

The Gospel News

More Than Just a Church Building

By Brother Michael and Sister Michelle Watson

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*Happy
New
Year 2023!*



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It was Friday morning, and in just a few hours, a huge load of roof shingles was scheduled for delivery at the jobsite where we are currently constructing a new church building in Pinetop, Arizona. We needed help unloading 190 bundles of heavy shingles—and we had to unload them off a conveyor belt directly onto the roof and then lug them up to the roof's peak.

This was a job that required strength and stamina. Two brothers from our branch were able to sneak away from work for a couple of hours, but we needed a lot more help—even more help than we imagined.

On that same day, out of the blue, we got a call from a man in the community. He had planned to volunteer on our job site on Saturday but was wondering if he could come that day (Friday) instead. Of course, we said YES. He said he'd bring one of his employees along with him. One more thing—they were professional roofers!

God sent the perfect people at the perfect time to help us out of a pinch. (We got the shingles placed successfully that afternoon.) This is just one of the many times that the Lord has come through for our building project.

Who Are We, and What Are We Building?

We are the Lakeside Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ in Arizona. Brother Ike and Sister Bonnie Smith first came to this rural area in 1969 to take the Gospel to the White Mountain Apache Tribe. They were soon joined by Brother Skip and Sister Cheryl Smith, Brother Herb and Sister Shirley Hemmings, and many others who labored faithfully for over 50 years to fulfill the Divine Commission.

Sister Bonnie Smith says, "It's a new day on the mountain! We are blessed beyond measure and rejoice to see the fulfillment of a longtime dream. After 53-plus years of meeting in various homes of saints and friends, community centers, and our double-wide mobile church, our hopes of a permanent structure are coming to fruition."

The Saints Are Looking Forward to the Future

Our current church building has served us well, but it's wearing out—and maxing out at capacity.

(Continued on page 4)

MA

Revelation 21:5
And he that sat upon
the throne said,
Behold, I
make all things **NEW**.
And he said unto me,
Write: for these words
are true and faithful.

KE

Second Nephi 31:14.
...After ye have repented of
your sins,... and have
received the baptism of
fire and of the
Holy Ghost, and can speak
with a **NEW** tongue,
yea, even with the tongue
of angels,...

Mosiah 27:26.
And thus they
became **NEW** creatures;
and unless they do this,
they can in nowise inherit
the kingdom of God.

ALL

Second Corinthians 5:17
Therefore, if any man
be in Christ,
he is a **NEW** creature:
old things are passed away;
behold, all things
are become **NEW**.

TH

IN

Mormon 9:24.
And these signs shall
follow them that
believe — in my name
shall they cast out devils;
they shall speak with
NEW tongues;...

GS

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.

Third Nephi 21:24.
And then shall they
assist my people that
they may be gathered in,
who are scattered upon
all the face of the land,
in unto the
NEW Jerusalem.

NE

Psalm 98:1
O sing unto the Lord
a **NEW** song;
for he hath done
marvelous things:
his right hand,
and his holy arm,
hath gotten him
the victory.

W

BFTP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck



In 1857, One hundred and sixty-six years ago, one of the first revelations was given to President William Bickerton, saying, "I accept of you this day, as my Church to whom my Servant John was commanded to write, while in the Spirit, on the Lord's day, and to the angel of the church of Philadelphia write; these things, saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the Key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie, Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet and to know that I have loved thee, because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Revelations Chapter 3)



Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ, while working to draw Israel to Christ through efforts focused on the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America



Vision Statement

- Living and worshipping in unity and righteousness will result in the fullness of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, culminating in continuous growth of the Church and fulfillment of Christ's promises concerning His Kingdom on Earth.



“Let Him Change Your Trajectory”

By Brother Doug Obradovich

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6)

“Who?” Too often, the “Who?” concludes with blaming someone, or worse, everyone.

Pause again. Exhale. Consider your game plan. Now that you are emphasizing change and developing a growth plan through gained perspective, process all of this. Without making any rash judgments (“It can never happen”), nor quick decisions, explore your opportunities and options. Mindfully anticipate your results (“start with the end in mind”) and formulate a comprehensive plan. Once framed, share your plan with someone you’ve identified as a viable accountability partner. Secondly, find a spiritual leader who has successfully changed their trajectory, and bring them in as an added mentor.

You are now ready for your last, deliberate step in changing your trajectory, which is the most critical facet to success: relinquish control! Consider the example of John Baptist; after baptizing the lord, John spoke directly to his inner circle, and explained how his own trajectory was changing. He told them to acknowledge the Savior by shifting their allegiance to Him. He explained his impending lessening and Jesus’ upcoming expansion this way, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” But this statement had a much deeper application, as the spiritual context of this holds the secret to “Let Him change your trajectory.”

“He must increase” = more of Jesus Christ in your life

“I must decrease” = less of you (ego); submit to His Spirit

When Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” He was speaking to such change. This proactive lessening of yourself comes through downsizing or eliminating pieces and parts of you that are keeping you from fully becoming, spiritually, personally, emotionally, professionally, etc. We are each indiscriminately magnetic, as our life experiences remain with us, whether by desire or circumstance, consciously or subconsciously. Many of these are best purged (discarded), as they represent shards and fragments that bring serious negative impact, causing real harm, physically, mentally, emotionally, and/or spiritually. The deliberate release of this extra weight allows for your smoother, surer, more directed flight towards your goal(s) and vision(s).

When you lessen or eliminate these hindrances, you create the void which provides space for God’s Spirit within you. Once He makes His way in, His clarity and direction can effectively change your trajectory.

Only you can decide whether it is time to change your trajectory. It is? Then, start cleaning out...

Is it time to change your trajectory? Sometimes a cleansing confession precedes such discovery: your current trajectory is not getting you where you want to be. This need not create frustration, which is often an offspring of inactivity. Denial obstructs personal growth, so you must invite change into your life. Rather than burying your emotions, dig them up and confront them. In order to realize your gain, you absolutely must address and embrace the pain; then empower it to provide inspiration and direction. You cannot start something new until you stop something old.

Pause. Exhale. Consider your situation. Address your situation with prayer and invite God in, giving Him full access into all of your life. Trade out the stagnation of negativity and trade it with the progress of positivity. One tactic: replace negative frustrations (“I can’t...”) with positive affirmations (“I will...”), which are built upon faithful desires (“I want...”). Focus on the “What?” and the “How?” vs. the

More Than Just a Church Building

By Brother Michael and Sister Michelle Watson



Our congregation is thrilled about the soon-to-be reality of a new building on a brand-new property located on the main highway and within 2 miles of the reservation.

"Having our new church visible from the main road means a lot in a small town like ours," says Sister Rachel Cotellesse. "And it's closer to the reservation in Whiteriver. This means we are closer to those who God has called us to serve."

"I am very excited for our new church building because it's God's dwelling on the mountain," says Sister Naomi Hopkins, "And there will be room for more people to invite into the new building." Sister Naomi's testimony has brought many people through our doors and resulted in several baptisms.

"When we have a dedication, we will have the opportunity to invite family, friends, and community. I pray that a sweet, sweet spirit will permeate the hearts and minds of all who attend here," says Brother Pat King.

Sister Kathy Palensar is also looking forward to more space for visitors. "We'll have more room for all of the wonderful outreach events we have throughout the year, such as Vacation Bible School, the Fall Festival, our Ladies' Circle teas and dinners—and we'll have actual classrooms!" Sister Kathy's son, Brother Robby, says, "It will be nice to have Sunday School in a classroom instead of the kitchen."

We're Building a Building, but God Is Building Up His People

The experience of watching the building go up has been

inspiring. Sister Cheryl Smith says, "For me, I personally felt His Spirit during the day the trusses were being put in place. It was breathtaking to see the process and how the brothers were working so hard to secure them. And the ceiling is so high! I just knew that God had sent His angels to protect them. It was a beautiful sight to behold."

The building is physically beautiful due to the architectural design by Brothers Timothy and Jonathan Scolaro from the Mesa Branch. But what's even more beautiful is how the Lord is building up the congregation that will use the Church as a home base to worship and minister.

Presiding Elder Brother Emil Palensar describes how our building project has changed our branch for the better. "The building project has brought excitement. Giving is way up. Everyone is praying for the project. Also, a lot of folks in the community ask about how it's going."

When I asked Brother Dylan Palensar how he's seen God at work in the project, he remarked on how quickly it's moving along. One of the reasons why the project has progressed so speedily is because we've had many brothers and sisters from around the Church—even from as far as Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania—who have traveled here to work (and work hard). One brother spent the first month of his retirement working on our building nearly every day. The Mesa Branch in our region has been a huge support. We've even received help from other groups in the community.

In September 2022, we had nearly 20 helpers from around the Church participate in a weeklong work party. In just seven days, we framed all the exterior walls, installed a majority of the wall sheathing, and placed all the trusses.

"Sisters pitched in with drinks, lunches, and dinners. Building the Church has brought more fellowship, friendship, interaction, and vision," says Brother Pat King.

"Everyone was able to do some little thing. The help of everybody in our area, in our Church...it's just a really wonderful thing to watch," says Sister Joann Cotellesse.



(continued on page 11)

Do Bee Stings Disrupt Your Book of Mormon Faith?

By Brother Josh Gehley

My wife and I started a beach vacation several years ago with a walk along the crystal waters and powdered sand. Out of nowhere, a shooting pain fired through my foot. I had stepped on a bee. Not being allergic, the small pain did not ruin the walk, much less the vacation. My foot hurt for a minute or two, but the blessing of where I was and who I was with far outweighed my painful surprise.

Spiritually, we all too often allow petty differences and minor criticisms to take us away from the Lord and His Church. A misinterpretation of scripture, a different church's doctrine or a comment from somebody who has never even attended The Church of Jesus Christ sometimes derails saints without a sturdy backbone to their faith. A sting from the opposition might come and we forget the beauty of where the Lord plants us. Nothing should separate us from the living waters of the pure gospel and the Lord's chosen saints of the latter day.

Imagine rejecting the Word of God over one issue, which in the end isn't even an actual problem. For example, critics often levy Alma 7:10, contending it contains an obvious mistake. The scripture prophesies of the birth of Jesus Christ saying, "he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers". The presumed problem is Jesus was not born in the city of Jerusalem. He was born in Bethlehem.

Don't let this (or any) attempted sting from an unbeliever usurp your trust in the Word of God. Sure, Jesus was not born in the city of Jerusalem, but that is not what the text says. Read it again, carefully. The prophecy reports Jesus would be born in the land of Jerusalem. Bethlehem is only 8 miles from Jerusalem; could that be considered within the land of Jerusalem?

In 2012, archaeologists discovered a seal in Jerusalem mentioning Bethlehem. They reported the artifact as confirming both the existence of Bethlehem in Jesus' day and its relationship with the much larger neighboring city of Jerusalem. A series of clay tablets from Upper Egypt go even further. The clay tablets, called the Armana Letters, include engravings that state, "And now as for Jerusalem—Behold this land belongs to the king" and "But now even a town of the land of Jerusalem, Bit-Lahmi by name, a town belonging to the king, has gone over to the side of the people of Keilah." (emphasis mine) The consensus of Biblical scholars confirms Bit-Lahmi to be an early form of the New Testament's Bethlehem. Ancient authors in Egypt considered Bethlehem to be inside the land of Jerusalem.

The convergence with the Book of Mormon is astonishing. Ancient authors in the Book of Mormon affirm Jesus would be born in Jerusalem, the land of their forefathers. Archaeology confirms through ancient inscriptions from the Middle East that Bethlehem was a town inside the land of Jerusalem. This makes the Book of Mormon historically accurate beyond anyone's available knowledge from the 1820s and 30s.

What once was a sting against the Word of God now silences critics. What if we didn't have the Armana Letters? What if the bullae had never been excavated in Jerusalem? The Book of Mormon was always historically accurate, even when the criticism appeared obvious at the surface. Archaeology now dissolves this attempted criticism into obscurity, but spiritual truth does not depend on a trowel. A trowel only unearthed a truth that the Book of Mormon already contained.

How many believers have allowed this small critique to prohibit them from taking the Book of Mormon seriously? How many have been stung by online reports not understanding the archaeological support? How many of us allow whispers and rumors to strip our faith and take us away from the truth contained in the Word of God. Saints, let us never miss the beauty of the Lord, His Church and His Word from false attacks by the enemy of our souls.

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GMBA November Conference 2022

By Sister Alyssa Maddox

The GMBA excitedly traveled to Farmington Hills, MI for our annual November Conference and was immensely blessed with encouraging messages, an inspiring community service project, and an abundance of young people in attendance.



Encouraging Messages

On Saturday night, Brother Zac Jackson spoke about Moses, reminding us that God's ways and thoughts are higher than ours. It is God's desire for us to come up to meet Him and dwell with Him. This is a hard task for us, so God comes down to us. Even in the darkest valleys, we can draw closer to the Lord, as if we were on the mountaintop. Brother Zac encouraged us to trust His calling in our lives to reach out and serve.



Brother Lucas Martorana followed, speaking on "Keep Going, Not Knowing." Moses doubted himself, which can be an example for us as a trait of humility, dependence, and reliance. It would be great if God told us everything we wanted to know about the rest of our life. Moses did not get this and neither did we. Sometimes, all we need to do is show up. Moses only needed to show up and God did the rest.



Brother Scott Griffith opened our meeting on Sunday, reminding us to walk by faith, not by sight. Matthew 14:22-26 tells us about Jesus walking on water. When Peter stepped out of the boat, he walked by faith and not by sight by focusing on the Lord instead of the storm. He started to sink when he began to walk by sight instead of walking by faith. We are faced with many trials and if we focus on them, we feel hopeless, we lose trust, and we begin to sink. Instead, we must be trusting that we can walk by faith and step out on the water by keeping our focus on the Lord.



Brother David Lovalvo followed, reading Mark 6:56, stating that all we need to do is make the minimal effort of reaching for the Lord and He will bless us. You must keep reaching, moving, staying connected to the Lord, and not give up. The hem is always there, no matter where you are or what you are going through. God will never leave you. There's not a time in our life that we would reach out and He wouldn't be there. Use every time we reach out to God and are blessed to increase our faith that we can rely on in moments of weakness.

Brother Jeremy Nicklow followed, speaking from Romans 1, where Paul says that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We should embrace our calling and it starts with our personal conviction of faith in God and His promises.

Community Service Project

The officers started a new initiative this year with a community service project during the Saturday afternoon session. There were three stations the congregation rotated through, focusing on the purpose of the GMBA to be missionaries. One rotation was led through a seminar discussion on the purpose of outreach. This seminar read through Matthew 22: 37-40, 1 Corinthians 12: 20-22, and Luke 6: 27-29. One rotation made blankets and helping bags with toiletries and necessities to be given to people in need in our community. Many bags will also be sent to the members in the Six Nations and Muncey reservations in Ontario, Canada. Finally, one rotation made greeting cards for people in our branches who need uplift and encouragement. The mentors from the 2022 GMBA Youth Camp led and supported each of the rotations.

Abundance of Young People

It was very uplifting to see so many young people in attendance from all over the country. Every region of the Church was represented. Over 80 young people sang and testified on Saturday night. They spoke of the goodness of God in their lives, the support they find from our Church family, and how rejuvenating this weekend was for their spiritual strength. We cannot wait to see everyone again at our GMBA Camp from July 1-7, 2023 at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia for an in-person camp open to all ages.



A Grateful Tree was created as everyone took a moment to write something that they were grateful for on a leaf and place it on the tree. So many Blessings! So much to be grateful for! →



A Triple Blessing in the Edison, NJ Branch

By Sister Terri Bravo



The members and friends of the Edison Branch consider July 17, 2022, as a very special Sabbath day because we witnessed the baptism of Brother David Tenorio and the ordinations of his mother, Sister Lydia Tenorio as a deaconess and his brother, Brother Andrew Tenorio as a deacon. In all aspects of the day, it was truly a blessing to be a part of.

The Edison Branch was filled with brothers and sisters of the Atlantic Coast Region. All were there to witness and support our sister and brothers on their important day. The ministers were poised to perform their holy duties, as the Lord directed.

Brother David Tenorio was baptized by his uncle, Brother Michael Zaino. Brother David had hands laid upon him for the reception of the Holy Ghost by Brother Phil Arcuri. He included in his prayer that David would “be a beautiful servant, promulgate the Gospel, be an example to his friends and a soldier of the cross.”

Next, Brother Andrew was ordained as a deacon.

His feet were washed by his father, Brother Luis Tenorio. Brother Michael Zaino offered the prayer of ordination. He included in his prayer that Brother Andrew “was called to be a worker, bless him with gifts, a testimony, and may he be used of God.”

Sister Lydia Tenorio was ordained as a deaconess. Her feet were washed by Sister Linda Young. Brother Jim Calabro offered the ordination prayer. He asked the Lord to “bless her to be a mother to the Church and carry the love of Jesus. May the Lord go with her all her days and may she be willing to do what she needs to do. When setting the table may she keep these things sacred in her heart.”

We heard preaching and testimonies of praise to God. Sister Angela Reyes had a vision when prayers were offered for Brother Andrew and Sister Lydia. She saw a light come down from Heaven and fall upon them. While we didn’t all see the light, we felt the presence of Jesus in our meeting. Especially touching was watching Sister Lydia Tenorio set the Communion table with her mother, Sister Lydia Zaino.

We were reminded that in September of 1997 Sister Lydia Zaino was ordained a deaconess and Brother Michael Zaino was ordained a deacon!

After our service we had a luncheon, which offered us time to meet and speak of God’s blessings. Much thanks is given to all who joined us, because we are in the family of God.



Happy New Year!

We wish you, your families and your branches a Joyful and Blessed New Year!

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a NEW creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become NEW.” (II Corinthians 5:17)

Role of the Gentiles

By Apostle Jerry Valenti

As we live through the latter-day period and anticipate the restoration of the House of Israel, it is a blessing to know that the Gentiles (which includes many of us) have a great role to play in this effort. Here are 5 amazing facts describing how the Gentiles are being used and will be used in the latter-day work of The Church of Jesus Christ.

1 Bringing Forth of the Book of Mormon – The cover page of the Book of Mormon describes the contents as “an abridgement of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites...sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of Gentile.” Joseph Smith was the Gentile who received the records and he and other Gentiles were used in the translation of the records.

2 Restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ – The Gentiles have been used to establish and lead The Church of Jesus Christ in this dispensation of time such that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ has been shared with many people, even as we prepare for the eventual gathering of Israel and appearance of Jesus Christ. “The Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great

worth unto our seed; wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders.” (1 Nephi 22:8)

3 Preparing for the Choice Seer – As Lehi describes in 2 Nephi 3, the Lord told Joseph of old that “a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins – and not to the bringing forth my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them” (2 Nephi 3:11). The Gentiles are the ones bringing the word forth among the descendants of Joseph in preparation for the Choice Seer.

4 Building the New Jerusalem – The Gentiles “shall assist the remnant of Jacob, and also as

many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem” (3 Nephi 21:23). The New Jerusalem will be the principal city in Zion.

5 Full Participation in Zion – Although participation in Zion is initially promised to the House of Israel, as the covenant people of the Lord, it’s a person’s relationship with Christ, not their bloodline, that makes them eligible for this great gathering. That’s why the Lord instructs the Gentiles to “be baptized in my name, that ye may receive a remission of your sins, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel” (3 Nephi 30:2). “For behold, as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord” (2 Nephi 30:2).

Ladies' Uplift Circle News

A Posse By Sister Gelsa Staley

The definition of a posse, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is “a large group often with a common interest.” Certainly, that describes the Ladies’ Uplift Circle of The Church of Jesus Christ. There is a statement in the General Ladies’ Uplift Circle By-Laws booklet that says, “whenever Circle sisters can work together, a richer fellowship with greater unity of spirit and purpose will result.” The following is a beautiful report from the Southeast Area of the Circle as the sisters gathered to support a sister in need.

A Sister Posse

There is a unique quality among the sisters of the Church or maybe just among most women. It’s called compassion. It is a trait where you can put yourself in another person’s place and feel her concerns, her pains and, most importantly, her prayers.

Recently, my husband had a major back operation. Several of my sisters decided to come to the hospital and wait with me while his surgery was taking place. They came with water, snacks, coffee and donuts (because food is always required among the sisters in the Church no matter what the situation is). Those sisters who could not come, texted and called. One sister texted and asked me if anyone was with me and when I

listed the sisters that were there, she said, “That’s quite a posse” and I answered, “Yes, a sister posse” and she replied, “The best kind.”

They are the best kind. They stayed for hours. We laughed, we ate, and we waited and waited. There was a complication during the surgery, and the procedure could not be completed that day. It had to be completed the following week. Some of those sisters came back again and waited hours with me again and would not leave until my husband was settled in his room.

How blessed am I? How blessed are we to have that kind of love for one another? My whole life I have known this love being “born and raised” in The Church of Jesus Christ. But sometimes, the love and devotion that you are shown strikes a beautiful chord in your heart and must be shared. I will not soon forget this love and I pray that I show the same love in return. For when you are in service of one another you are in the service of the King.

What a display of sisterly love as they fulfilled the second aim of the Ladies’ Uplift Circle, which is “to promote a closer fellowship between sisters throughout The Church as they share their problems and joys and pray together”!

"I believe the building project has created a tighter spiritual bond. We have become unified in our goals," says Erryn Picciuto.

God has blessed us with a spirit of unity in the decision-making—even in selecting colors! He's blessed us with a spirit of community on the job site. As we give of ourselves—time, money, sweat—God is developing us spiritually as His people.

Sister Bonnie Smith sums it up like this, "Our mission to the White Mountain Apache Tribe began in 1969. Our blessings have been abundant. The dedication of our congregation is evident, putting our faith to work to accomplish the realization of this dream. We thank God for the love and support of the General Church. May God bless each and every effort to support this dream."

What is one thing you are praying for and would like to see happen in your branch or in the Church in 2023?

"I would like to see more visitors come in off the street to attend our services." -Brother Michael McGuire, Cape Coral, FL Mission

"We are building a new Church and the prayer I want to be answered is that our building will be built and filled with Apache and Navajo brothers and sisters." - Sister Joann Cotellesse, Lakeside, AZ Branch

"The power of God to be made manifest in our services to convince those who have not accepted Jesus Christ, strengthen the saints of the Church and prepare us for the next steps in the fulfillment of the Latter Day prophecies found in the Bible and Book of Mormon." -Brother Paul Palmieri, McKees Rocks, PA Branch

"I am praying that the young people will think about how much God loved them and make a greater effort to put Him first in their lives." -Sister Beatrice Hopkins, Quincy, FL Branch

"Continued spiritual growth and unity amongst all the saints. Sanctification of everyone who enters into the family of God. Pray for the lost ones to come home and stay in the gospel." -Sister Sharon Sloan, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"That our membership would grow in spirit and new members." -Sister Anita Znoy, Creekside, MI Branch

"I pray that God gives us the strength to finish constructing our new church building in 2023. I am hoping that the Lord fills our bigger building with souls who need Him." -Sister Michelle Watson, Lakeside, AZ Branch

"What I would like to see happen for our Church is for us to never forget we are nothing without God. For all of us to grow spiritually and be workable for God always." -Sister Heather Escobar, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"For all those who left the Church to come back and be reunited with the Church family." -Sister Dienna Rogers, Irvine, CA Branch

"I pray that loved ones of the Saints of God come to Church and find the Lord. Many members have spouses, children, and grandchildren that they would love to learn of our Wonderful Father in Heaven. Praying the Lord touches each and every one. I also pray that we all, as members, draw closer to God in these the last days." -Sister Denise Marie DeFalco Dickson, Detroit, MI Branch #1.



Blessing Bits

BB Work Day Protection - I work from home. One work day, rather than sitting down to work at my office desk, I decided to sit in the living room and work from my laptop. All of a sudden I heard a loud crash in my office. I went in to find that the protective glass that sits atop my desk - a pane of glass approximately 35 inches long and about 4 inches thick - had crashed into a million pieces. I thank God that on that particular morning, He directed me to sit in the living room. I'm also thankful that our little ten-pound dog who loves to sit under the desk while I work was with me in the living room. -Sister Rebecca Martorana, Mesa, AZ Branch

BB He Makes All Things Possible - As a young married couple in 1985, Sister Carolyn and I moved to California in order to work among the Hispanic brothers and sisters of the Church. We discussed taking a leave of absence from work, traveling to California to find a job, and then moving there. After much prayer, we felt that if it was the Lord's will, He would make the way easy for us. We received several experiences, one of which was a dream where a man and woman called to offer me a job. The following day, this exact

dream came true. The relocation package included ALL travel and moving expenses, closing costs for the home we sold and the home we bought, as well as 2 months of living in an apartment in California. The Lord indeed made everything easy and covered every expense. The Lord has blessed our lives many, many times. -Brother Stacey Light, Irvine, CA Branch

BB Gratis Dad (Thanks Given) - For more than 20 years, the Mexico Field Committee has hosted a Christmas celebration for children and families in two of our smaller missions - Mexicali and Vicente Guerrero. We provide Christmas gifts and shoes for the children, pinatas, food bags for the Church and community members, and a shared meal and fellowship service to round out the day. Many families have come and benefited from this holiday tradition and hearing of the goodness of our God. We are thankful for the opportunity to share our abundance with others and would like to take a moment to thank the saints for their generosity in helping to make these yearly events possible. -Brother David Arreola, Mexico Field Committee Chairman

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Elizabeth McDonnell at eksanchor@gmail.com. [in approximately 150 words]. Answers to Question of the Month to gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org.



Question for this month:

Spring is coming! Plants and flowers start growing again. What tips do you have to continue to grow your relationship with God and your brothers and sisters?



Answer from last month:

What is one thing you are praying for and would like to see happen in your branch or in the Church in 2023?

"I am prayerful that our branch will begin to grow this year and that our membership will continue to be active for outreach and spreading the gospel." -Brother Andrew Tenorio, Edison, NJ Branch

(Turn to page 11 for more answers)