



Pulse of the Congregation

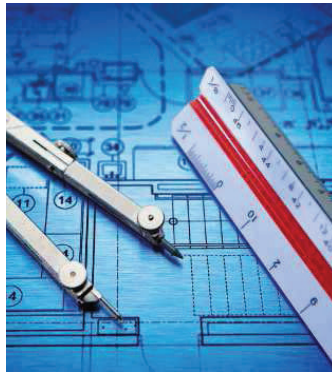
February, 2015

“We Will Build It Together...It Belongs to the Lord”

by Brother Brian Herren

With the Lord's help, the Saints in Salem are moving forward with plans to build a house of worship. When the Kirtland temple was commissioned of God, He called upon His people to build "...a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God..." We might hope the same dear elements combine in our humble efforts to glorify God in establishing a sanctuary in this portion of His vineyard. It shall be the house of the Lord, standing as a testament of His righteousness and holiness. No human effort could have brought us thus far, nor the best of our faculty afforded so gracious the delivery of fertile grounds and blessed opportunity. Men familiar with the project have made special note of our fortune, as this humble branch has passed softly through purchase agreement negotiations, lot line amendments, government deliberations, county permits of conditional use, city ordinance and utility demands, seasons open to community protest, and plan- bles us, and causes one's heart to swell in the tion for the kindly thoughts that distill unseen be ever employed, our praise unceasing, still only be expressed in small measure during this

A sum of \$75,000 has been paid in full for the the sole stewards of the Lord's property at 3725 45th AVE, Salem, Oregon. Saints and donated resources toward the purchase, and treated us so generously. We will not soon from any opportunity to return such pleasant



ning committee review. God's provision hum- gratitude that turns away greed and vain ambi- in the hearts of the unworthy. Could our songs our gratitude toward our Father in heaven could earthly probation.

land, satisfying the loan, and making the Church parcel 2, partition plat #2013-11, adjacent to friends of the Church in five different states we wish to here thank all those whom have forget the kindness you have shown, nor turn favors in your service.

The present course now finds momentum gaining, as we move forward in harmony to determine the form the new building will take. The process will include the voice and vote of every member, without unnecessary burden put to the open partici- pation of those inclined to assist. We will be able, patiently and with much respect, to see the whole congregation move forward as one body. We pray that the Holy Spirit will govern our minds and inform our hearts, ensuring that our own will is qualified always by the voice of the Lord and our love for each other. If possible, every voice will be heard in those matters of greatest consequence, and the vote of the great and small counted the same. It may not be that every voice has equal sway in our hearts, but every voice should have equal opportunity. A democratic process is not one that demands equal weight to each voice, but it is one that ascribes equal value to each vote. Such is the history of common consent in the church, not one without influential leaders, but one without self-important leadership.

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Congregational Camping



Update: This year, the church has reserved more camp sites than in any previous year for the annual congregational camping trip, but they are being spoken for very quickly. The fellowship this summer will mark our eighth annual excursion and it is still growing! Thirteen sites were reserved for the weekend of July 10-12, 2015 at Devil's Lake State Campground. Within two weeks of publishing the January, 2015 edition of the regional newsletter announcing the camping trip, every single full hook-up site has been spoken for and two tent sites reserved. In total, 8 of the 13 sites are now spoken for. Five tent sites remain available. If you are interested in reserving one of the remaining tent sites, please contact Brother Brian Herren (drbrianherren@gmail.com or 503-949-2484).

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I pray that the records of our deliberations are small, leaving those who follow after little more than this account: “We built it together...it belongs to the Lord”. I pray that the name of the man or woman by whose idea any particular element of the new church building is come might be quickly and thoroughly forgotten. Such things are possible amongst God’s children when they walk as one. If any one name, or group of names, remains to future generations as important to this building, such remembrance will be a moment removed from the true Benefactor and God by whom all good things are come. If Christ is the author and finisher of our faith, then He must also be worthy of credit for the works which are borne of it.

Beginning at a meeting on February 22, the congregation will begin to generate large consensus ideas that might be presented to the architects for inclusion in preliminary drawings. The Church does not need each member to bring a set of blueprints, but for each member to bring ideas that might be incorporated into one set of blueprints, having been drawn up with the efficacy and economy of well trained hands. The full attention and expertise of the architects at Studio 3 Architecture in Salem, Oregon will be trained and focused upon the project before us. Mr. Bolante and Mr. Lodder will be employed to incorporate the ideas of the congregation with technical expertise and an eye toward spacial and economic efficiency, while honoring every pertinent building code. The expense of the architect is expected to be between 3.5% and 9.5% of the total building costs, and is a necessary component to every commercial building project in Marion County.

During this exciting time, let us prayerfully search the Lord’s will in every matter. If the house of the Lord belongs to the Lord, then so must the process by which it is built. While experience and reason compete for our interest, neither will adequately substitute for the direction given by the Holy Spirit. It is possible that a church could be built in Salem by Christmas of 2016, and equally possible that the most important result of our labor will not be the building of a church at all, but rather the building of a people that shall worship within it.

The Parables of Jesus Christ

by Brother Gary Livingston



On October 19, 2014, Elder Brian Herren began teaching our adult Sunday School class entitled “The Parables of Jesus Christ.” We have truly been blessed to have included our senior high youth in this class as they have been active participants in both discussion and demonstrations.

Jesus used parables in His earthly ministry to teach those who might not be ready to hear or understand the deeper principles of the gospel in ways that they could better comprehend. The word ‘parable’ means “comparison, illustration, analogy” and Jesus used examples from everyday life to make comparisons to spiritual concepts and understandings. As one contemplates these parables with prayerful consideration, the Holy Ghost rewards the thoughtful learner with deeper understanding and insights.

Our senior high youth have been especially helpful in demonstrating some of these analogies, or comparisons. Brothers Michael and Vitaliy used a blowtorch and match to show us that we are to “...be the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid” (*Matt. 5:16*). They showed us that even a light as powerful as a torch needs a simple match to give it light as both torch and match are of great importance. I don’t think any of us will be able to forget brother Taylor demonstrating what it actually looks like to “gird up your loins” as we learned the parable of The Watchful Servants. “Let your loins be girded about and have your lights burning” (*Luke 12:38*).

As we are moving through these parables in chronological order, our classes are filled with much discussion, deep learning, and insightful self-examination as we, as brothers and sisters, are actively striving to live our lives in harmony to the gospel message as we glorify our Heavenly Father.



Young Adults Group Taco/Movie Night and Surprise Dinner

by Sister Cessaries Galusha

Ten happy YAGgers enjoyed a wonderful evening of fellowship on the evening of January 30th. Each enjoyed making their own scrumptious tacos and burritos until our bellies could hold no more. Laughter, fun, and even some demonstrations of yoga positions were had in bonding and sharing with one another. We also watched a very inspiring film based on a true story of a native tribesman from India who worked tirelessly to learn Western language, culture and education to finally be able to translate the Bible into his native tongue. He even had to create his own written language for the tribe to be able to read! It was a fulfilling night, and enjoyed in peace and the Spirit of love.

The following afternoon, three of the group returned for a surprise visit to our beloved Walt Rennick! He was all smiles as Brian, Travis and Cessaries brought him dinner, lovingly made by Melissa Herren. We shared the meal together, and were blessed by his stories and memories of days gone by. Walt has been a tremendous blessing to so



many throughout his life, and we cherish these moments we were able to spend with him in his home.

Supporting Simonka Place

by Brother Brian Herren

We wish to thank the regular volunteers who have been working so hard at Simonka Place, and those now stepping up to add their labors to the principles we find so dear in thought and study. Your service to those in need has honored the Giver of all that is good, blessed His church with a bright countenance in the eyes of her community, and witnessed of Christ's love to those who stand to benefit by the treasured gifts of Christian fellowship. This year marks 9 years of community outreach and service at Simonka Place, with approximately 950 dates of service. Members of the Salem branch have served dinners, swept floors, mopped dining halls, washed dishes, preached the gospel, shared testimony, led worship, provided ministry in music, and shared genuine smiles when all the world was dark.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction..." - James 1:27

For hatred and cruelty, those afflicted have turned for help, and have oft been comforted by those works which seem but the least of our reasonable service. The impact of being there for one at the lowest point of her life, offering even one encouraging word to a soul in sorrow's way, cannot be overstated. Thank you so much. May the Lord be glorified in all, and every hour be redeemed for His honor.

"Therefore, let your light so shine before this world, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." - Matthew 5:18



Builders and Climbers Spaghetti Dinner

by Sister Cessaries Galusha

On January 18th, the Saints were blessed after our morning services with a feast prepared by our Builders and Climbers. Each Builder took responsibility for a portion of the meal, bringing supplies and some even preparing the dishes entirely on their own! Lovingly, they served the congregation and waited on tables ensuring their needs and desires were met. One young man was even known to take un-emptied glasses and refill them to make sure he was doing his job!

I felt very blessed to have our youth serving in these ways, with preparation, giving of their own resources, love, and the attitude that made the Saints feel it was their joy to do so. Many gave generously to help fund the upcoming youth camps at this dinner, and we are reminded how we are one body, giving in support of one another. The youth grow stronger year by year in body and mind, and we seek to aid them to strengthen their spirits as well. The Lord pours out His blessings in all ways that we have need, and the provision for our youth to attend camps to learn and worship Him, is another show of His grace and kindness to us!



Saddle Mountain and Sushi

by Brother Aaron Dukes

On January 17th, the Young Adults Group (YAG) of the Salem branch were privileged with the opportunity to gather together in fellowship while attempting to conquer Saddle Mountain. Due to an overall mild winter, the group did not have to face the hurdles and dangers of snow on the steep and somewhat treacherous trail. However, wind and rain were present in abundance to keep us all humble and remind us that while man has stewardship over all the Earth, we are not its masters.

The trip to the Saddle Mountain trail-head was enjoyable and safe, despite an enthusiastically driven final approach over unkempt roads with many a pothole and hairpin turns to keep us all awake and alert.

Several of the young men in the group were able to take a quick lead in their eagerness to reach the top, while the rest of the group was content to take a more sedate pace. For sisters Cessaries and Lisa, this was motivated by a desire to enjoy the walk, and their hike was mostly leisurely in nature. For others, such as myself, the decision was mandated by constant vocal reminders from our bodies that the flesh is indeed weak.

Saddle Mountain takes its name from the depression or saddle between its two peaks, and the leading group found it agreeable to take shelter in a rock outcropping at the bottom of this feature for the purpose of rest and regrouping. The break was an excellent chance to rest weary legs, and to replenish our bodies reserves with some much needed snacks. After the rest of the adventuring party had congregated, we were able to continue our trek up the taller and harsher of the two peaks.

Mist, rain, and driving wind plagued the YAG for the entirety of this second leg of the journey, due to a lack of timber on the upper peak. Still, by grace all were triumphant in the attempt. Many will expend much effort to conquer natural obstacles to prove themselves, and to assert their power, skill, and dominance. It is thus much to the contrary that this author returns from his trek exhausted and more convinced than ever of human frailty, and our smallness in this world. Still, we persevered and emerged victorious from our adventure, a little colder and a little more damp, but stronger than we were before.

As all triumphant adventurers returning from a hard journey, it was then time for us to have a feast. The Young Adult Group – freshly dried from our ordeal – met at Brother Brian and Sister Melissa's house with the eminently generous Takashi to learn how to make our own sushi. The warmth of fellowship, not to mention indoor heating, was welcome respite. Much warmer was the wasabi paste prepared by Brother Brian. We were blessed to be able to enjoy each other's company, and the nourishment we shared as we broke bread with our family in Christ.



Youth Christmas Party

by Sister Melissa Clark

The Builders and Climbers and Lambs of Zion were both privileged to be a part of this year's Christmas party. Such joy and love abided in the Murnieks home as we ate, sang, and played. Each Builder and Lamb brought a gift to be exchanged over a Christmas story. There were plenty of festive treats to be eaten and laughs to be shared. Instead of the traditional ginger bread house from a box, Deanne made ginger bread dough so the youth could create their own houses. Each of the youth decided to make churches and other religious objects. I'm very thankful for the fellowship that was shared and for the time that was spent in preparation for this event. I cannot wait for the time when we are all able to meet once again!



Christmas Caroling 2014

by Sister Cessaries Galusha

Twenty-seven saints gathered in fellowship last December to go caroling in Zionit! Delicious sandwiches, cocoa and sweets were provided at Brian and Melissa Herren's home as we prepared to enjoy the crisp evening, singing many of our favorite carols from house to house. We had new song sheets to use, with a few songs not heard before, and many of our traditional classics. The residents of the homes were so generous in donating food to the Marion-Polk County Food Share, and we toted wagons and wheel barrows to collect their offerings. All together the total food donated was around 243 pounds! The children were the most excited in our group, running up to ring the doorbells and bringing back the food they found. They even did a lot of the song requesting! It was a joyous time to be together, and remember our Savior's birth.

Christmas Tree Deliveries

by Sister Dorothy Herren

Saturday, December 6th dawned cold with a chance of rain predicted. LRS members: Melissa Herren, Carla Livingston, Traci Scuito, Cessaries Galusha and Dorothy Herren met at Melissa's house at 10 am. After making sure all the necessary tools were loaded and trees were secure, we were ready to go. With a prayer for safe travel, we headed north to Gervais. The first tree was pulled to the tailgate, the stump trimmed, stand attached, cords binding the tree cut, and the tree given a good shake. The tree was received with much appreciation. After a brief visit and a prayer, we headed south to Jefferson where we were greeted by a chorus of dogs (I think they were barking Christmas carols for us loud and strong).

Then, we were off to Albany. As we prepared to trim the trunk on this tree, instead of taking turns cutting the stump as we had before, Traci suggested that two of us could cut it together with one on each end of the saw. Because of the innovation of our own small but effective cross-cut saw, the rest of the deliveries were far easier. From Albany we headed to Stayton while enjoying our sack lunches on the go. We finished delivering the last of the trees in Salem.

We were blessed with clear weather for all the deliveries (unlike our adventures last year in the snow and ice), with no traffic jams, and there were joyful recipients.

Wreath Making Fundraiser

by Sister Trina Herren

Year after year the youth come together to create beautiful 18-inch wreaths to put on display in as many homes as possible. It seems the wreaths sell themselves at this point, and the desire for them has increased to an all-time high. With a combined effort from 9 youth, 9 adults, 5 evenings and lots of supplies, 169 wreaths were assembled. The sound of Christmas hymns being sung and the joy that is had as we gather together with one common goal is something I look forward to each year. Thank you to all who chose to display one of these amazing round rings full of hard work and dedication. I would like to give a special thank you to Jim Clark for his undying dedication to the yearly project and many hours spent in a cold garage helping teach the newcomers, and the Trammells for the use of tables, clippers, materials, and the always needed heater, and thank you to all the women who helped assemble the bows.



Our Lord is never-ending, and our foundation is much like the ring we begin with. He is the same today, tomorrow, and always, as is the process in which the job is completed. Yet the end result is a unique masterpiece handcrafted by one who cares. The dedication to make each ring special in its own right is a characteristic to be absorbed from those around to use in a later light. Our Lord is so gracious and takes care of His children in such magnificent ways. The funds raised are being put toward the cost of camp at which many souls have received testimony, which has caused them to come to Christ more fully, as well as learning to give much of themselves to allow others to see the very same light given to them. I look forward to hearing the stories and testimonies gained from camp this year. May the Lord continue to bless this flock and uphold us through every trial that may come our way.

Concepts from Africa 2014

by Brother Vitaliy Surov

“Hey, so if I scheduled a day, or a retreat, where we would have more class oriented activities, instead of swimming or volleyball, would you guys be interested?” asked Kevin Herren during reunion in August. On December 6th, 2014 six souls from Oregon set out to gain a taste of the ministry we have heard about in retreats far away, like in Africa. Their destination was not set on Kenya, Egypt, or Tanzania. They were not seeking to visit a restaurant with an African cuisine, nor awaiting to speak with someone from Africa. Instead, their desired location sat in Washington, at the Vancouver Restoration Branch. In Africa, youth camps are held once a year, kids attend, and all who are present grow closer to God, just as in America. But, in Africa, youth camps contain hours and hours of class, every day. So, to receive a taste of a day at an African youth camp, four youth would be taught by two priesthood members for seven hours over the course of a day. It was a day I will never forget, and I hope you can understand the greatness of this day within these few words. We set out for Vancouver in the morning, and the hour drive there was filled with anticipation. We had been fasting for two days prior, broke bread together before we left, and just knew that God was with us. Once we arrived, we prayed before entering the church building, got situated, and then began our concepts from Africa retreat. Kevin Herren began the classes, and taught about the Sermon on the Mount. We read through Matthew 6 and 7, and Kevin and Brian Herren answered questions we had along the way. Humbleness, affliction, being a light, zero contention, and prayer were a few things that Kevin expounded upon. After lunch, we began our second set of classes, which Brian Herren taught. He presented a “Missionaries Guide” on PowerPoint, explaining how Christ has placed His true church upon the earth, and then spoke he about Zion, her future. In the missionary guide, the apostasy of the church was covered (beginning with Old Testament prophecies), then warnings from Peter and Paul, Revelation 14, and finally how the Restoration came about, fulfilling Old and New Testament scripture. It all fits together!!!! He taught us the structure of the Church and how the gospel gifts have returned to men. On Zion, we read Alfred White’s vision, and the excitement we had was incredible!!! I can’t explain the bonds that I felt that day with the youth. The last slide on the missionaries guide had pictures of us four youth, and Brian spoke of the last days, and how excited he was for the next generation of men and women to rise up, to stand steadfast, and to proclaim the word of God. As I looked around, I saw three youth who were listening attentively, and had fire in their heart. As I looked around, I saw a glimpse of the generation Brian awaits and another generation that will teach us. I realized that the prophets saw this evil time, where nation would war against nation, where earthquakes would shake the earth, where men’s hearts would fail, and where right would be wrong and wrong would be right. However, I also realize that the prophets saw God’s kingdom, God’s Spirit, the rising up of a generation, and the awakening of Zion. We had 7 hours of class that day. Those 7 hours weren’t boring, nor were they dissatisfying. We loved it!!!! From all that I learned that day, one thing that really stood out to me was that we were filled from classes. Not to discount playful activities, for activities allow bonds to form, but there was a fulfillment from the classes that activities could never fill. In Africa, the kids love youth camps. They love to have classes, and before that day, it would seem strange to me. However, now I believe I understand a little bit of their love for learning and being taught. That day, I believe to have tasted just a drop of what the African youth feast upon, and caught a tiny glimpse of the sunrise that begins to peek over this generation.

