

The Gospel News

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*For unto
us a child
is born!*



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...and the Government Shall Be upon His Shoulder...

A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

The title, taken from Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus Christ, is oft quoted around this time of year in the following context: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of government and peace there is no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6; 2 Nephi 19:6). Seven centuries in advance, this prophecy foretold the wonderful birth and fleshly presence of the Son of God, the Savior of the world. Sermons today, celebrating the fulfillment of this prophecy in the birth and life of Christ, usually elaborate on the listed titles in praise of God for His wonderful omnipotence and love for mankind in bringing His salvation to us.









But important parts remain to be fulfilled. As we rejoice in our Lord's time on earth—during which He certainly did establish Himself as our "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace"—we should also grasp and hold onto the comfort available to us as we anticipate and work to receive the promises yet to be fulfilled:

- The government shall be upon His shoulder
- There shall be no end of the increase of government and peace
- The zeal of the Lord shall perform this

Considering the present state of earthly governments, not even the most forgivingly optimistic observer would describe any of them as resting upon the shoulders of Christ. Yes, we can find elements of righteousness in founding documents, charters, and constitutions, but ... we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). Not only is this the present case, it was true in the first century when Paul wrote it, and it was true in Isaiah's time as well. So, what will it take for us to experience the government resting upon the shoulder of Christ? Has it ever? Will it ever? Let's look at some scriptures to understand better.

It was during very troubled times that Isaiah was gifted with this prophecy (Read Isaiah Chapters 7–9). Judah was threatened by an alliance of surrounding kingdoms. Through Isaiah, the word of the Lord told Ahaz (the king) that the aggression against Judah would not stand – nevertheless, he was told, If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

(Continued on page 4)

	<p>According to the lyrics of SILENT NIGHT</p> <p>What two words describe the Holy Infant?</p>		<p>According to the lyrics of IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR</p> <p>Who was bending near the earth to touch what?</p>
<p>According to the lyrics of WE THREE KINGS</p> <p>The star of wonder has what kind of beauty?</p>		<p>According to the lyrics of ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH</p> <p>Who was echoing the Angels' joyous strains?</p>	
	<p>According to the lyrics of GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN</p> <p>Throughout the heavens there shone what?</p>		<p>According to the lyrics of GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN</p> <p>Christ was born to save us from what?</p>
<p>According to the lyrics of MARY, DID YOU KNOW?</p> <p>Mary's baby boy will one day walk on what?</p>		<p>According to the lyrics of IS IT NOTHING TO YOU?</p> <p>What came before the cross carried far?</p>	

BFTIP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck



Forty-six years ago this month this editorial viewpoint appeared in the 1976 Gospel News by Apostle Paul Palmieri:

THE LORD OMNIPOTENT

Good King Benjamin also was blessed with a visitation by an angel of God whose remarkable message to the king was "... behold, I am come to declare unto you the glad tidings of great joy. For the Lord hath heard thy prayers, and hath judged of thy righteousness, and hath sent me to declare unto thee that thou mayest rejoice; and that thou mayest declare unto thy people, that they may also be filled with joy. For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men working mighty miracles....And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and abominations of his people, and he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary....And moreover, I say unto you that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ the Lord Omnipotent." (Mosiah 3:3-5, 7, 8, 17)



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.



“What Mite You Give?”

By Brother Doug Obradovich

“All that she had” (Mark 12:44)

MORE IN, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their ABUNDANCE ... she of her want, did cast in ALL THAT SHE HAD, EVEN ALL OF HER LIVING.”

Amount? Unimportant. Intention? Critical.

Her minuscule gift dwarfed the others. No church wing was named after her, no newsletter listed her amongst the most generous donors, nor was a plaque with her name hung in any vestibule. Yet, in God's eyes, her gift was the most significant. Hmm...maybe her plaque actually does hang somewhere: in the Word of God (Mark 12 & Luke 21)!

It's not the dollar \$igns, it's the %ercentages.

It's not only WHAT is given, but also WHEN it's given. Some give what's left of their efforts (ex: reading scripture at day's end just before exhaustion overpowers, writing a check after all the other bills are paid, giving time to church after natural needs are all completed, etc.).

And it's not just WHEN, but likewise, HOW it's given: “Every man according as he

purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, nor of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (II Corinthians 9:7). How do you “purpose” your giving in your heart? Like a child stomping back to their room when told they HAVE to clean up? If your purpose is pure, and you give without purpose in getting, then (watch this) then you receive!

Jesus said so, “Give, and it shall be given unto you” (Luke 6:38). God said so, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse...saith the Lord of Hosts,...and prove...if I will not open the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10). His reward for your two mites? You won't have the room to store His return!

Imagine the lines of people at the bank that promised a 100% return on investments; or 200%; or 300%. Now envision if these returns were of Biblical proportion: “Invest 10% of your money, and the interest earned = “YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ROOM TO RECEIVE IT!”

When will we finally understand that we can't outgive God? When will we finally trust Him enough to give back freely? Stated more directly: WHAT MITE YOU GIVE?

Picture Him sitting undetected against the wall, hood pulled low on His brow, covertly watching everything unfold. From the shadows He watched the people file towards the 13 receptacles strategically placed in the temple, allowing for public spectacle: the gift-giving to the church. Similar to today, as many churches utilize a collection basket traveling overtly across laps in long pews. Large donations still intimidate, or even restrict, those unable to match such gifts. However, it was the strangest of incidences that caught Jesus' eye; the actions of one particular woman.

Mark 12:41-44 – “Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury ... MANY THAT WERE RICH CAST IN MUCH ... there came a certain poor widow ... she threw in TWO MITES. He called unto Him His disciples ... Verily I say unto you ... this poor widow hath CAST

...and the Government Shall Be upon His Shoulder...

A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

(continued from cover)

Note that belief in the prophecy was key to receiving its benefit. Meanwhile, the prophet foretold of an even greater pending threat; the Assyrians were rolling over every kingdom in their path as they progressed towards Judah. No apparent remedy was available as the people lingered in unfaithfulness. Fear was the order of the day. But, Isaiah declared, Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. In so many words, Isaiah's prophetic advice was to disregard earthly threats and forsake earthly confederations while praising the Lord and being diligent to obey Him, to trust Him, and to please Him. Isaiah continued along these lines, leading to the prophecy: For unto us a child is born...and the government shall be upon his shoulder...

Isaiah was telling Judah: BECAUSE a savior is promised, fear can be overcome. As king, Ahaz was being given the opportunity to place his government upon the shoulder of the Son of God—an opportunity neither he nor the people of Judah were prepared to appreciate. Knowing when the prophecy would be fulfilled was not important; rather, faith in the promise and righteousness before the Lord were essential. Over the ages since that prophecy, there have been some leaders who tried to place the government upon the shoulder of the Lord, although we read of many who did not.

King Benjamin, followed by his son, King Mosiah, are examples of those who did their best to implement inspired government. King Benjamin's final address (Read Mosiah Chapters 2–5) stirred the people to humble themselves and unanimously change their hearts (Mos. 5:1–5), to believe all the prophecies, and to covenant to do the will of God all their remaining days. Mosiah was promptly consecrated to follow his father as king, and, with the united righteousness of the people, we readily understand that the government rested upon the shoulder of the Lord...for a time. What a blessed time that was!

One generation later (Read Mos. Chapter 26), those who were children at the time of King Benjamin's address had grown up without having understood his words—hence many did not believe, developed hard hearts, refused to join the church, and lived in a carnal and sinful state as a people separate as to their faith. Also, dissensions among the brethren caused the number of unfaithful to increase. The government as it had been set up, began to falter (sliding off the shoulder of the Lord) to the point that Mosiah found it expedient to preclude the possibility of a future unjust king by reorganizing the government as a democracy—depending on most of the people to choose righteousness, thereby preventing the minority instituting unrighteous governance (Read Mos. Chapter 29). However, he cautioned the people: ...if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then

is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you; yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction even as he has hitherto visited this land (Mos. 29:27).

Under the new government, every person was considered equal to everyone else. The law allowed each person to believe as he pleased. For the next ~120 years (Read Alma, Helaman, and 3 Nephi Chapters 1–6) the people ("separate as to their faith") lived a strained coexistence upon the land, sometimes under the one legitimate government, sometimes divided by rebellion. At the time of Christ's birth, the miraculous sign of a night without darkness led to a brief period of widespread belief and peace in the land (Read 3 Nephi Chapter 1). But this was short-lived, and the land gradually became dominated by the unrighteous, eventually disrupting the church through internal strife (Read 3 Nephi 6:10-17). Without unity in righteousness, however, the people were unable to maintain a government upon the shoulder of the Lord. In fact, the will of the people, driven by self-interests, pride, and disputations, led to the total disintegration of the government, with only a few remaining who were converted unto the Lord (Read 3 Nephi Chapter 7).

As had been prophesied, the people's choice of iniquity led the Lord to act decisively. Upon the crucifixion of Christ, there were terrible storms and earthquakes upon this land leading to great destruction and the disappearance of major cities. Only the believers and the "more righteous," those ...who received the prophets and stoned them not...who had not shed the blood of the saints... were spared (Read 3 Nephi Chapters 8–10). Later in 3 Nephi we find that those who survived the devastation were in a state of repentance and preparedness for the visit of Christ that followed. During the few days He was with them, He presented His gospel in detail, set up His church as he had in Jerusalem, and united the people under His Holy Spirit. Every person, by taking on His name, became one with Christ and thereby one body which comprised Christ's church. The government—by that unity of individuals in one Spirit—was upon His shoulder.

Continuing into 4 Nephi, we see the description of a people under a government upon the shoulder of the Lord:

- All converted unto the Lord
- No contentions or disputations
- All things common—no rich, no poor
- All free—no bondage or slavery
- All manner of miracles manifested in the name of Jesus
- All walking after the commandments received of the Lord Jesus
 - Continuing in fasting and prayer
 - Meeting together often to pray and to hear the word of the Lord

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Christmas Reflections – Past, Present, and Future

By Evangelist Mark Kovacic

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I keep an old black-and-white (B&W) photograph on my desk. The scene is from 1959 and shows me at three years old, my six-year-old sister, and my eight-year-old brother. We are surrounded by simple toys adjacent to a small Christmas tree. Behind us is an old B&W television and on the stool a black dial handset telephone. But there are smiles galore, enough to pass around. It was a joyous time for most people, but as Charles Dickens pointed out in his 1843 "A Christmas Carol," maybe not for everyone.

Over the years, the photos change from B&W to color and small thirteen-inch TVs to 52-inch flat screens. But the joy and love stay the same. Everyone looks a little older, a few more wrinkles and gray hairs (or lack thereof). People were added to the family—through marriages and births; however, we have not forgotten the reason for the season.

And then the unthinkable happens, the old begin to get sick and die. We don't know how to deal with this occurrence. It's a shock, yet part of the cycle of life. At first, we think we are the only ones who ever had a loved one pass on to the next life. Then we find out otherwise. Although we know they have gone to a better place, it's the void that is created (both natural and spiritual) that makes it hard. The family photos take on new meaning.

Besides the cookies, pies, and other delectables we enjoy, it's the relating of past stories that become the center of our attention. It always begins with "Remember when..." (travels, outings, gatherings, and so much more). Forgotten is the discussion as to when was the actual day Jesus was born. Instead, we focus on the love, joy, and peace that the King of Kings and Prince of Peace brings to our lives. We refocus on the reason for the season.

Yes, we love the holiday season (from Thanksgiving Day to New Year's Day)—the music, the festivities, and the kind and charitable acts that strangers perform for the underprivileged. In some ways it is the best description of the future Peaceful Reign—it's the holiday season but warmer!

So cherish those old photos and share those old holiday memories and stories—again and again! Don't forget to make new ones by hugging the unhuggable, helping the helpless, and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, who was born to die for the world (that's another story for another day). Yes, continue to remember the reason for the season and all the good that comes with it. As Dickens' character Tiny Tim said, "God bless us, everyone."

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(continued from page 4)

- No envying, strife, tumult, lying, murder, robbery, lasciviousness (lustful pursuits)
- No -ites—all one as children of God
- People happier than any who had ever been

This perfect “government upon the shoulder of the Lord” lasted for about 194 years until some revolted from the Church, and once again there began to be Lamanites (division) in the land. The breach grew in form and number over the next two hundred years as the beautiful governance established by the Lord’s visit was no longer recognizable and was barely remembered. Failure to maintain unity in righteousness had again caused the government to fall off the shoulder of the Lord.

But Isaiah’s prophecy also stated: ...Of the increase of government and peace there is no end... So, we can see that the wonderful 4 Nephi “government” was not the complete fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, because it came to an end. What have we learned?

- Government upon the shoulder of the Lord is achievable per the examples cited above, especially as related in 4 Nephi
 - Those who are so governed are truly blessed
- Even a righteous leader cannot sustainably implement this government by himself
 - The people’s choice to be in unity with Christ is essential
- Righteous people desire to place their government upon the shoulder of the Lord
- The referenced scriptures point to the conclusion that Christ set up His church to be this government, His kingdom. Citizenship is available to all through faith, repentance, and baptism.

Isaiah’s prophecy does not stand alone. Other prophets foresaw the time when the government would permanently rest upon the shoulder of the Lord:

1. Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream: ...And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: ...and it shall stand for ever (Dan. 2:44).
2. Later, Daniel had his own dream which elaborated on this understanding: ...one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14).
3. ...I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom (Dan. 7:21-22).

4...And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him (Dan. 7:27).

These excerpts from Daniel clearly tell of a coming time when the saints of God will be given (by the zeal of the Lord) possession of His everlasting kingdom as servants of Jesus Christ.

Nephi also saw this and prophesied (Read 1 Nephi Chapter 22): And the time cometh speedily that the righteous must be led up as calves of the stall, and the Holy One of Israel must reign in dominion, and might, and power, and great glory...And because of the righteousness of his people, Satan has no power; wherefore, he cannot be loosed for the space of many years; for he hath no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth. And now behold, I, Nephi, say unto you that all these things must come according to the flesh. But, behold, all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people shall dwell safely in the Holy One of Israel if it so be that they will repent (1 Nephi 22:24-28).

There is so much in store for the saints of God, more than we can fully embrace in any short article. Please take the time to review the scriptures that are referenced. God has a mighty purpose for His church which requires each of us to yield our wills to His. There are battles to be won, but the winners have already been declared. God is zealous to complete His plan, so zealous that He is going to shield and protect every repentant soul of every nation and people.

This government (His church) will continue to grow, such that, “...the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Isaiah 51:11). As we celebrate the birth of our Savior—our Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, our Everlasting Father, our Prince of Peace—Jesus Christ, let us resolve to make it our daily priority to be one with Him, uniting ourselves in His righteousness and placing our own individual and collective governance upon His shoulder.

In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

James Crudup, Joel Gehly, Pete Giannetti, John Griffith, Scott Griffith, Paul Liberto, Thomas M. Liberto, Leonard A. Loyalvo, Frank Natoli, Paul A. Palmieri, Peter Scolaro, Jerry Valenti

To learn more about The Church of Jesus Christ, with Headquarters in Monongahela, PA, please visit our website. The World Operations Center for world-wide missionary efforts is in Greensburg, PA.

www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org



God's Greatest Gift

And He told Peter, "Don't you know that if I wanted to, I could call God to send 12 legions of angels to come and fight?" (See Matthew 26:53). There are at least 6,000 angels in 1 legion, so He was saying He could ask God and for 6,000 x 12, or 72,000 angels! He had all power, but He gave his life for us.

Jesus was determined to give us the gift of a new loving and kind religion. He was going to let them kill His body. He would die and then resurrect (come back to life) and show us that there is a heaven and a wonderful place where our spirits will go when our bodies die. What a gift! He taught us our souls would have everlasting life in heaven if we just serve God and love others.

So, what kind of gift can each of us give? Who can we help? Who can we be kind to? Think about it. Is there someone you can take time to be friendly to? Is there even someone at school or church that needs a friend?

Will you give them the gift of talking to them?

Can your Christmas gift be forgiving someone you are mad at? Can you clear your heart and even say a prayer for them? Can you be extra good to someone in your family? Maybe you are impatient with your sister, cousin, stepparent, or elderly grandparent. You can say a prayer in your heart and do something loving. Another gift.

Who are you mean to sometimes? Ask God to change you. That can be a gift to everyone who has to see it. You also could ask your parent if you could call a far-away aunt, favorite brother or sister at church, or friend and just tell them you care by wishing them a good day. Words have power. Use yours as a gift of kindness and love.

With much care,
Your friend,

Sister Jan

Dear Friends,

Christmas is a time of gifts. And we know that on Christmas we celebrate the fact that God gave us a huge, unbelievable gift. He gave all of us on earth His only begotten son, Jesus! This was the Baby in a manger who grew up to teach all humans the way of love and power.

Then, when Jesus was all grown up and had been teaching His twelve Apostles and anyone who would hunger and want to know the truth, Jesus gave His life! Before this, the Laws from Moses, including the Ten Commandments, taught people they must make a sacrifice when they went to God for answers to their prayers. They would bring an offering of a healthy animal or even as Cain did in the Garden of Eden, they should bring a perfect and beautiful part of their harvest to Lord (See Genesis 4:3).

And the Laws from Moses were very tough. Jesus' laws were gentle, loving, and often challenging. Like He taught us to love our enemies, and do good to those who treated us really bad on purpose (See Matthew 5:44). Our gift, our Jesus, teaches us to forgive others seventy times seven for things they do wrong to us (See Matthew 18:21-22)! That is a big challenge.

Jesus taught us that the one thing God wants from us is a broken heart (to be sorry when we do wrong) and contrite spirit (See 2 Nephi 2 6-7). Now we no longer have to buy an offering to sacrifice when we pray. Jesus teaches us to pray in our hearts when we need something or are afraid. He also said when we ask God something in prayer, to use His name—Jesus, our friend. He will stick up for us because that is why He came (See John 14:13 & 14).

And Jesus in His human form knew that His job was to be the last sacrifice. The night before the angry rulers came to drag him away to be killed, He prayed. When the temple guards came to take him, His apostle, Peter, jumped in and using a sword, cut off the ear of one of the attackers. Jesus picked it up, put it back and healed the man.

Scan the QR Code below to view a video of Sister Jan Bork and Ben Champine making a Christmas gift for the birds! To scan the link just open your camera on your phone and hold it over the code and the video will come up. All you need to make the craft yourself is:

- A pine cone
- Peanut butter
- A butter knife
- Some bird seed
- Ribbon



Trust in the Lord *By Sister Megan Morle*

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

I've always struggled with letting go of control, especially in stressful situations. I want to find a solution instantaneously while also taking credit for figuring out what to do. And you might find yourself in similar situations. Wanting to fix your problems right then and there to get the results that you want.

The feeling of getting instantaneous results has been ingrained into us as a part of our everyday routine. How many times do we find ourselves turning to our phones to look up a question we have and immediately getting thousands of websites that have all of the answers in less than a second? Or how many times do we order from online stores and get our packages delivered to our doorstep the next day?

We are so used to the routine of getting everything we ask for right away that when the answer isn't instantaneous, we begin to feel anxious and panic. And what happens when we panic? We refresh Google a hundred times until the answers show up or call the store wondering where our package is when it's twenty minutes late. We take over to get the answers we want.

Because we are so used to getting everything we want when we want it, we expect the same to come from God. Many times, we want God to work within our timeline and give us the solutions to our problems that we think are most beneficial to our lives. Whether it's with school, work, relationships, or anything that you find yourself praying

for; we expect instant answers.

Oftentimes, throughout the day, I find myself praying for a specific outcome, not taking into consideration that this outcome may only be a part of my plan and not a part of God's plan. And when the outcome I pray for doesn't happen, I find myself getting upset. This often forces me to take a step back and re-evaluate my situation. And more often than not, I recall these verses.

These verses have taught me that trusting in God isn't just praying and just asking for help, it's being fully prepared to let go. Letting go of my plan, my wanted outcomes, and my timeline. Trusting in God is trusting that His plan will always be more perfect than mine.

Over the years, I've learned that all of the times I try to take over in a situation, I always find myself in a more difficult and more stressful place than I need to be. And as soon as I relinquish the control over to God, He always provides a simpler solution. It makes me think about how many times I could have avoided certain situations if I had just gone to God first.

Trusting in God's plan is never an easy thing. We may not get our instantaneous answers. We may not even get the answers we think we deserve. But, 10 out of 10 times, God will provide the direct path you need to be on. We just must be willing to trust.

Christmas Gifts and Donations.

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Christmas Gift List

By Apostle Jerry Valenti

The Christmas season is sometimes thought of as the gift-giving season. However, when it comes to God, His desire is to give gifts any day of any season. Here are 5 amazing facts regarding gifts that God has given and/or desires to give to all mankind.

1 Being Saved from Sin - Sin is something that separates people from God and will ultimately prevent them from dwelling in the kingdom of heaven. But God, in His grace, set up a plan of salvation to save us from our sins. Faith, repentance, and baptism allow for our sins to be removed and place us on the path that leads to God's eternal kingdom. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

2 The Gift of the Holy Ghost - The Holy Ghost is given to believers after baptism through the laying on of hands by the ministry (see Moroni 3:3, Acts 8:17). It is provided to us to lead us through life and help us make choices that God wants us to make. It cannot be purchased (as a man named Simon discovered in Acts 8:18-24) - it is a gift from God. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus

Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

3 Spiritual Gifts - Various spiritual gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Moroni 10. All of these are to help the church on Earth, but also to allow individual believers to play a role in the kingdom and be a blessing to others. The spiritual gifts range from the very visible (preaching, teaching, tongues) to the less visible (helps, hospitality, administration) but all are important as they all come from God. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Corinthians 12:4,11).

4 Eternal Life - The above gifts are all preparation for the gift that keeps on giving for all time - the

gift of eternal life. We may miss out on things on earth but we don't want to miss out on the mansion that God will give us in which we will dwell with Him in heaven for eternity. "Lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, yea, which is eternal, and which fadeth not away; yea, that ye may have that precious gift of eternal life" (Helaman 5:8).

5 The Son of God - The gift of God's Son, given on the very first Christmas, is what makes all of the above possible. "And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ" (Moroni 10:18). "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "In the gift of his Son hath God prepared a more excellent way; and it is by faith that it hath been fulfilled" (Ether 12:11). Amen.

Ladies' Uplift Circle News

A Miraculous Meeting *By Sister Marty Jumper*

The Greensburg Branch hosted the General Ladies' Uplift Circle Conference on October 7, 2022. With a welcome to all in attendance, Sister Lisa Champine, General Circle President, called the conference to order. Before getting into the business of the day, as has become our custom for outgoing presidents, Sister Gelsa Staley presented Sister Lisa with a special Ladies' Circle logo necklace and thanked her for her ten years of service to the General Ladies' Uplift Circle. Now with the agenda in hand, we went through the roll call of officers, unfinished business reports, the officers reports, and took the collection, which was added to the fund that would be distributed for missionary work in the afternoon session.

After lunch, we returned to begin the second business session of the day. The Area President reports were given, reporting the wonderful and imaginative activities the Area Circles do to impact their local communities and to help the Church. Next, we had a special prayer asking the Lord to guide us as we elected new officers to lead the Circle. The new General Circle President is Sister Jacqui King, and Sister Sharon Sloan was elected as the new Vice President. The other officers elected that day are Sisters Angela Yoder and Mitzi Calabro as the auditors for General Circle, Sister Robin Burns was elected assistant to the Printing Committee, and Sister Marty Jumper was elected as Editor. All the other officers were retained in their respective offices.

It was now time to disperse the funds to help the many missionary works of the Church. We were about to experience the most amazing acts of love to help the missionaries and the people they serve. The IMOC monetary requests to the General Circle totalled \$13,391.00. The Circle had only \$5,450.00, falling very short of the total needed to fill all the requests. The Circle started to pull together all the money available to get as close as possible to the total needed. The collection from the morning session was reported as \$994.00. Immediately, a sister donated \$6.00 more to make the total an even \$1000.00. The Fundraising sales of \$581.00 were added to help. Then, Sister Lisa received an anonymous note donating \$4,000.00 to allow our sisters in Malawi the opportunity to meet together after a three-year separation! Then another donation of \$1,000.00 was given, and then another \$1,000.00, and it didn't stop there. Donations kept coming until we had the requested \$13,391.00!

We were able to give \$5,150.00 to the NAOC to fulfill all their requests, with the exception of one. The Circle sisters always strive to respond in full to the needs of the Church. At this conference, the spirit of charity moved among us and the sisters responded.

At the conclusion of our conference, a circle was formed as we sang a hymn and closed in prayer, thanking the Lord for a beautiful day as sisters of the General Ladies' Uplift Circle.

What is your favorite holiday side dish or dessert?

"Homemade perogies." -Sister Alanna Wiktorowicz, Mesa, AZ Branch

Ingredients:

Dough: 2 cups King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 large egg, 1/2 cup sour cream, 4 tablespoons butter, room temperature

Filling: 1 cup warm mashed potatoes, 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

To finish: 4 tablespoons cold butter, 2 large shallots, diced; or one medium onion, sliced. Add bacon in filling for extra bonus!

Roll dough, cut into circles, fill, fold and seal edges then boil.



"Gravy. It makes everything it touches taste better!" -Brother Tim Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch

"I have two favorites which are desserts. The first is pumpkin pie and the second is fruit cake, but it has to be a really good fruit cake!" -Brother George Kovacic, Middle Tennessee Mission

"Cranberry Sauce ... Cranberry Relish.... Cranberry Bread.... Cranberry Anything!" -Sister Dianne Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch

"Raisin pie." -Brother Mark Kovacic, North Georgia Mission

"Since I usually take my children to the Detroit Lions game on Thanksgiving, I would say my favorite holiday side dish is a hot dog with mustard. Go Lions!" -Sister Janice Frammolino, Detroit, MI Branch #1

My mother made home made "mince meat". Most people turn their noses up at the thought of Mince Meat Pie, but we loved it. It was a yearly Christmas treat. We haven't had any since my mother passed eight years ago. The base of the recipe is green tomatoes, so this is time of year to make it. I had better get busy!" -Sister Marty Jumper, Aliquippa, PA Branch

"Peach pie." -Brother Frank Natoli, Detroit, MI Branch #1



"My grandma Loretta Lovalvo's ricotta cookies." - Sister Sydney Lovalvo, Farmington Hills, MI Branch

Whisk in a bowl: 2 ¼ cups flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, ½ teaspoon baking soda, 1/8 teaspoon salt. **Beat** ½ cup unsalted butter for 30 seconds, **Add** 1 cup sugar and beat until fluffy, add 1 egg and 1 teaspoon of vanilla. **Once incorporated, add** 1 cup of ricotta, and beat until mixed well.

With the mixer on low, add in flour mixture a little bit at a time, making sure each addition is incorporated well until adding another addition. This should be a slow process. Once mixed put in fridge for 30 to 60 minutes.

Scoop the dough into balls on parchment lined cookie sheet that are about ½ tablespoon in size. Bake at 350 for 12 minutes. The cookies will feel soft, but if the bottom of the cookie is brown in color and on the edges, they are done. Let cook then frost with
Frosting: Whisk powdered sugar, milk, 1 teaspoon vanilla, splash of lemon juice. Whisk powdered sugar and milk until it creates the consistency of a glaze. Frost and add sprinkles.



"Corn Casserole - so so good! Recipe: 1 box Jiffy corn muffin mix, 2 sticks of butter, 1 can creamed corn, 1 can corn (drained), 2 eggs, 1 cup sour cream, salt and pepper to taste - mix all together and bake in sprayed pan at 375 for 1- 1.5 hours." -Sister Kim Morle, Atlanta, GA Branch

"I love sweet potato casserole. The more marshmallow topping, the better!" -Sister Alyssa Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch

"Sweet potato casserole with ALL the marshmallows." -Sister Christine Martorana, Lake Worth, FL Branch

"Hershey's cream pie." -Brother Douglas Alverson, Spartanburg, SC Branch

"My grandma Grace Lobzun's pumpkin pie cake!" -Sister Rebecca Wilcoxson, Eria, PA Branch

"My favorite thing to eat on Christmas is Manicotti with homemade crepe shells. This is my Aunt Loretta's recipe and we would make them together for the family." - Sister Carolynn O'Connor, Farmington Hills, MI Branch

Shells:

1 ¾ cups flour, 2 cups cold water, 3 eggs, 3 tbsp of parmesan cheese, ¼ tsp salt, Dash of pepper, 4 tbsp melted butter

Blend all ingredients in a food processor. Pour ¼ cup onto a griddle and cook until very light brown on both sides. Set aside to cool.

Filling

1 lb ricotta, 1 cup mozzarella, parsley, cinnamon, salt and pepper to taste

Mix filling, spoon on to middle of each shell and fold the right and the left side over. Put upside down in a casserole and top with your favorite sauce. Bake at 350 for about 30 min or until very hot all the way through.



What is your favorite part about Celebrating Christmas and New Years:

"The birth of Jesus who died to save my soul!" -Sister Auriah Blackmountain, Lakeside, AZ Branch


"Our branch goes Christmas caroling to all our shut-ins, having our family all together with special traditions (can be a 3-day celebration), and the New Years Eve watch service with branch video of the year, testimonies, & fellowship." -Sister Terri Nath, Monongahela, PA Branch

"So much to love about this time of year, but considering how sentimental I am, I get quite carried away with our Christmas trees (yes plural) and all our special ornaments. I love reliving these memories as we decorate and watching our son James

set up our Nativity display, one of my most cherished gifts from my parents!" -Sister Shelly Crow, Irvine, CA Branch.

"When we lived in Ohio, we didn't have any family close by. We would always go out to a fancy dinner on Christmas Eve and then see a movie. It was one of those special family traditions we'll never forget." -Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr., Forest Hills, FL Branch

"One of my favorite times during the holidays is the Christmas Program at Church. It is usually the kick off to the celebration and spending time, singing, performing and praising God with my favorite people sets the tone for the rest of the festivities." - Sister Carolynn O'Connor, Farmington Hills, MI Branch



"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God,..." — Luke 2:13



Blessing Bits

BB 'Tis the Season - Fall is a time when we enjoy apple cider, pumpkin flavored everything, cooler temps... and for some of us, it's Gospel News donation season! I have the privilege of collecting the yearly donations for The Gospel News. It's such a blessing to go to my mailbox and find the envelopes that have arrived that day. I'm always excited to see the fun stickers and read the encouraging notes that often accompany your donations. I thank God that He's given me this opportunity to work for Him in this capacity. Collecting these donations is a small task...It reminds me of the scripture, "By small and simple things are great things brought to pass." (Alma 37:6-7)- Sister Dianne Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch

BB Training Up Our Young Ones - I've been a Sunday School teacher for 35 years. There have been occasions when a child or young person makes a comment and you know that what they are learning is sinking in. Those moments make an impression in your service to God. Currently, I teach my 6-year-old twin great-nephews, Chase and Benning. Recently, their mom, Sister Ashley, told me something that happened at the school drop-off line. They have a favorite Song of Zion they listen to on the way to school, #170, "The Rocks Bowed Down." As they were waiting their turn

in the car with the windows open Ben turned the volume way up. Ashley asked why he did that, he said, "Everyone needs to hear this." I was blessed and humbled when she told me this. Blessed because they understand the importance of sharing Jesus. Humbled because I wish I had the boldness of a child. - Sister Lisa Champine, Detroit Inner City, MI Mission

BB A Spiritual Gift Received - As I grew up in the Modesto Branch, I was inspired by Evangelist Eugenio Mora, who preached to the Spanish-speaking Mexican migrants of our branch. I never understood his words, but I felt the Spirit of God as he preached. This desire to work amongst the Spanish-speaking membership kept growing in my heart, so I moved to southern California in my early twenties to help at the Santa Ana Mission. At one preaching service, I spoke to the Lord in my heart about my desire to speak to the Spanish-speaking group; my heart was exploding with desire. At that moment, the Spirit of the Lord told me that He would grant my desire. Immediately, the Lord opened my mind and loosened my tongue to speak Spanish. Afterwards, I became a Spanish-speaking minister at the Santa Ana Mission and currently support the Bell Branch. It's been a joy to be able to do this- Bro. Anthony Cardinale, Sr., Bell, CA Branch

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:

What is one thing you are praying for and would like to see happen in your branch or in the Church in 2023? Share your response so that the brothers and sisters can pray with you!



Answer from last month: What is your favorite part of Celebrating Christmas or New Year's Eve

Christmas is my favorite time because we all get together if we can. We love each other and celebrate Jesus' life. It is a wonderful time of the year." -Sister Joann Cotellesse, Lakeside, AZ Branch

Turn to page 7 for more answers.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God,..." — Luke 2:13

