



# Pulse of the Congregation

June, 2017



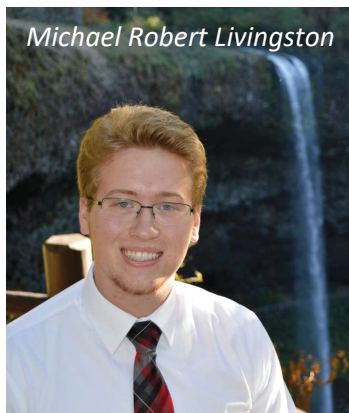
*by Brother Gary Livingston and Sister Cessaries Galusha*

Congratulations to our 2017 graduates! Sydni Williams and Michael Livingston have successfully completed their high school degree, and Travis Clark recently finished his BS degree from Oregon State University! They are all off and running into the next chapter of their lives. May God bless them as they seek His will in their lives; we are excited to see where they go!

Sydni says that she has always wanted to be a nurse. Up until recently, she had plans to attend Boise State University to pursue nursing as her major field of study. Her plans got changed when she was approached by the Air National Guard with an opportunity to enlist with them to train in nursing at the Klamath Falls Air Base. This fall she is planning to attend Boot Camp after which she will attend a tech/med school. It will be there that Sydni will learn the skills they will need for her to be a nurse on base. As she is attending school with them, she will be earning college credit towards her major and will end up becoming a certified EMT. She will also be receiving clinic hours during this time. Sydni will finish up sometime before August of 2018 and then she plans on attending Boise State University for the 2018-2019 school year.



*Sydni Marie Williams*



*Michael Robert Livingston*

Michael spent his last two years in high school alternating between attending North Salem High School and Career Technical Education Center (CTEC). While attending CTEC, he was introduced to a number of skills which sparked his interests. Some of these included welding, drafting, machining as well as other metal fabrication skills. He has especially developed an interest in machining and will be pursuing that field when he attends Chemeketa Community College in the fall. As a result of maintaining a high grade point average throughout high school, Michael has qualified for the Oregon Promise Scholarship as well as Chemeketa Scholars which will pay for his tuition for the upcoming 2017-2018 school year.

Travis now has a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Oregon State University. He graduated in April 2017, and he and his wife, Maddy, have been blessed with a new home in Zionit, as well as a wonderful job in his field of study! The testimony of these blessings can be found in following articles of this newsletter. The Lord has smiled upon him and he truly gives Him all the glory for His hand in his life.



*Travis Scott Clark*

## Upcoming Events:

- July 7-9: Congregational Camping
- July 11: LRS meal preparation for Reunion
- July 20-22: Garage Sale
- July 24-30: Regional Reunion
- July 30-Aug. 5: Youth Camp
- August 20: Baptismal Service



## Philippine Mission Reflections

by Sister Deanne Murnieks

*Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*

Psalms 29:2

God is always so good in the way that He knows our hearts and gives us beautiful gifts according to our individual needs and desires. On May 15, 2017, Charles, Donovan and I were blessed to travel to the Philippines to visit with the Saints on the island of Mindanao. While we were there we were able to hold 6 different youth camps for over 600 youth, along with their parents, representing almost 40 branches from across the island. We had a wonderful time sharing the truth of the Gospel and how God has provided the very best plan for our lives when we follow His laws surrounding the covenant of marriage. We were able to travel with Elders Dan Brotherton, Jim Bailey, Michael Vick, Steve Ferguson, and Roger Graybill from the Center Place. Brother Dan travels to the Philippines four times a year and is very active in the work that is being accomplished in that part of the Lord's vineyard. I, especially, had been desiring to be able to do some "missionary" work for the Lord for some time, when the possibility arose for us to travel to Taiwan as a family. But those plans never really materialized, as it is evident now that the Lord had other plans for us. Then, in December 2016, Frank Van Fleet called and told us about the True Love Waits youth camps AAIM was planning to present in the Philippines in May. We had some initial hesitation because of some scheduling conflicts for Ginger. But after some thought and much prayer, it seemed like the Lord had really put our hands to this work. My husband is a gifted teacher. He is very enthusiastic and always trying to engage students in thought provoking and interesting ways. Besides his natural teaching talents, this particular camp needed to be shortened from a 15-20 hour weekend seminar format that is used in the states, to about 3 hours of class materials, because of the time constraints we would be under in the Philippines, as well as the necessity of a translator that would naturally lengthen our presentations. The reorganization of the classes was right down Charles' alley, and he was easily able to cut the classes down to a manageable size that still conveyed all the most necessary information. And his teaching style kept the students spellbound...despite the sometimes awkwardness of the topic!

Elder Jim Bailey headed our team. He has done a lot of work in the church as a family counselor, and his wisdom and love provided great leadership in the overall direction of our classes. By his encouragement, we focused on the love of our Heavenly Father as the main focus of our purity classes. It is because of our Father's love that He has provided such an excellent plan for love and marriage to be

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## Philippine Mission Reflections

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a blessing to our lives. His wife, Becky, and daughter, Angela, also helped a great deal in preparing rings and medallions to give to the young men and women as a token of their purity covenant.

Donovan was also an important member of our team! He, with his youthful zeal, made quick friends of all those we met, and his love of basketball didn't hurt either. He provided the majority of the object lessons in each of our classes, lending support for our message as one of their peers. Because of his young age, he was able to minister to the youth there in a way that none of the rest of us could have. Also, as the only female on the trip, I was blessed to be "Mama" to 600 precious youth that week. What a blessing!

In thinking of how I might possibly describe our trip, the only word I can possibly use is "beautiful". Our time in the Philippines was absolutely beautiful! There was a perfect peace that surrounded us everywhere we went. All of our needs were completely met by our Heavenly Father before we were even aware that the need existed. He went before us in everything we did. We lacked for nothing. We were protected from harm, and provided health, strength, and rest even when those conditions were unlikely to exist. We were provided hours in the day when there weren't enough to accomplish everything that was necessary. Since the actual attendance was more than double that which we were expecting, we ran out of supplies more than once. But not a single youth went without. The Lord always provided just the right amount for that day, and adequate time that night for restocking of supplies! Once when our van broke down, He provided food for us while we waited. Remarkably, the other vans ended up also traveling to our location that day, even though this was not the original plan, providing us a ride the rest of the way. Even though we were extremely late to our destination that day, both because of the long trip and the car trouble, the Lord miraculously allowed us to finish our material on time so that we could still leave early in the evening. This was an important concern, both because of our broken wheel and because of the security issues on the island at that time. He is always so good to us.

It goes without saying, that the people there are also absolutely beautiful, in heart and soul. They are precious and caring, with a love for and a devotion to the Lord that is uncommon even among the Saints. They have such light in their eyes and in their spirits. They are diligent in their work for the Lord, even after toiling a full day's work. They are eager to learn and serve in any way they can. The topic for our classes had been chosen deliberately because of there being some evidence of a lack of understanding in this area. And often this topic of purity before marriage might not be viewed with much interest by teenagers, but the youth in the Philippines embraced the camps eagerly. They were happy to be learning the Word of God and gaining a better understanding of His truth for their lives, no matter what the topic.

We have all been changed by the beauty of their hearts, by their diligent devotion to the Lord's work, by their eagerness to learn His laws and apply them to their lives. There is so much more to say, I can't possibly write it all. But I am just so thankful to my Lord for His blessings and provisions and for allowing us to do this work for Him. I can never repay Him for His goodness.





## My Testimony of the Philippines

*by Brother Donovan Murnieks*

This past May, I was blessed to go on a mission trip to the Philippines with Brothers Dan Brotherton, Steve Ferguson, Mike Vick, and Jim Bailey, and my wonderful family. We were presenting the True Love Waits seminar to the youth there. We were very blessed while we were there and I was touched by the people's joy and hunger for the gospel. It was a humbling experience.

One of my favorite things was fellowshipping with the youth there and developing friendships with them. Every village has a basketball court...although they were much different than the basketball courts we have here. Often they were just an area of flat dirt with a makeshift backboard and hoop. I've played with many kids who have much more equipment and training than they do, but none of them love to play as much as the kids in the Philippines. This provided a good way to get to know them better, to develop friendships, and to witness to those who weren't actually attending the camp.

I was also very thankful for the fellowship I could have with my fellow missionaries at meals and in the van as we travelled to various locations. Though the van rides were not the most comfortable....and even less safe...every day I looked forward to that part of the day. We had great conversations, I got to know my brothers and sisters very well, and we laughed a little too! One of the brothers would often say, jokingly, "In this van, we'll laugh together, cry together, and we might die together!" It truly was a wonderful experience.

I am thankful that the Lord was with us and that we had zero complications. I look forward to returning one day. I am thankful for the experience, and I encourage all those who are interested in mission work to pray about an opportunity to serve in that capacity.



## Nepal and India Missions Trip

*by Brother Brian Herren*

Brothers Doug Smith, Lyle Smith, and myself will travel to Nepal and India to serve a missions trip. A central focus of the journey will be to provide a priesthood retreat so that the church leadership in these remote areas continue to learn the basic principles underlying the ordinances and sacraments of the Church, the nature of priesthood authority, the scriptural mandates pertaining to shepherding the flocks, and the important distinctions of the Restored Gospel. While it is true that the Church has native priesthood in some foreign fields, it is equally true that significant ongoing ministry remains necessary for their development and for the prosperity of the flocks around the world. A dim and uninformed view supposes the need for missions to be small in places where some priesthood may already serve, but a more enlightened understanding respects a great, great need for ongoing missions in these isolated portions of the Lord's vineyard.

In addition to the priesthood retreat in Nepal, we plan to travel to more rural areas of Nepal and India to introduce the Restored Gospel to those who have not heard the angel message, whereby the mission field might be pressed further and her borders enlarged. We pray that seeds might be sown for future harvests in the more remote corners of the present work.

In Nepal, 93% of the population is religious, but only 0.4% of the population is Christian. Most are Buddhists and Hindu. The need is great, and the persecution of Christians is growing some. On account of the recent changes in the Indian government, Nepal has made Christian proselyting against the law. We have been asked to wear plain clothing and not carry many books. It remains legal to support the existing community, but a close eye is kept to guard against the growth of Christ's church there. To complicate life for our brothers and sisters in Nepal, a terrible earthquake in 2015 destroyed much of the infrastructure making some of the roads impassable and bringing down buildings that had stood for centuries. Entire villages were reduced to ruin. Let's pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in Nepal and India, and pray for those who might join them in common bonds as the kingdom goes forth.





## Blessing in Travel

by Brother Brian Herren

The Evangelism Council of the Colbern Restoration Branch in Independence, Missouri invited me to preach a four sermon series over a five day stay this year, April 22-26. Melissa and I traveled in time to witness Brother Adam and Sister Honey Brendel's wedding ceremony at Buckner Restoration Branch. It was tender and moving as Brother Dan Brotherton officiated the worship filled service. Brother Stu and Sister

Milee Gage hosted our stay in Independence and they offered such a beautiful and comforting ministry in their home that they brought the peace of the kingdom to our daily walk. From the Gage's home, we were able to walk to the Temple Lot, view the Joseph Smith III home, visit the stone church, and spend time in quiet worship. Our visit to Independence was blessed as we spent each day fellowshiping with the Saints, and preaching in the evenings. It is encouraging to see all that is good that is happening in the Center Place, and to witness a diverse congregation as hundreds turned out to hear the sermons that continued throughout the week. There were Saints from different branches, different conferences, and different parts of the world in attendance as we worshipped the Lord together.

I was afforded a second unique and marvelous trip this summer. Melissa, Cessaries, and I were blessed to travel to the Missionary Reunion in Lamoni, Iowa, July 18-24. Sister Cessaries was invited to serve as the choir director, and I was invited to preach the opening evening service at the Shaw Center at Graceland University. It was a very great honor to me to have been asked and I felt very small amongst the brethren who assembled there that night. Missionaries that I look up to from around the world had returned from their various posts to bring testimony of God's Kingdom going forth. I was especially impressed by the deep and substantive classes at the reunion, the quality of the sermons, the spirit filled testimonies, and the communion we shared in the Holy Ghost. Each day began with priesthood worship at 6:15 a.m. To sit with those men and worship God at their side was a rich blessing that only heaven can afford. I would have shrunk into my chair, but for their constant invitation to stand as one of them and enjoy the common bonds of discipleship. The days were filled, and without idleness, before ending with preaching and much needed respite in the halls of Walker Dormitory.

On Monday of reunion, Brothers Richard Neill and Brian Mundy escorted a small group for a special tour of the Joseph Smith III home in Lamoni, and the nearby cemetery. The experience was beautiful. As we wandered through the cemetery looking upon the headstones of some of the church's greatest missionaries and pioneers, Brother Richard Neill shared testimonies from the lives of those stalwart men and women. I was humbled and touched by the Holy Spirit in a way that renewed my commitment to dig deeper in my service to God and the promulgation of the precious work entrusted to our care. Brother Richard Neill preached the Monday evening service. The following day, Brothers Richard and Brian exhibited articles of church history they had acquired in connection with their purchase of the Joseph Smith III home in Independence. The articles included Brother Joseph Smith III's 1860 copy of the Bible, and several other rare gems. We were not really supposed to touch some of the more fragile parts of the collection, but who could resist laying a finger lightly upon such an important relic of Restoration history?!?!? Melissa adored the many children of the reunion and took to them as a mother does her own. I think the Lord smiled upon her in her ministry as she gave place to those so dear to the kingdom. In song, Sister Cessaries led a very skilled and powerful choir into the registers of angelic song. It was an easy place to become tearful for joy, and a hard place to leave.

The Missionary Reunion humbled me, encouraged us, inspired us, and renewed our hope in Christ that He is alive and working within His church. The unrelenting concerns of the fractious nature of the Church seemed a small dilemma in the presence of such a Mighty Savior. Surely, if He can rise from the grave and come triumphantly from His throne, He can heal the wounds of His prideful folds and bring again His Zion upon the earth. May God bless us in the sweet and holy Spirit which has built my faith this year in the blessings of my travels.

*So be ye encouraged and press on to the consummation designed of God for this people—  
unity, honor, sanctification, and glory. Amen.*

*Joseph Smith III. Lamoni, Iowa, April 18, 1909*

# Gifts of Employment

*By Sister Maddy Clark*



I think Travis and I both expected on some level that it could take a while for us to get the jobs we wanted, that we would have to work in some places we didn't quite like, or places we didn't want to stay in forever. This is the reality for a majority of college graduates, even those with degrees that are highly sought after in the market, such as Accounting, and even more so for highly specialized degrees that might require more training after college, like Microbiology. However, Travis and I have found ourselves to be unbelievably blessed in our positions. Not only did we get jobs quickly after graduating from college, but we got jobs in our chosen career field, and jobs that could likely end up being the careers we hold for the rest of our lives.

When I decided to major in Microbiology, I was at a point in my life where my relationship with Christ had only just started, and I didn't know that this sort of decision was something that should be prayed over and thought over liberally. I chose micro because it was fun and I liked my classes, which is an understatement, not because I was guaranteed a job when I graduated, or because there was a plethora of options for me. The problem with something like a B.S. in Microbiology, is that it's pretty specific, almost too specific. There was no one to tell me that maybe I should take time to consider what I would do beyond my degree, what jobs were available, the extreme likelihood that I would have to go back to school for my masters or an equivalent form of study. I had no plans, other than to finish my degree. So, finish I did. As the list of required courses I had left to complete my degree grew shorter, the more I found myself relying on Christ to see me through the troubles that college provided.

I graduated in June of 2016 with a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology and a minor in Chemistry, and absolutely no job prospects. Two weeks later, Travis and I were married, and my free time was suddenly overwhelming. I began to pray consistently as I surfed the web for jobs that might be interesting. Anything that would help to pay the bills. I applied at Oregon Freeze Dried and didn't get a call for an interview. I applied to several paid research positions at OHSU, for any science related job I could think of. Finally, I applied at OSU's Veterinary Teaching Hospital for a position as a receptionist. I had connections at the Vet School and used them, thinking that it would be an easy-in. I got a call for an interview, went in a week later, and sat at a table in front of a group of highly educated and complete strangers, and answered every question as honestly as I could. It seemed to go well, I liked them, and it seemed like they liked me. I never heard back from them.

Disheartened, I returned to my job search. Nearly two months had passed since I had graduated, and still there was no job. I continued to pray and so did Travis. We both knew that it would be okay, that as long as we had faith in our Heavenly Father, we would be provided for in whatever ways we needed. Then, in August, I applied for an entry-level position at Salem Hospital. I got a call for an interview a couple of weeks later. At the interview I then was told that I would hear back within a few weeks about the outcome. I don't remember exactly how long it was, but I didn't hear back until the beginning of September. As it turns out, the position I have at Salem Health has been a blessing to both Travis and I in more ways than I can count. Not only am I allowed to pick up extra shifts so that I work full time, and am encouraged to do so by my boss, I find myself enjoying the extra time I spend there. I can work as much or as little, between 30 and 40+ hours a week, as I want. Beyond the money and the hours though, I have found myself even closer to my career goals. Sometime in the year previous, I had decided that I would like to apply to OIT and become a Medical Laboratory Scientist, but I knew that it would cost a lot of money and take even more time. This has been a huge obstacle for me since I started working at Salem Health; would it be wise for me to go back to school? Could we even afford it? Would it even be good stewardship of the time that I had been given?

Not long afterwards a co-worker resigned, and her full time position, with the hours I really liked. opened up and I decided that school could wait. If it was in my future, then God would make the path to it clear, if not, then there would be something else for me. I applied for the full-time position and everyone thought that I would get it because it was very similar to the shift I already worked and there weren't many other people who had the experience working the shift as I did. Once again, God reminded me who is really in control of our lives. Despite how badly I wanted that job, I didn't get it. Then, something astonishing happened. One of the Microbiology Technicians approached me and asked if I would be interested in doing a program through the hospital to be trained as a microbiology tech. This--this is what I had been waiting, hoping, and praying for: the opportunity to use my degree, to be useful to society, and to continue to learn. Now, I understand why I didn't get the job at Oregon Freeze Dried, or the

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## Gifts of Employment

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one I was desperate for at the Vet School, or even the full-time position in my department. It made sense. It's going to be a slow process, years in the works likely, but for now I am happy with the job I have, and even happier that the Lord allowed me to be placed in a company that will help provide for my dream job.

Travis's story is dramatically different. While I was working at Salem Health, he was still in school completing his own Bachelor of Science in Accounting, and working part time on campus as a student accountant. He began his job search much sooner than I had the year before, and prayed continually. His faith is so much deeper and stronger than mine. We both prayed over the matter, hoping that he would get a job not just that would be interesting, but that would provide for him the things he wanted most; a 9-5, Monday through Friday career. He wanted the ability to have weekends, Sundays in particular, off, and the evenings too, so that he would be free for Prayer and Testimony Service and other family gatherings. He wanted a job that would provide for his new family, and something that would get better for us over time. He applied to several jobs and received several rejection letters, each more disappointing than the last.

There was one in particular that I recall him mentioning over and over again with the State of Oregon in Salem. It made sense; it was a good job, good benefits, close to his family, and closer to my parents than Corvallis, and made even more sense as we planned to move to Salem when our lease was up at the apartment. While I was working, he was praying. And then the email came. He didn't get the job. What a blow this was for the both of us. I continued to remind him almost daily that things would work out, that everything would be okay, that we were in God's hands, and that He would care for us. It was something that we had both needed reminding about while job searching. Not long after, he had a phone interview for a position at Oregon State in the BEBC, the Business and Engineering Business Center. He was nervous before and after and didn't feel like it went as well as it could have. We continued in prayer and then he got an official interview. After the interview there was still some hesitancy about the position; Travis received an email saying that they were still considering all the applicants, but they had really liked him. I think we both took it as something else, as a possible way of letting Travis know that he wasn't quite right for the job, but as it turns out, the email meant what it said. They liked him and he got the job.

Job searching is a reminder that we need to have two things with us at all times; faith and patience. Patience to wait until the right job comes to us, and faith knowing that God will help us when we need it most. To me it feels as if I went an eternity without a job, but it was barely four months. Travis and I made it through, with his full time summer position, the comfort found in each other, and most importantly, a foundation in Christ.

## Saints Working Together

*by Sister Dorothy Herren*

Thursday evening on June 29th was clear and warm when more than a dozen saints climbed onto Brother Ron and Sister Dorothy's roof, to finish tearing off the old roof, removing millions of staples and ripping up the tar paper. Then they worked on the next step; laying down the "gator skin" paper and stapling it in place.

By Friday evening the roofing had been delivered and the job of laying the roof tiles began. The Lambs not only provided scrumptious sandwiches, chips and lemonade/iced tea, but they entertained the workers with numerous camp songs. The Builders and Climbers were tasked to pick up debris around the house, with the help of the Lambs, they swept the concrete surfaces and made sure no staples or nails were left laying around. There were so many dedicated eager Saints on hand that they were able to share the task. Nearly the entire back roof was completed by the time tired bodies were ready to call it a day.

Saturday, work on the front of the roof began under cloudy skies. Again, there was no shortage of enthusiastic workers present which allowed for the work to be spread out and completed efficiently. The roof was finished by 4:00 pm to the relief and gratitude of all. God truly blessed us with great weather, strong bodies, willing souls and an abundance of fellowship.



# Lives Beginning Under the Direction of Our Heavenly Father

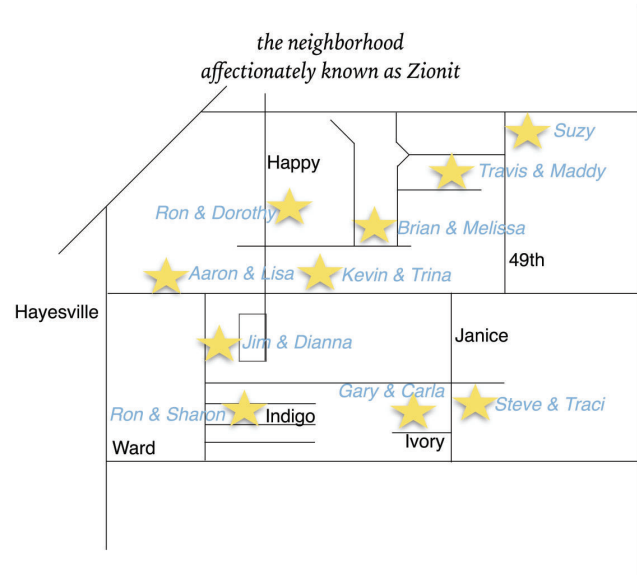
by Brother Jim Clark

After marrying last June, Travis and Maddy Clark have resided in Corvallis, Oregon as Travis finished his Bachelor of Science in Accounting degree at Oregon State University. Upon completion of her Bachelor of Science in Microbiology degree last year, Maddy was blessed with employment by the Salem Hospital. Within a month of his graduation Travis was offered an accounting position with Oregon State University. Surely the Lord has blessed them tremendously. As they begin their married life together they have moved into their first home on Rawhide Court in Salem, just a couple blocks from Brian and Melissa Herren. This is also within walking distance of nine Saints' homes in Salem as well.

While Travis and Maddy were preparing to move in, Aaron and Lisa Dukes were preparing to move out of the home they had been renting on Rawhide. They desired to stay within the area, close to so many of the Saints, and their employers Garmin, and Marion County Courts respectively. As they searched for their first home, recent escalation of home values combined with scarcity of homes available made it seem as if they might have to look elsewhere within the city. Homes being sold received multiple offers and it was difficult to have an offer accepted. After many prayers, while Lisa was traveling to work one morning, she noticed a home for sale. Inquiring immediately, it having just been put up for sale, theirs was the first offer, which was then accepted.

A double blessing was realized as Travis and Maddy were welcomed back into the area, while Aaron and Lisa were able to stay close within walking distance to work for Lisa, as well as unto so many of the Saints. Both are now actively engaged settling in and preparing the homes their Heavenly Father has provided for them.

How great is the goodness and power of our Heavenly Father? He has provided for these two couples just beginning their lives together and they have responded seeking His will in all they would do. Many are blessed through their gifts, talents, and desire to serve. We are excited to discover the future He has in store, and so very thankful for the tremendous blessings which have already been bestowed. Even as His hand is made manifest amongst His people, we rejoice in such blessings with all praise and glory unto our God. Surely all have been blessed with the addition of these homes and the new families which shall reside within them.



## Birthday Celebrations!

by Sister Cessaries Galusha

On the evening of June 6th, many saints gathered together at the home of Kevin and Trina Herren to praise God for the lives and birthdays celebrated for the month of June. Particularly, we remembered our Brother Walt Rennick, who is strong of health and countenance and turned 95 on June 1st! Other June birthdays include: Melissa Clark, Michael Livingston, Jim Clark, Deanne Murnieks and Suzy Herren. It was a beautiful evening and we shared some of Walt's favorite pie and ice cream. Each life celebrated this day has been more of a blessing than can be expressed. The gifts of God manifested in each one have been abundantly cherished and recognized by the body, for we know that each one has gifts like no other, and all are needed in making the body whole and working to its capacity.



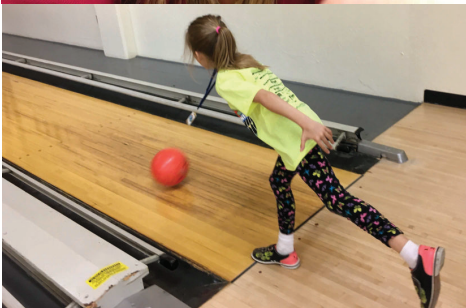


## Builders Bowling

by Sister Lisa Dukes

In April we had planned to have a team building field day for the youth to grow together as a group. However, due to inclement weather, we decided to move the activity indoors and had the youth compete as a team against Kevin Herren and myself. The game was bowling, and Kevin and I brought our "A" game to the lanes. After our first game, Kevin and I decided that there needed to be some goal or award for winning. So it was decided that if the youth won, they would get ice cream. If the commissioners won, they would eat vegetables while we ate ice cream. The youth learned a valuable lesson that nothing unifies a group more than a common goal; and they won! Unity amongst the saints is important, whether it be while fixing the roof of one of the saints' homes, making hard business decisions, or bowling for ice cream.

*We are one in the Spirit, We are one in the Lord,  
We are one in the Spirit, We are one in the Lord,  
And we pray that all Unity may one day be restored,  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love!  
Yes they will know that we are Christians by our Love.*



## Mother's Day Dinner

by Sister Melissa Herren

On the evening of May 12, 2017, eight mothers gathered at the home of Brian and Melissa Herren for a delicious dinner of beef stew over creamy mashed potatoes, accompanied by a fresh green salad and completed with a homey caramel apple cake. While we dined on our dinner, we had laughter, lively discussions and were treated to some of Sister Jean Trammell's stories of her youth. It is wonderful to hear how she was blessed and given wisdom as a young woman. She is truly a gem. After we had finished our dinner, and were about to part ways, Sister Valentina Surova began inspecting the piano, sat down and spontaneously played three beautiful pieces for our listening pleasure! What a surprise and blessing to hear her talent put forth that night! Thank you Brother Brian for preparing such a nice meal for us. We look forward to our gathering next year! Thank you, Father in Heaven for the gift of motherhood and the tie that binds us!



## Lambs Bowling

by Sister Deanne Murnieks

In early May, I was blessed to be able to attend a bowling outing with the Lambs of Zion. Their exuberance and love of the Lord is always a joy to be around. The thing that impressed me the most about spending this day with them, however, was the beautiful way that they encouraged one another and cheered one another on. They were not competitive with one another at all, as children can sometimes be in these situations, but were impressed by and positive about one another's accomplishments. They helped one another with strategy about how to overcome the challenges we sometimes face in bowling. They cheered when these challenges were overcome, and consoled and encouraged one another when they were not. In many ways we can learn a lot from them. Our journey and struggles in life are individual in many ways, but reaching Zion is not a race. We will succeed or fail in this endeavor together. What light can be seen in the youngest amongst us...of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

## Lessons from the Rock Boxx

by Brother Kevin Herren



*Whoso comes in at the gate and climbs up by me shall never fall: wherefore blessed are they of whom I have spoken, for they shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy. – Sec. 36:10h*

In the end of March the Builders and Climbers gathered together around the breakfast table in the Murnieks' home and shared in nourishment for both body and spirit. There we worshipped, and it was shared how the Lord calls us to climb, that we must overcome the obstacles in our lives which will otherwise hinder our walk with God. If we are not willing to overcome difficulties, if we will not put in the effort required to climb the mountain, then we shall never reach the summit of the mountain of God where He waits patiently for us. We shared from the scriptures where God called Moses and others out of their dwelling place and up to the top of a mountain to meet with Him.

After taking nourishment we were off to the Rock Boxx, which is a rock climbing gym. For most of us it was our first time at the Rock Boxx, and first time rock climbing at all. The beginner boulder was immediately surrounded as we at first stared and encouraged others to try it. It did not take long, however, before we were all seeking greater levels of difficulty and greater challenges to meet. As we climbed and grew in confidence and ability we grew in victory. Led on by the encouraging shouts from below we stretched, twisted, reached and muscled our way higher and higher. It was a good way to explore and continue to ponder the idea of climbing past the stumbling blocks which are in our path. At first we stare at them in disbelief; often convincing ourselves it is impossible. Before long we have overcome the simple and have become confident enough to face greater challenges. When we see our brothers and sisters working to overcome challenges in their lives we can give encouragement by the way. Before long we find joy and fellowship in the difficulties, not because they were fun to go through, but because we have gained victory in spite of the difficulties and have gained a greater confidence in the abilities that God has placed in us.

When the day was finished, I reflected how the obstacles which kept us still in the beginning were not worthy to be counted as an obstacle at all by the end. I thought how the youth grew so much in their ability and courage so rapidly. As we meet difficulties and are not deterred, but face them head on, we will find a strength that we never knew we possessed, and God will be glorified by our victory.

## Principles Put Into Practice

by Brother Brian Herren



For nearly a year now we have been studying the Doctrine and Covenants in the Sunday evening class. Of the scripture recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, God has said, "Behold, I am God, and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding." (D/C 1:5a) This scripture has been fulfilled many times in the sense that we have grown in our understanding considerably through the prayerful study of this book. The class has not only been an intellectual exercise, but the Holy Spirit has worked upon our hearts as we have considered the principles of Zionite living. We have grown closer and closer in charity, and, in many ways, we

have come to be of one heart and one mind as a family in Christ. Recently, while studying the principles of stewardship in greater depth, several felt prompted that they should give of their surplus in order to relieve others of their debt. We have begun applying this principle by starting out very small as we work together to help those who are in the class to get out of credit card debt. It may seem a small matter to many, but as we are studying the principles contained within the Doctrine and Covenants as a class, we are trying to practice them in our fellowship as well. Sometimes great things are born of small starts, and we are excited to see how exercising these basic principles will grow beyond the burgeoning seedling. We feel to thank God for His unifying hand at work amongst us, and to praise Him for the light which is come by His Son. If any are interested in joining us, it is never too late to join the class. The Doctrine and Covenants class is held each Sunday evening at Steve and Traci Scuito's home at 6:00 pm. We have also started sharing in potlucks regularly, the second Sunday of each month at 5:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to come and study together, and to enjoy the fruits of the Spirit that attend our communion.





# SPARTAN RACE

YOU'LL KNOW AT THE FINISH LINE

## Strengthening the Body

*by Sister Melissa Clark*

The YAG was extremely blessed to travel to Idaho and participate in the Spartan race together. We had a great reunion Friday evening with those who had been in Missouri and we decided to travel to the course to see what was ahead of us. As we looked at a few of the obstacles, some realized the task was not going to be easy. That night we all drank a cup of protein and listened to those more experienced on how to go about some of the obstacles. As we awoke and drove to the course the next morning, we all felt blessed. We were able to watch the elites go through the course until finally it was our turn. We did a little Zion cheer and decided to all stay together. It was really amazing to participate with the group as we were all able to help each other in different ways. It made me come to a greater understanding of how in the church we all have different strengths and weaknesses. We must always be willing to help our brother beside us through whatever trials. After the race, all in attendance were able to go out to the #1 China Buffet where we gained back all the calories we burned on the challenging course. The weekend ended Sunday with a morning service brought by Brian in a beautiful place, and a long drive home. What a blessing to spend the weekend with my brothers and sisters! I patiently await another experience like it!