yet, as the song says, "When I taste Your goodness, I shall not want."

As editor of this publication, I have prayed and considered what God's people need to be reminded of. This article is to remind you that God is present, He brings joy, He speaks in many ways, He is able to find you in your trials, He hears your song of praise, your song of sorrow and pain, your plea for peace, direction and assurance of His love. He finds way to meet you, to assure you, to bless you. This is why we love Him, for He searches us out. May God bless you continually, and that you in all places may bring Him the praise He is due. ■



## Michigan Reunion 2019

Sr. Kelli Moran

The theme of this year's Michigan Reunion was, "The Armor of God." The reunion was held June 14 through 17. We welcomed church family from Ontario, New York, Arizona, Missouri, and Colorado. The fellowship began Friday afternoon with a rafting trip at the Trudgen's, followed by dinner at their home.

Saturday morning we gathered together at church as Elder Dan Lawrence opened our reunion. He spoke on how we need to be in a constant

conversation with the Lord.... Some of the ways of doing that are through songs and prayer. One of the scriptures he used was Colossians 3:16 – *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."* Elder Brandon Tarbell added to the opening, reminding us that our time together was a special blessing for us to come together, while being united in worship and

loving fellowship.

Elder Bob Hedrick shared a message of serving one another, so that by strengthening our church we may serve the Lord mightily. He shared scripture showing how Christ was a servant to others, and how we should desire that same attitude, instead of wanting to be leaders. He shared Philippians 2:5, *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ,"* to remind us how we should be serving. He also spoke on how the whole body needs to join together and work



to the measure of every part. He used Ephesians 4:15-16 to bring this to light, and also emphasized how we need to take care of the body of Christ first so that we can be strong enough to go out and help others. We need to build strong relationships, and he emphasized that those relationships do require effort. He reminded us that we are to love one another (Matthew 22:34-40). While we serve one another, it may be inconvenient and uncomfortable, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't do it. He ended his message with this thought: "When we serve, do we give our best or do we give the leftovers?"

Our second speaker on Saturday was Elder Ken Oar. Br. Ken started his message with a

reminder that we have been called to be Christians every day of the week, and that people should see hope and joy in us. He read 3 Nephi 5:60-63 and stated how we should be serving the Lord with all our heart, and that our focus should be that of heavenly things, not earthly. He went on to say that when we do serve Him and follow His teachings, God will bless us. He shared Romans 1:16, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."* Elder Oar ended his message by reading 1 Nephi 1:1 and sharing that we will persuade people to believe in God by our actions.

Following a morning sacrament service on Sunday, Apostle Alvin Moser shared a

message called, "There's No Such Thing as a Dragon." He read from 1 Corinthians 15:50 and Galatians 5:17, sharing that you cannot enter the kingdom of God with your earthly body, but have to be spiritually prepared to enter heaven. He discussed Solomon, and how he gradually pulled away from God and started preferring the things of this world. Apostle Moser also spoke on how we can find contentment with godliness. He shared 1 Timothy 6:6-12, *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and*



*into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called,*

*and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."*

The reunion came to a conclusion on Monday when several church family members made a trip to Sleeping Bear Dunes in northern Michigan. Many of them hiked the huge sand dunes and enjoyed playing in the sand, while others took in the views and spent more time "catching up" with one another.

We are so thankful to everyone that made the drive

or flight to join us for a weekend of preaching, prayer services, sacrament, and fellowship. It's always a blessing to our local to have fellow brothers and sisters worship with us. We were all spiritually fed and encouraged to continue persevering in our service for the Lord. ■





## 2019 Missouri Reunion Report

Sr. Deb Haines

We entered the Church of Christ for the opening prayer service of the 2019 Missouri Reunion, Friday, July 26th. We were greeted by Elder Glenn Gill, with Priest Bruce Haines assisting. Br. Glenn read a prayer given by the Apostle Paul from Ephesians 3, reminding us that we come together ourselves under the banner of Christ. He also read III Nephi 5:9.

Br. Bruce gathered the list of those in need and began a season of prayer where many voices were lifted. The service was then opened as the Spirit led for songs, testimonies and prayers.

▶ A Brother testified that this last year he and his wife benefitted from all the prayers on their behalf. At one time Hospice said she would pass away within six months, but she's still here and doing better all the time. There was a point though that she didn't want to stay here, she wanted to go "home," but God turned

her around. There are a lot of people out there that don't appreciate prayer. He rejoices in it.

▶ A Sister testified she's thankful we're here, all the faithful. She told us that the song "The Old Old Path" reminds her of her parents. They were faithful to the end. She told us that our testimonies confirm her faith—to keep on. We hope of Zion and God's promises—through our trials. We can't do it without prayer. We're thankful for sermons and the Gospel, which confirms her faith also. She wants to be a light, yet she stumbles. She's thankful for God's forgiveness.

The 11:00 a.m. sermon was given by Elder Randy Sheldon, with Priest Bruce Haines assisting. Br. Bruce gave the opening prayer and read Psalm 50, about Zion and the gathering. Our "all" needs to be on the altar of the Lord and we need to get ourselves out of

the world.

Br. Randy entitled his sermon, "Scoffers, Believers and Christ." Br. Randy told us the Lord is doing things, and the believers are about helping. Scoffers stand back and are negative. Keep God's commandments, the good works you do are acts of faith. Br. Randy read 2 Peter 3: 3-4. Scoffers don't believe Christ is coming; they try to trip up what God does. Don't be afraid of having a finger pointed at you by a scoffer. Do not be intimidated. He read Matthew 24:48-51. He's always heard that being said: "Don't let scoffers shake you . . . GIRD UP YOUR LOINS." He read 2 Peter 3:8-9. He told us he used to raise bees. As soon as they are "born," they know exactly what they are to do . . . head right to the fields. God needs us in the fields. Someday soon, "He'll come as a thief in the night" . . . (that's to the scoffers). We need to get our house in order for when He comes. Br. Randy read Revelation 8:2-5. Our

prayers go up like incense and come down as blessings. There's coming a time where "Babylon," the world, and its system of decay. There's a foul spirit you can see and feel. He read Revelation 18:2-5 says, "Come out of her **my people**" (who may be in Babylon). GET OUT OF IT—DON'T GO THERE! Br. Randy told us that Granville Hedrick had a visitation by an angel in 1864. In Illinois the farmers heard this revelation and knew they had to leave the place they loved. They returned here, just six miles north of Independence, in the dead of winter. The river was frozen, but with slush on the top; it was melting. Br. Frisbey told them, "I'm going. . ." and he went by faith. He made the trek across the river, and all the wagons followed. They, about 60, came back to a town that hated them (they thought), but things had changed; God had changed the hearts. The Temple Lot property was repurchased. We are the believers. When God returns, He'll see us. He's coming. He read Revelation 19:11 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, about the returning of His Saints. The believers are ready. Scoffers will not be ready. He read Revelations 20:1-2; 3 Nephi 4:51; and Moroni 7:47-50. We're told none is worthy or acceptable to be there—except the humble and contrite, those who love the Lord. He read 1 John 2:15. We are not to "love the world." Be ready if He comes now—or tomorrow. He read Revelation 20:6, that's the hope we have; pray for one another.

Br. Bruce told us we are in a battle between good and evil. Read Matthew 24. Be a light in this world.

**A**t 2:30 we were blessed with a Song Service, and then a 3:00 p.m. Sermon was given by Elder Dan Lawrence, with Elder Albert Leighton-Floyd assisting. Br. Albert read Psalm 37.

Elder Dan Lawrence told us he is thankful to be here, in a house full of faithful followers of Christ. He read Acts 2:22; 36-37; and 3 Nephi 13:15. This is a challenge from God's word: what am I doing and what should I do? What is God's purpose in my life? Does my life draw men to God? What kind of person should I be? We are to be like Christ ALL the time; it has to be genuine. . . it's being a humble follower all the time. Br. Dan read Matthew 22:35-40. He told us we show God our love when we keep His commandments. What is your attitude? What's deep inside? Everything grows on love. Br. Dan read 1 John 4:7-8. He that doesn't love, doesn't know God. He read Moroni 7:52. What does this look like in our lives? He read Luke 3:7-14. What should I be? Christ said, "Even as I am." If the Holy Spirit steps out and says, "Don't step there," don't do it! He read Moroni 7:12-15. Love God enough that we turn from those things. God doesn't hide Spiritual concepts. He doesn't keep things from us to keep us from attaining salvation. We each need to look at ourselves, and have the right attitude when partaking of (His sacrifice) the sacrament. We need to be able to sacrifice for the good of others—start in our own homes: brothers—be spiritual shepherds, willing to sacrifice for family; cherish your wife; be spiritual examples—protect, provide, and encourage; earn and deserve respect. Sisters—strive to be Proverbs 31 women; Support your husband, cherish and honor him. None of us is perfect—we all fall short. Gracefully, lovingly understand or do everything that is right. Hold each other up to others; Communicate openly and honestly. . . in love; Draw closer to God and draw our children in; with charity and pure love be examples; seek Biblical solutions to problems; make Christ the center of our lives. . . Asking yourselves, "What matter of person shall I be?" Br. Dan

read 3 Nephi 12:34-35. Conform our core to the love of God.

Br. Albert told us we have been given good counsel. Br. Randy told us earlier to come out of Babylon; Br. Dan asked us, "What shall we do?" KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS!

**F**ollowing a Song Service at 7 p.m. a Sermon was given by Priest Kevin McGhee, with Elder Martin Addie assisting. Br. Kevin exhorted us to ask ourselves—"What does God want me to do?" He read Mosiah 2:13-17, the camp theme this year. He told of an incident; a sister asked for prayers, and a comment made touched him deeply. The comment was. . . "It's a privilege to pray for you." He knew God would provide people for him to talk to in his need too. He read 1 Timothy 2:8. Br. Kevin said he was fired from his job recently; but when God removed the obstacle it didn't feel like it was a blessing, but it was. He believes God was providing correction in his life; he realizes now, he wasn't giving Him his all. Br. Kevin read Hebrews 12:5-11, and Colossians 1:17-18. He told us he wasn't giving God preeminence in his life. A friend of his sent him a scripture, Genesis 3:19; our relationship with God is all that matters. He read Jeremiah 29:11-13 and James 1:5-6. He told us to go to the Lord, it's time to live the words on the page. It's an opportunity to pray for each other, and that prayer has purpose; after all, Satan tries to stop us from praying. He read Proverbs 3:5-6. When someone ignores you. . . this feels bad. How does God feel when we do this to him? God wants us to talk to Him about everything. In praying we are glorifying Him. He read Revelation 4:11, John 4:23 and Alma 16:219-222. His wife told her friend about Kevin losing his job; the friend works for Costco and she told Kevin to apply there. He got an interview. . . only

scattered part-time, but he took it. Another friend told him about a pharmacy, but he thought it was closed. Two days later, he learned this friend was sitting next to two others at a ball game, and the husband and wife sitting next to her were both pharmacists at the pharmacy she had mentioned to him two days earlier. The wife is the new pharmacy manager at that pharmacy! He knew then that God was setting it all up. He called the manager and went in for an interview the next day. He had no nervousness; he knew this was God's plan. She had others to interview, so she said she'd call back. She did, two days later. She couldn't wait; she offered him the job! Br. Kevin read Mosiah 2:15. Our God is able. . . turn it all over to Him.

Br. Martin observed we are all like a ripple in a pond, and he said Br. Kevin had used his favorite verse, Jeremiah 29:11.

**S**aturday Morning Prayer Service began at 9 a.m. Elder Steve McGhee was in charge. He told us he came home from camp yesterday after a wonderful experience. Br. Steve read 1 Peter 1:3, and told us "Blessed be. . . unto a lively hope. . ." That's why he feels excited. It was a wonderful last campfire; half of the young men gave testimonies and half of the young women also did. There was only one adult testimony. There's a place in Heaven reserved for each of us. Br. Steve took the prayer list and then led us in a season of prayer. Many voices were lifted unto our Heavenly Father, and some of the testimonies that followed were:

▶ A Sister told us the day before they were to leave she left her car at home for her husband to check over. She got ready for the trip, got a lot of things done at work and then he called: it turned out there was a big problem with the Excursion, it was not safe to take on the drive. There was nothing else available large enough to

hold everything they had to bring. She knew God would take care of it, somehow. She got on the phone and tried to find one to rent. Her cousin, who is a travel agent, also tried to find one. Her cousin finally found one for her and reserved it. There was only ONE available. God made a way.

▶ A Brother testified his daughter recently testified how she'd been going through an awful struggle. Our Br. told us he stopped trying to "fix it" and let God do what He was going to do: it worked. He continued to love her like a dad loves a daughter. God did the rest. Our Br. also told us about a trip made to Ethiopia in April. Koba's cousin wanted missionaries to come, so they went. These people weren't even sure there is a God. One old man said about 30 generations ago there was a man that did. They said they only believed in what they could see. The ministry explained about God. They were the only white men ever to teach them. They taught about administration. . . and administered to about 20 people. Two days later the old guy admitted that when they told them God is like the wind, he knew they were right. They administered to him and his eyes are improving. He testified he learned more in four hours with them than he'd learned all his life. Our Br. said he'd taught this class about teaching God, never knowing that someday he'd need it. God does not give us a Spirit of fear, but with a lively hope. Our faith is rising in this generation. We have a faithful God.

▶ A Sister told us that she'd hurt her back last year. She doesn't want to relive it. She taught her 3-4 year-olds at VCS, and Thursday night she felt spasms in her legs. It was the 4th of July. She remembered because their cat got outside accidentally,

spooked by the fireworks, and wouldn't come back. At 3 a.m. she awoke with terrible cramping pain in her legs. She was administered to; the cat was prayed for also. After they prayed, her husband walked over and opened the door. While praying he'd heard a meow. God had watched over the cat; she knew she was in God's hands too. The next morning the pain was okay, and she was able to do what she needed to do. She told us when she was a tee, she thought she wouldn't be able to have a future because Christ was returning. Life won't stop! We'll be in His presence! Live EACH day! Every minute we live for Him, because any minute we could be in His presence.

▶ A Sister said her brother, his wife, and their 2-year-old son moved near them recently. She has been trying to encourage them. Please pray for all those loved ones who have drifted away. She also thanked anyone who prayed for the weather at camp; it was beautiful!! She told us we're in a battle, but it's not with each other; we need to be prayer-buddies. The Lord will help us to be victorious. . . through the rough times. In preparing for camp she asked a brother to pull a trailer. His response was, "I'd love to!" Praise God, He's good ALL the time!

**T**he 11 a.m. Sermon was given by Elder Donald Gill, and Priest Shaughn Sprague assisted. A special song was offered by Elder Glenn Gill. Br. Donald held up an empty cardboard box. The label on the box said "YOU and ME." He told us when we were born we were an empty box. . . There are only two spiritual options; walk in the spirit or walk in the flesh, and they are opposites. He read Galatians 5:13, 16-17, 19-23. He gave us a visual: rocks (sin) go in the box—it makes the box a "heavy burden."

There are nine “fruits of the spirit” that God wants us to have. What happens if we put the fruit in the same box? We can’t do that; they’ll be crushed; we need to take the rocks out. He read 1 John 1:9. We need to confess our sins and be cleansed, which is forgiveness. The book of Enos fits perfectly to this. Br. Donald read Matthew 6:14-15. He told us to remove the rocks. NOW, it’s suitable to put in other things. Now we can put the fruit into a clean box. He read 1 Nephi 2:48-53. There’s joy in fruit from God. Share it. We have a common desire to learn about God and be His people. Br. Donald read Galatians 5:13, 24-25. Liberty means the freedom from the heavy burden of sin and the chains of lust. Walk in the Spirit. The box is a symbol of conversion to “you and me.” The world around us doesn’t want this. Br. Donald had asked God, “What do you want me to do for a sermon?” He waited for God’s answer, and in a little while, the message flowed. He couldn’t write fast enough! He told us to listen for the Spirit to guide you to what God wants you to do. He read Alma 21:27-53. Our fight is for our souls; sin kills the soul. They seek to destroy liberty that comes from Christ. Moroni rent his coat—that’s pretty angry. “In memory of our God, Our religion, Our freedom and Our peace. . . .” (They knew Christ in 72 B.C.) This is the “Title of Liberty.” They bowed to the earth to speak to God. They were “Christians” because of their belief and faith in God, and came running to the “Title of Liberty,” doing the same and making covenants with God themselves. The people were making a binding promise and were ready to be called His people. In baptism, we can’t deny it, because of the Holy Ghost. He told us, he’s a Donald, but for today he can be our Moroni. Run to baptism and don’t look back. Repent and open yourself to the will of God. “Rise Up, O Men of God.” Come out of Baby-

lon, bonded together in freedom. This is the truth—right from the scriptures. You and I have to decide what to do with the box. Choose liberty and choose to be washed clean. Br. Donald then expressed his thanks from the Warrensburg Local. They are now ready to put down the carpet in their new building. They were blessed with the right people at the right time to do this work with their building. Jesus is calling! We can do what He wants us to do. No rocks, no fear. Be His people.

Br. Shaughn told us to walk upright before God.

After a Song Service, we were blessed with a Sermon at 3 p.m. given by Elder Bob Oldham, who was assisted by Priest Stephen Kimball. The Wiley daughters opened with a song special, “Come Thou Fount.”

Br. Bob began by reading a poem entitled, “People’s Problems” by Helen Steiner Rice. Br. Bob had talked to a younger sister about her problems. He read her some scriptures and told her he would pray for her. He didn’t know what else to do, but he wanted to do more. Later, a voice spoke to him, and he was told, “*What greater gift can you offer than your prayers?*”

He read John 8:19, explaining that we don’t all serve the same God. He read Luke 12:46-48 and Mosiah 1:106-108. He went on to tell us that in 1829-30 Christ brought forth the restored gospel. . . His gospel and His authority. We are just like King Benjamin’s people. We have no excuses—we’re servants, not judges. It’s God that converts people to His gospel. He read Mosiah 1:39. King Benjamin said, “I’ve taught you; that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord.” Br. Bob told us that today the Lord spoke through His servants. He read vs 76-85. Is there anyone here who doesn’t realize we are indebted to

God for everything? Br. Bob read John 5:25-29, Revelation 20:12-13 and Mosiah 1:86-91. Think about what you’re saying when you sing the song, “Send Me Forth.”

After dinner there was a Music Program outside, followed by an Ice Cream Social in the dining hall, where the written and pictorial history of “On the Road to Yucatan” was displayed.

The Sunday morning Sacrament Service began at 9 a.m. Apostles Jeff Oldham and Joel Yates were in charge. The ministry serving the emblems were: Elders David Rudd, and Bob Hedrick; Priests Shaughn Sprague and Stephen Kimball. Apostle Jeff Oldham opened the service, asking us to, “find joy in the journey today.” We’ve had a wonderful reunion so far, and he anticipates more to come.

Apostle Joel Yates read Moroni 4:3-4. He explained who the WE are in this verse; it’s us, the church. All of us. He read 1 Samuel 17:40-47. He told us the people couldn’t do anything except fear the giant. David used what weapon he had; he was zealous for the God of Israel. We are not to be afraid. There’s nothing stronger than God. Problems are like giants in our lives. God will make a way for our escape if you stand with Him. Let your faith arise in His name. We are willing to keep His commandments. Fellowship with brothers and sisters is important. Br. Joel told us he wanted to go to the Michigan Reunion, but . . . wasn’t sure if he should. Then he got a call from a member that needed help. He went. One sister he visited said she was alone, but not really alone because she’s with God every day. He had a nice study with her. Then he visited a brother, and their time of study and fellowship helped him set himself back on the path, putting God more firmly back in his life plan. He read 1 John 5:1-5 and Galatians

6:2-6. Bear each other's burdens. Lift each other up. Comfort those who need comforting. Rebuild relationships and encourage others. At the same time, let them do what they can do for themselves. If we do all for them, they'll get weak. Support each other. Sometimes we just have to explain things in a different way, so they'll understand. He read Galatians 5:7-10, and from 1 Corinthians 12. When is serving God convenient...? Br. Joel remembered at work one day they got a call; there was a 19-year-old in trouble with a heart problem. This kind of call is usually a drug problem. They arrived and he wasn't there. They headed out, but got another call, the same young man was now at Walmart and needing help. It was 2 a.m. but in talking with this young man our brother determined that he was crying out for spiritual help. He remembered earlier in the day he'd prayed to be able to help someone. This was it. God had given him what he'd asked for. It's not always convenient. Get higher. Step up. Two years ago he watched his daughter struggle. Now she wants the cords to strengthen and bind her.

The emblems were blessed and the sacrament served. Br. Bob led us in a season of prayer for all those that were listed. There were many voices lifted unto our Heavenly Father. Then the service was opened to the leadings of the Spirit; some of the testimonies given were:

▶ A Sister told us she had a huge blessing this last week at camp. She reminded us that last January she had a heart attack. At camp she felt a lot of pressure in her chest, like she was going to have another heart attack. She laid down for a while. She asked for her niece, the camp nurse. Her heart started racing, then she started coughing, just like she had with the January heart attack. Then she realized

she had the same song in her head as when she'd had the heart attack in January. She was administered to, and she started to calm down. Her blood pressure had been out of control. All of a sudden, she was back to normal. She feels honored and knows she's not worthy.

▶ A Brother told us his wife was in the hospital in May. While at the doctor appointment she spiked a fever and they said she was septic. The doctor didn't believe she would survive, but she did. God chose to heal her of several illnesses while she was in the hospital. She can now eat everything except dairy. It was God's perfect timing. Christians suffer with grace. She was hugely blessed. At one time she had heart failure; it's gone. Everything else too...just one step at a time.

▶ A Sister told us it's a joy to be here with us. Last fall she thought she was "going home." She'd lost her joy. She realizes now she has so much to be thankful for. God's given her back her strength. She holds us all in her prayers.

▶ A Sister testified how the Lord helped her husband. He had two bleeding ulcers and very little blood left. She is so thankful God helped him. He would have died otherwise. Never give up—there's always hope.

▶ A Sister told us her cousin was in a terrible accident a while ago. They weren't sure she was going to live. She's thirty years old and has a teen daughter. She needed surgery. Her liver was in bad shape...bleeding. She was in a medically induced coma for some time. She was administered to and the bleeding stopped. She wanted to write something; she wrote down... "Don't let me go." She's been greatly blessed. She was out of the

hospital and on the road to recovery. She told of an experience she had early on while in the hospital. She said she heard and even felt the prayers of others for her. She wasn't afraid. At one time, she said she was in a cold dark place, and she felt someone come up and sit beside her. He said to her, "Just stop breathing and it'll be easy to let go—it'll be over." Then she saw a pin of light. She saw her uncle. He spoke. When he touched her, his light dispelled all the darkness. She had no more fear. She knew that it was God and Satan speaking to her. She knew she wanted to live...she knew she had things to do—to right herself.

▶ A Brother reminded us in the story of Peter while on the ship they saw Christ walking on the water. Jesus is our example...do what He does. Peter climbed out of the boat and stepped out on the water. It held him at first. He could have sunk, but Christ held His hand out to Peter. A couple of years ago—two times, he and his wife came very close to having bad accidents. The first one was his fault. The second time, a car came out of a side street. There's a little blue mark on their car to remind him of it...it was that close. When we're in our own cars, we're walking on the water. He prays he can keep walking on the water. Our lives are moment to moment. We can be gone quickly, but the Lord will be there. Pray for each other.

▶ A Sister reminded us that in Timothy we are told to be ready in an instant. She doesn't ever have a plan. She's moment by moment. She's been doing her parents' insurance/medical papers/billings, etc. There are umpteen bills. She was told in a telephone interview that her mother would qualify for a waiver. This is an amazing miracle!

The last two years she has had continued peace about her mother's situation. Hope is a faith, believing as a child that all things are possible with God. She had an experience on I-70 just the day before. She was "cut-off" by another driver. She was nearly hit. It was a government car. She wanted to take measures to report him. They got a photo of the car and license plate. She followed him and in making eye-contact, he begged for forgiveness. She realized that we all do this with God. She had to give it.

- ▶ A Sister requested administration. Br. David Rudd and Bob Hedrick performed the administration.
- ▶ A Brother testified that we need to do what God wants; He'll direct. He told us that he is 58-years-old and that while helping out in VCS his class asked him how old he was. They thought he was really old, so they began guessing...high. They couldn't believe he was only 58 because of all of his gray hair. He told us in 1999 they were in Mexico after his father-in-law died. He was driving a bus. There was a problem with the air-shocks; one side was lower than the other. While he and his cousin were deciding what to do, his cousin heard a voice tell him not to let our brother do anything until after he'd put blocks under the bus. He did, amazed that he'd heard a voice, and knew it was the voice of God. After he'd done that, our brother just barely touched it and the air bag exploded. He felt himself move, being pulled out from under the bus. He felt the pavement move underneath him. It had to have been God that pulled him out. When he got up, he was all dirty...and his hair had changed...he was all silver-gray. He and his cousin talked a lot after that. Everyone that was

there that night has been baptized since that happened. You need to do what God says; the benefits are amazing.

- ▶ A Brother told us that he stepped in a hole at camp. He knew when it happened that it was at least a bad sprain; he heard it pop. He was nauseous. He asked for administration right away...and he was. He could feel himself improve. He came home from camp and went to the hospital; they have a good orthopedic medical center there. They did an x-ray and put him in a boot. Shortly, the Orthopedic Specialist came in and told them that it was just a bad sprain, but that there is evidence that a year or two ago there was a break there and it healed. However, our brother knows there was not a break there before! God healed him. Even the sprain is healing MUCH faster than it normally would.
- ▶ A Brother told us he was in a terrible accident in 1978 in Mexico when he was about 19 years old. He had broken bones everywhere—they thought he was dead, or about to die. They let him lay on a gurney in the hall for 24 hours unattended. A Social worker, who must have been sent by God, got him the care he needed. He's had cancer, with a 30% chance of survival; and he's still here. He believes that no one dies until God says it's so. He has to repent all the time. Yet, he has peace. He hopes when God is ready for him, that he is ready.
- ▶ A Sister told us she didn't listen to God's voice. She was at their daughter's and taking pictures with her camera. God told her to zoom in on their truck to get a photo, but instead she took three steps forward and fell. She tore a ligament. After five weeks there was no healing so they put her in a boot. Her doctor said, "You choose, it'll be surgery, either now or

later." She was doing fine after the surgery, but the pain started again; a strep infection had developed. Now she's on antibiotics. It would have been really bad if she'd let it go. We do need to listen to God's voice.

- ▶ A young Sister told us a few weeks ago she passed out while at home. She woke up on the bathroom floor. She cried out for help and passed out again. After finding her they took her to the hospital. Her heart was in A-Fib. She was sent for a sonogram and the diagnosis was pancreatitis. She was administered to and her blood levels went from over 600 down to 69. It was a miracle! The doctors still can't figure it out. She is so thankful they share a home with her parents. They are there when she needs them!  
There were six administrations that took place.

- ▶ A Brother told us that before he had his surgery, he and a brother went to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. They started the trip with a prayer. They were able to find a hotel when they got tired, but then the truck wouldn't re-start. They prayed. In the morning they crawled underneath the truck. The starter was loose. He tightened it up as much as he could but knew it needed a stronger arm. It started, though, and they headed down the road. Just down the road a few miles was a Ford dealership. They stopped and had it tightened up and were back on the road in just minutes, at no cost. God was watching out for them.

Apostle Jeff Oldham proceeded to close the service. He asked us to think about what we've heard. Reach out to someone in need.

**A**fter lunch, we were blessed with a Special Song Service. Elder Donald Gill assisted.

There were many wonderful gifts of praise offered up to our Lord.

At 4 p.m. we were blessed with another service. Elder Randy Sheldon opened the service with a song and prayer. There was a special song by Sr. Dolly Smothers, “The Old, Old Path.”

We were blessed with a very special service, a baby blessing. Elder David Rudd gave a message, reading 3 Nephi 8:25 and Mark 10:13-16. Br. David held his four-month-old granddaughter, Macy Layne McIndoo, as Br. Jeff Oldham assisted him. Parents Lindsey and Tony McIndoo looked on, as well as her big sister, three-year old Blakely.

Following the baby blessing was a sermon given by Elder Rick Olson, assisted by Br. Randy Sheldon.

Br. Rick told us he wasn’t able to be here Friday; so he hopes his sermon fits in well with what we’ve heard so far. He reminded us that reunions have a purpose; they are to unite and cause us to remember. Br. Rick read Alma 19:92-97. He reminded us that God created the law of gravity. God tells us He does not change, so if He changes, then He can’t exist. . . nothing would exist. Our faith must be like Alma’s. There is no other way to salvation except through Christ. Like gravity, we don’t think about it until we fall. We do the same with God. With repentance there will be forgiveness. We will be restored, but only the truly penitent are saved. . . . We treat this like gravity. We don’t want to be cut off from God, but to have reunion with Him. Br. Rick read Ephesians 4:1-8. God



desires us to have the unity of faith. We all need Christ; the Holy Spirit, Love, etc. We need to support each other. We don’t make this journey alone. Our parents and others influence us all. We are to care for one another, the body of Christ. Be forgiving. Reach out to someone in need. Unity with God is better than being “right.” The whole body needs to fit together—unto the edifying of the body in love. Serve each other, find something, to help any way you can, even letting someone do something so they feel a part of the body. None of us can make it alone. It’s by design, the way Christ designed. Br. Rick read 1 Peter 5:1-7. Be subject one to another; anything else separates us from the body. Don’t just go off and “do your own thing.” Be peculiar; don’t

follow the world; live your life as an example of Christ, in humility. God cares for all. Christ gives us hope and faith; He has the power of forgiveness. The goal is to be with our Heavenly Father, and glorify God. There are all kinds of reasons why people separate themselves from the body. God will make you perfect, even though gravity takes over sometimes. Br. Rick read Jude 1:17-21. None of us are perfect or blameless without Christ. One is not above the other. He read 1 Peter 4:8. If we have charity, we are willing to love, forgive, etc., and this will cover a multitude of sins. We are to be like Christ, have the bond of unity, strive for perfection in Christ. We are to use hospitality. . . always; treat all that way. Glorify God through Christ. We can do all things. . . with the mind of Christ. He’s given us one another; to strengthen, lean on and trust, with love. God will be with us. He doesn’t change. . . .

Br. Randy, in his closing, asked us all to gather to the center of the sanctuary in the aisle and put our arms around each other. We did this as best we could while Br. Rick quickly snapped a photo of us!

Thus, the 2019 Missouri Reunion came to a close. Our hearts were full, and we were blessed to have felt the sweet Spirit of the Lord. May we hold on to all we learned and shape our lives as Christ would have us do.

*In love, your reporter,  
Sister Deb Haines ■*



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