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VISIT OUR WEB-SITE
www.theremnantchurch.com

FRONT COVER—Alice Smith, First Branch – Photographer
Ralph Damon.

Our Mission Statement
The Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is
called into renewal to preach the fullness of the gospel of Jesus
Christ to all who will listen, and to prepare and gather a
righteous people for the building of the Kingdom of God on
earth, Zion.
Many years ago, as a member of Zion’s League and living in the St. Louis, MO area, an event, though somewhat inconsequential at the moment, has given me the opportunity to reflect several times upon what happened and its lasting lesson learned - although not fully understood until these many years later.

In those days of carefree youth, we were a busy and active Zion’s League organization. The St. Louis District was fortunate to have a husband and wife team, Glen and Zelmar Bond, be the district’s Youth Leaders. They were very much the outdoors family and, along with their three boys, all good friends of mine. They were always providing ways for any young person to be in the water or in the woods, learning from and enjoying the rich fellowship of those days.

On this particular day, while boating and swimming in the Meramec River, a group of us young men decided to swim from one side of the river to the other. It was not an especially long distance, but long enough to challenge the bravest of all of us young men. Somewhere midstream, I gave out. I simply couldn’t swim any farther. As I bobbed up and down in the water, I discovered that the bottom of the river was just deep enough that my head was about six inches from the surface of the water. Like a cork, I bobbed up and down, touching the riverbed with my feet, pushing off and surfacing for air – again and again – all the while slowly being drawn further downstream by the current.

Glen apparently noticed me in distress and brought his motorboat quickly along side of me, reached out, and took my hand. He asked me if I was all right. What a relief I felt. Someone’s hand in mine, getting ready to lift me out of my predicament. But he didn’t.

After a brief time, he asked if I could make it back to the riverbank. When I said I thought I could, he gave me a little push and I was off on my own again, now swimming back upstream and towards the campsite. It was a struggle, but I made it, on my own, with just a bit of help.

So, what have I learned from this? I suppose the greatest lesson was that, in our times of stress and trial, we often aren’t “removed” from the circumstances surrounding us, but must dig deep inside of ourselves to battle against the seemingly overpowering forces threatening to carry us away or destroy us. As Remnant Saints, these past fifteen years have not been easy ones. We have struggled against forces of the world, of Satan, and sometimes of our own making, in our effort to “swim across the river.” We have sometimes found the riverbed a bit deeper than we anticipated, the current a bit stronger than we thought, and our physical and spiritual strength weaker than we supposed. But the hand of God has always been there, reaching out to support and assist us when necessary.

He has not yet lifted us out of our difficult challenges, but He is always asking us if we are all right. He has then, many times, encouraged us to continue to swim forward, not to return to our former campsite that was comfortable and safe. Yes, He’s even thrown us a few life jackets when needed. Some of us He’s perhaps even taken the time to teach us to swim.

As we look at the rest of this 2015 year, do we find ourselves swimming strongly and decisively toward the Kingdom goal? Do we have the strength and desire to commit ourselves to never stopping, never faltering, in our singular purpose for this life? Yes, the river of life desires to take us from the far shore. The water is deep in places. We do get tired. We do get weak. But there is a hand out there reaching for us, a presence nearby that wants nothing more than to see us, stroke after stroke, make our way to that far, distant shore. Perhaps this will be the year of fulfillment for us. If not, shall we swim on, and on, and on?

Ralph W. Damon
For the First Presidency
NEWS AND UPDATES

CORRECTION: In the last issue of The Hastening Times, the individual who took the front cover picture was not properly identified. That person was Mr. Bill Edwards of Bill Edwards Photography. If Saints wish to see more of Mr. Edwards work, they may simply do an internet search using the name of his business. Our apologies to Mr. Edwards.

THANK YOU, MARYLYN GOSLING AND MARISSA VANBIBER: For the past few years, Sister Gosling has been the branch contact for the gathering of branch news for The Hastening Times. With this issue, she is “retiring” and looking for further endeavors to serve the Remnant Church. We thank her for the diligent work she has provided. We are now asking that all branch reporters submit your branch news to Sister Kathie Mills at the Church Headquarters. Her email address is kmills@theremnantchurch.com. Sister VanBiber has worked tirelessly to consistently gather the personal information on our members and family members who are serving our nation’s military. She has also “retired,” and we thank her for this dedicated service. At this time we are looking for someone who would volunteer to step in and take over this ministry. Please contact Ralph Damon at the Remnant Church Headquarters if you are interested.

“CENTER PLACE OF ZION”: We are so pleased to be able to report to the Saints of the inception of the Center Place of Zion (CPZ) organization. Under the direction of High Priest Robert Ostrander, High Priest Mike Hogan, Elder Dick Paris, and Bishop Dan Keleher, they will be working in conjunction with the First Presidency and with the assistance of the four branch presidents and the several priesthood quorum presidents to fully develop this program. The initial informational meeting for this long-awaited venture will be held on September 6 at the combined evening service at the Gathering Place at 6:00 PM. A “Newsbriefs” will be prepared describing in detail this new outreach of ministry in the Center Place.

PRIESTHOOD ASSEMBLY AND WOMEN’S RETREAT: October 2nd through the 4th will be the annual gathering of priesthood and women throughout the Church for another weekend of study, worship, and wonderful fellowship. Plans are now underway with the First Presidency and the Women’s Council making their plans for their individual, as well as cooperative, activities. We encourage all priesthood members and women of the Remnant Church to make every effort to attend this weekend’s activities.

MISSIONARIES IN TRAINING: Apostle Terry Patience reports that there are currently seven participants in the Church’s M.I.T. program. Another training session should begin in the near future. Any young man, ordained or not, interested in learning how to become “missionary minded” is encouraged to contact Brother Patience at tpatience@theremnantchurch.com. A missionary outreach event is scheduled for the Rogers, Arkansas Branch in August where the Remnant Church will be represented during that community’s arts and crafts fair.

SPECIAL PRAYERS ALWAYS NEEDED: The First Presidency would like to take a moment to encourage each Saint to remember those who have great physical and spiritual needs in their lives. As of this time, Presiding Bishop W. Kevin Romer and Patriarch Richard L. Wilson struggle with health problems that seriously affect their ministries and their ability to work in the vineyard. Many others of the Church also are bound by illness and weakness of the body, causing them to have to reduce their ability to minister. May each of us find time, daily, to constantly remember, in the deepest of our prayers, those in need who live and work around us for the Kingdom.
"I would that ye impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants..."

Mosiah 2:43

There always seems to be activities and programs that the Remnant Church is involved which are little understood or known to the vast majority of the Saints. When we speak of the “outreach” of the Church, all too often that phrase is caught up in our missionary work, the temporal development of sites and buildings, and the day-to-day governance of the Church as a whole.

However, there are many other activities, which are equally important, and which bring help and relief, along with much needed sustenance to many of our Center Place members and those of the local communities. We would like to share just one of these “outreach ministries” with you at this time.

Sister Frances Chelline has been directing the operation of the Food Pantry, housed in the Remnant Church headquarters building, for several years. In that time, literally thousands of pounds of food and food stuffs have been given to those in need. We recently asked Sister Chelline to share some of her thoughts regarding this ministry.

"Working in the Food Pantry is something I truly enjoy doing. I pray every Friday that I will always be kind, loving, and patient to those who come to us in need. The Pantry is open on Fridays from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon. Boxes of food are prepared and given to those who have signed up at Lunch Partners.

“When they come to the Food Pantry, they may receive one box of food each month. There are times when someone comes in who has not signed up, but is in great need. We either give them an emergency bag or a box of food. We normally put dry foods such as cereal, macaroni and cheese, crackers, cookies, Hamburger Helper, Ramen noodles and such in each box. A variety of cans, such as vegetables, fruits, soups, tuna fish, salmon, stews, chili beans, broth, etc. is also usually available. Further, peanut butter, cake and cookie mixes, jellies, and canned or dry milk is also given out. When possible, treats such as Heath Bars, Pop-Tarts, candies, tea, and sugar packets can be given to them. So far this calendar year, we have given out 138 boxes of food plus many emergency bags and extra boxes of food.

“We welcome anyone to come and see our Food Pantry in operation and just visit with us any Friday morning. We especially wish to thank all of those who have donated so generously to our cause.”

Perhaps no greater explanation of this ministry which Sister Chelline offers is found in these wonderful words of King Benjamin: “Behold, I say unto you, that because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of my God. And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God.” Mosiah 1:48, 49
Once again a group of Remnant Saints, from different areas of the country, came together on the hill at Guthrie Grove Retreat Center. Remnant Saints have met on this hill now for more than ten years for reunions. Guthrie Grove Retreat Center is owned and operated by the Community of Christ Church.

We had a wonderful week once again. We had approximately 60 campers of all ages. Some campers have attended from the very beginning of our reunions, and some were here for the first time. We were blessed with an abundance of priesthood, and the Holy Spirit used our priesthood to minister to the people. The Holy Spirit was present in our music, in our worship, in our class work, and in our play times. We were blessed with beautiful prayers and powerful testimonies. The Lord spoke to us and instructed us to continue to study and pray to Him for His constant guidance. The gift of love that can only be given by God was present everywhere.

Iowa thanks everyone who made this reunion possible. Without the attendance of Saints from the “Center Place,” the Iowa Reunion would cease to happen. We invite all those who attended this year to come back again next year. We invite those who have been here before, but could not make it this year, to come back again. We especially invite those who have never attended to “come and see” what you may have been missing.

The Lord truly does meet us on this sacred, precious hill.
What a wonderful reunion we had in Cascade, Idaho. We were blessed with the wonderful Spirit of peace and unity, the weather was beautiful, warm in the daytime and cool in the evening, for excellent campfires and sleeping. It also allowed us to have all of our services in the chapel, something we have not been able to do for several years.

We had an abundance of young people again this year and each of them, as they could, participated in all aspects of the camp, from their participation in the worship services to volunteering for kitchen help to sweeping the floors. By working together in these ways, along with their time together at recreation periods, they enjoyed building lasting relationships with each other. Our reunion was not large with only 30 campers, but the Spirit which greeted us each day, and stayed with us until the close of the day’s activities, allowed us to grow together quickly and powerfully. Our study focus was on the Remnant Revelations and how they apply to us today. Each camper left the reunion with a deeper understanding of where we, as a Church, stand in today’s world and the outstanding potential we have when the task which lies before us is completed.

We enjoyed the presence of several families from “back east” this year as we found the return of Elder C.H. Whiteman and his wife Pat and Patti Jobe among our campers. New to Cascade this year, but looking forward to their return in the years to come, were Craig and Ardyce Nordeen. They jumped right in with Ardyce leading the evening campfires, Craig adding his ministry to the worship and preaching services, and both of them participating in the reunion choir. Craig and C.H. led our prayer services and brought a refreshing and tender Spirit to those moments of worship.

Sister Paula Brackett was our reunion ‘food service director’ and, as might be expected, did an outstanding job of feeding everyone. Morgan Wigle served as the reunion director with great support from Tony Hill and Jim Watkins. And thanks to each and every person who served as a teacher, helper, dishwasher, firewood gatherer, floor sweeper, and in any other task which needed to be done – you served God and the Saints. Thank you.
The 2015 South-Central States Reunion was again held at the Northeastern Oklahoma A&M University campus on June 20–26. Our theme this year was “Finding the Path Less Traveled.” We had a well-rounded line up of speakers from around the South-Central States region.

We started our week off on Sunday morning with Patriarch Arthur Allen. He and his lovely wife Joann have gathered from Marlin, Texas and now attend First Branch in Independence, Missouri. He spoke to us about “Yielding to God’s Word.” On Sunday night, we heard from High Priest Elbert Rogers, the presiding elder at the Sperry, Oklahoma Branch. He spoke on “We Build Our Faith on His Promises.” The Monday evening preaching service featured High Priest John Atkins, the presiding elder at the Rogers, Arkansas Branch. His topic was “We Sacrifice Our Desires for His.” At the Tuesday evening preaching service we heard from Seventy Roger Tracy, a member of the Sperry, Oklahoma Branch. He spoke on the subject “We Acknowledge There Is More Truth to Learn.” The Wednesday night preaching service featured Bishop Benson Galbraith from Center Branch in Independence, Missouri and spoke on “We Accept God Offers a More Abundant Life.” At our Thursday night preaching service, we heard from Apostle Donald Burnett whose message was on “We Become Willing to Grasp the Rod of Iron.”

We had two adult classes. One was taught by High Priest David Van Fleet and the other one was taught by High Priest Elbert Rogers. The young adult class was taught by Seventy Bruce Terry while the children’s teacher was Sister Coral Rogers. On Tuesday afternoon we had a class by Bishop Ben Galbraith. Our afternoon sharing sessions were conducted by the Patriarchs which brought a lot of testimonies from the Saints. It is always good to hear how the Lord is blessing those who endeavor to follow after His teachings.

We had a campfire in the Commons area each night with songs and skits from many of the campers. It was a good time for fun and fellowship for all ages. Some of the Saints were glad not all of the antics in the skits were captured on film.

In our morning prayer services, we did something that has been done at other times with great results. The Aaronic Priesthood, along with our bishop, stood at the corners of the room and offered prayers and called for the ministering of angels as the Saints gathered for our morning prayer services. This raised the level of the presence of the Holy Spirit and inspired the Saints to reach a higher level of communion with our Lord. Also, on one particular morning, there were three of the Saints who were permitted to see the presence of Lamanite angels who visited our service. The morning prayer services were a great boost to the Saints as we prepared ourselves to commune with the Lord throughout the day. We found that the Holy Spirit was with us in great abundance for the entire week.

There were fewer Saints than usual at this year’s reunion. We had forty-four campers in all, but that just allowed us to draw closer to each other in our worship and fellowship. I know each year we say “this year we had the best reunion ever.” However, I can say this with great assurance: the 2015 reunion was the best all-around reunion for the South-Central States. The level and intensity of the Holy Spirit was in great abundance and the Saints were uplifted and richly blessed in every way.
Each year, when we try to write an article about the Geneseo Reunion, it gets harder and harder to do so. How do you keep saying that it just keeps getting better and better? For those Saints who have never attended this particular reunion, or any other, they are missing out on what it is like to live in a Zionic condition, even for a short time. Many of the Saints have grown up attending reunions and that is why they are active today. Others are just learning to appreciate this wonderful experience and look forward, in anticipation, to more in the future.

Sometimes we allow the vision of the Kingdom to become dim because we focus on the hard work that lies ahead and the small number of Saints that we have to carry out this task. This is why getting together at camps and reunions is such a valuable ministry for those in the priesthood as well as our brothers and sisters who serve as members.

One hundred and twelve Saints and friends from several different states and Canada assembled on these beautiful grounds in western Illinois for a week of fun, fellowship, music, classes, preaching ministry, and prayer services. Each came for different reasons and with different expectations, but nobody left disappointed. In reading the individual testimonies, which are posted on the Remnant Church Facebook page, we can see the remarkable effect this week of walking down “The Old, Old Path,” especially with “our friends most dear” had on all who attended.

One of the remarkable strengths of this reunion is that it is for all groups in the Restoration Movement. It makes no difference which group you come from, and that subject is never broached during the week. We came as a group of eager, extended family members wanting to hear the ministry that was being provided and basking in the fellowship and friendship of everyone in attendance. Thirty priesthood men were available for ministry, and each was allowed to participate in the services. Most were introduced as “men of God, authoritatively called to bring ministry.” No more was necessary. All differences were put aside, and we began to realize that, fundamentally, there are no differences. We are all children of our Heavenly Father looking for His Spirit to teach, heal, and show the way to the Kingdom.

The Lord was obviously pleased with our preparation and participation. Because of the unity experienced, we were blessed to hear His voice on Wednesday morning as He gently blessed, challenged, and chastised, to show the changes that we must make if we are to be His. Several came with physical disabilities, and they were presented to the Lord for His healing Spirit to intercede. Brothers Bob Moe, Paul Gress, Tom Beem, and Robert Murie were administered to, and each had a testimony of an almost immediate healing. Brother Tom actually had a heart attack two days after delivering a powerful sermon, but, after his administration in the washroom where he had collapsed, he felt almost instantly relieved. He was sent to the hospital for medical precautions but was able to drive himself home after just a couple days in the facility.

The camp was threatened several times during the week with tornadoes and severe thunderstorms, complete with hail. We were protected as the storms seemed to break as they approached and went around our campgrounds. A few of us left with some hail damage on our vehicles, but the Lord protected us. During one storm, we all gathered in the basement cafeteria and sang songs and prayed for protection. Never once were we in any danger as our Lord protected His people.
One of the best features of the reunion was the abundance of young people who were in attendance. They, and their dedicated teachers, gathered daily for classes and fellowship. They had their fun on the playground and in their trips to swimming in a nearby lake, but when it was time to get serious, they settled right down and entered the sanctuary with reverence. As a group, they were given a “special word” to listen for in the evening sermon. Whenever the brother preaching mentioned that “word,” they made a mark on their paper. At the end of the evening, the young person with the closest total was given a special treat. It was exciting to watch them jotting down their marks as the sermons progressed.

Everyone chipped in to do their best to help out. The KP lists were filled and very seldom did Brother Jack Evans have to find extras to fill in. Even KP was an uplifting experience.

Another wonderful use of our Aaronic ministry was to see the men standing at the four corners of the campground and in the sanctuary just prior to the fellowship services and the evening sermons. This was done to invite angelic ministry to attend our worship and help us get the most out of what was rightfully ours to expect. It was so touching to see these wonderful men position themselves at their stations, quietly and reverently. As soon as the group saw the men in position, they lowered their heads and began to pray that the Spirit would come in abundance. And it did.

The week went by all too quickly, and there were many sad faces, especially on the young people, as we gathered to say goodbye. At the closing fellowship service, all the priesthood stood on the sides of the sanctuary as “watchmen in the tower” to show the magnification of their calling and their dedication to act as servants to the Saints. Then the Saints gathered together in a large circle, holding hands, and sang in closing, “The Old, Old Path,” and then finally, “God Be With You Till We Meet Again.”

So now we say goodbye for another year and most are counting the days until we can return again. The reunion was extremely well organized, and everyone thanks Brother Mark Deitrick for his hard work in putting everything, and everyone, together. May God bless us until we meet again.
By Terry W. Patience

The Center Place In-Town Reunion is now complete. At the beginning of the week we had 82 people registered. Of those, we had about 15 youth attending. I know that there were more people who attended different classes and services throughout the week, so it’s hard to say what a true total would be. All were welcome, and I am so glad that so many found that they wanted to be there.

The evening services were the best attended. On Sunday evening, we had about 20 visitors from BYU as they passed through our area during a summer of study beginning at Nauvoo and working their way through the Church historical sights before returning home. They provided the special music for the service.

There were two prayer services held during each of the weekdays: a 7:15 AM priesthood service and an 8:15 AM service for all who wished to attend. The general prayer and testimony services were led by Presiding Patriarch Carl Vun Cannon and the Order of Patriarchs.

During the week, two classes were provided for the youth: one grouping for the junior and senior highs, and one combining music classes for the elementary students along with their arts and crafts. A morning and afternoon class for the adults was also provided. The morning adult classes were taught by Seventy Matt Goodrich and Elder Alex Vun Cannon. The afternoon class/discussion was led by Apostle Terry Patience. After the afternoon class, we all headed to our own determined destinations. For some of us, that was an afternoon rest period.

Many of the young people (and a few adults) had the opportunity to go swimming at a local indoor pool instead of taking a rest. This is always something that the youth look forward to.

Most people returned for the evening preaching services. President Frederick N. Larsen provided the ministry on Sunday. Ted Webb provided the ministry on Monday, Roger Schuelke on Tuesday, Ray Setter on Wednesday, and Bruce Terry on Thursday - all members of the Quorum of Seventy. So, as you can see, we had a missionary team working for us all week.

After the evening services, we were privileged to participate in evening campfires. Due to the weather, two of the services were indoors. The other two were at the newly refurbished campfire site behind the Conference Center.

We also had a good turn-out for the lunches each day where good fellowship and food were had by everyone. The meals were funded by a free will offering which allowed more to share in the meal without feeling the burden of the expense. Thank you, Sisters Ardyce Nordeen and Linda Burnett, for the wonderful food.

Towards the end of the week, I discussed with Assistant Director Bill Derr how well everyone pitched in, making this a successful, peaceful, and spiritual camp. We both hope that everyone who participated came away with greater spiritual strength, and an increase in knowledge about our Church and our Savior, and with our friendships toward each other greatly deepened.

God bless and we hope to see you, and many others, here next year.
Reunions are a very special and very unique part of our Church life, and their existence is only in those church groups that formed in the Restoration Movement from 1860 on. In other words, they are only a part of the RLDS Church experience.

In the early Reorganization, there were two conferences each year, a spring conference and a fall conference. Over time, the Church leadership, under Joseph Smith III, decided that preparing for and conducting two conferences each year was consuming all their energies and so the fall conference was dropped. This was disappointing to many of the Saints, not so much that they missed the business meetings, but they missed the chance to gather for fellowship and worship. Thus, the idea for “Reunion Meetings” was born.

In 1883, Charles Derry and John Hawley presented a resolution to the General Conference that would provide for the holding of reunions:

The committee to whom was committed the papers in respect to reunion meetings by the church, beg leave to report that they respectfully recommend that this conference advise that mission and district authorities arrange for such reunions for religious services, when and where it may be by them deemed best. (Church History, Vol. 2)

That conference adopted this proposal and thus began the practice of holding reunions, which has been our unique tradition now for more than 130 years. Even in times of separation and other confusion, we have continued to meet in reunions on a regular basis.

The first reunion of the Church was held in Leland’s Grove, Shelby County, Iowa in September of 1883 for a full week. Many attended, including members of the Twelve and Seventy, and a number of high priests. Joseph Smith III was also present. The assembly was so satisfied that they immediately adopted a resolution that more of such meetings be planned and carried out.

We, the Saints assembled in this reunion meeting, have realized spiritual blessings and favor from God, and have enjoyed the communion and fellowship of each other since we assembled together, and believing as we do that great good will accrue to the Church generally as well as to us individually, in the continuation of these meetings, resolve that we are in favor of holding a reunion meeting annually... (Church History, Vol. 2)

A reunion the following year in Garner’s Grove, Harrison County, Iowa, had more than three thousand Saints in attendance! But two years later, this same area saw a reunion of more than five thousand! Forty-two people were baptized at this reunion in 1886. The report of the Garner’s Grove Reunion in 1889 included the fact that 55 people were baptized, most of them adults, and that the Holy Spirit blessed the meetings there.

Between 1885 and 1890, there were also reunions held at Galland’s Grove, Iowa; at Harlan, Iowa; Laguna, California; Wheeler’s Grove, Iowa; Sacramento, California; Tulare, California; Jonesport, Maine; Logan, Iowa; and at Birmingham and Leeds, in England. All the reports that remain from these experiences are positive and encouraging. Gifts of the Spirit, healings, and the joy of close fellowship were present at all. This unique and special tradition in our movement was firmly entrenched!

The first reunions were often held in the months of September and October, which was the time the second conference each year had been held. By 1891, there were several held in the summer months also. Thousands attended these early reunions, both members of the Church and nonmembers who were curious, or actively seeking truth. As a result of excellent preaching, and the spiritual gifts manifest, many were baptized during these times.

At first, members of the Presidency or Twelve presided over the reunions. But as time went on, and the size and number of reunions grew, it became important for local districts to handle the administrative aspects of each reunion. With this trend, the reunions tended to be absorbed more and more fully into the planned activities of each district. This was the case in general by the turn of the Twentieth Century. In 1900, there were at least 12 reunions held from New England to California, and some in Wales and England. By 1902, that number had increased to twenty.

The schedules of the earliest reunions usually included only preaching and prayer services. As time went on, class activities and presentations were added, especially those of a missionary nature, since the gatherings often attracted visitors. By 1907, reunions were becoming a major summer activity for the Church. In that year, there were thirty-six reunions held between June and September. By this time, each reunion included scheduling for departmental
activities, especially as general church officers could be on hand to discuss Religio lessons, hymn and choir lessons, etc. Slowly a trend away from strictly adult-centered schedules gave way to a family-centered week, with classes, activities, and even special prayer services for children.

In 1912, the first reunion of the season was held in Australia in April, followed by forty-three more in the domestic fields of the United States and Canada. The larger districts were beginning to acquire their own reunion grounds, but there were not yet permanent facilities on those grounds. People still brought or rented tents for housing and cooked their own food. There were also, often, animals, horses, etc., that required pasturing.

The gatherings at reunions came to be an important aspect of Church life. Apostle J.F. Curtis said, “This gathering together at reunions tends to a higher spiritual condition, and should be encouraged, as the results for good are plain to be seen.” (Church History, Vol. 6)

By the 1920’s, many districts and stakes had purchased reunion grounds and were steadily making permanent improvements to them. Visiting general church officers found reunions to be among their best opportunities to teach the priesthood and clarify General Church policies and procedures. Both choir and congregational music benefitted from reunion experiences and lessons, and the First Presidency made the recommendation that the reunions devote one evening to an emphasis on the importance of higher education. (Graceland College was, by this time, in existence.)

In 1922, the Joint Council appointed a committee on reunions. This was to help smaller reunion groups benefit from the experience of those who had larger gatherings or who had been in the practice for more years. This committee was replaced in 1923 by a committee consisting of a member of the First Presidency, a member of the Twelve, and one representing the Church departments. They were given the task of working on reunion preparation as a year-round task. The reports to the Herald from these years show that reunions continued to be blessed with rich outpourings of spiritual gifts and prophecies.

In the 1920’s, centralized meal times became possible as groups constructed dining halls on their grounds. Planning for the food began months ahead of the reunion season. Many women’s groups sponsored “canning bees” to put up food for the coming reunions. At the same time, men would hold “work days” to get the grounds ready by cleaning and repairing facilities. All of these activities had a two-fold purpose: to reduce the costs associated with running a reunion and to promote fellowship and advanced spiritual preparation.

World conditions in the 1930’s and early 1940’s (the Great Depression and World War II) put a strain on some reunion activities and planning, but attendance continued to be surprisingly high, both in the United States and abroad. The dominant missionary tone of the earlier reunions had given way in large measure to pastoral ministries, although there were still many reunion baptisms, some even in war-torn England.

The members of the presiding quorums of the Church carried heavy burdens of responsibility during these years. Some of them taught or preached at as many as six reunions in a single season. Yet, they reported that each gathering was richly blessed. President McDowell said, “We believe that the spirit of this reunion can be taken as an index of the spirit of the Saints throughout the Church…There was present a spirit of hope, assurance of final victory, a conviction that…the purposes of God as expressed to the Church [shall] be realized.” (Church History, Vol 8)

The 1950’s and 60’s were a turbulent time within the Reorganized Church, but reunions continued to grow in popularity and in number. Most domestic field districts were able to purchase campgrounds during this time. Sometimes two or more districts would purchase land together, allowing for more Saints to attend reunions and youth camps.

The reunion experience was, for a time, sheltered from Church politics, but gradually, those issues pressed down even there. Those who wished to promote new doctrine and policies found the groups gathering each summer a captive audience and often tried to dominate a reunion’s focus. Sometimes it was successful; in others it was not. After a few years, those who were fundamentally like-minded tended to register only for those reunions that they felt would not expose them to unwanted changes. This also worked for a time, but eventually there came the time of breaking away.

As independent branches formed, the desire to rekindle the spirit of fellowship, worship, and outreach that had been such a large part of the reunion experiences through the years reformed. Very quickly, ways to gather in the summer for reunions and camps were found, and the tradition continued.

Today, the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints hosts four or five reunions each summer. There, the blessings of gathering apart from the world are gained as Saints meet and fellowship together. It is a wonderful time to recharge spiritual “batteries” and renew commitments. If you haven’t attended a reunion in a while, look ahead to the coming summer and make that a priority in your planning. You will be blessed and strengthened just as Brother Curtis said so many years ago, “…the results for good are plain to be seen.”
What an inspiring journey we have been on, together, this past summer! Our Theme for the 2015 Senior High Camp was, “Jesus…I AM.”

We had engaging and encouraging classes built around our hope in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Jesus revealed to the world that He was that “I AM” which promises us so much, and He proclaimed many things about His mission, His nature, and His character in the Gospel of John. Jesus declared: “I am the bread of life,” “I am the light of the world,” “I am the door of the sheepfold,” “I am the good shepherd,” “I am the resurrection and the life,” “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” “I am the true vine.” Apostle Terry Patience and Bishops Dan Keleher and Richard Paris led classes on these thoughts. Additionally, we viewed and discussed some lessons from the series, “Overcoming Emotions That Destroy.” The lessons centered on understanding the emotion of anger, identified the three masks of anger, revealed that anger is really an indicator that something else is going on deeper in our lives, and shared tools on how to effectively use this emotion for good.

Our evening classes together began with a movie night, “God’s Not Dead.” The story is told of an atheist philosophy professor who plans to forego “dusty arguments” in his class, and insists the new students declare that “God is dead.” Unable to do this, Josh Wheaton is challenged to defend his faith and prove to the class that “God’s Not Dead.” Against all odds, Josh stands up for his faith and takes on the challenge. Throughout the week, we explored lessons from the movie, and what the Scriptures tell us about God’s desire for each of us to take a stand for Him, and acknowledge Him before man.

Activity classes were led by Rebecca Paris. We had the opportunity to make beautifully decorated glass lanterns, create magnetic note boards, and paint some creative crafts. Abby Mercer led our Group Fun! What new and exciting games we played in our fellowship together. Rebecca led the singing (in her signature fun-loving, sometimes crazy style…. “Baby Shark!”) at our amazing campfires each night. What rich blessings we shared, whether we were indoors under the light of our candles, or under the canopy of God’s creation. We were encouraged to come before the Lord to seek His blessing, to receive a healing, to receive His guidance, and to receive His instruction as we were presented before the Lord’s throne. We shared in His Spirit in our times of prayers and testimonies, and received the ministry of angels and the presence of the Church of the Firstborn, as well as direction from on High.

We had such a wonderful staff. Our amazing cook, Corwyn Mercer, was assisted by Tessa Woods (who also assisted by Sara Reynolds, Dan Keleher, Stephanie Turner, Drew Coleman, Abby Mercer...and others!); our camp log editors and camp photographers, Samantha Holt and Marci Damon; additional counselors for our young men, Drew Coleman and Josh Madding; and counselors for our young women, Sara Reynolds and Jasmine Buttery; and our camp nurse, Stephanie Turner. Thank you to each of you for your tireless work and dedication to this year’s camp.

From the beginning of camp, your love for each other and the unity you displayed were a wonderful expression of the type of love your Heavenly Father desires for you to share. We were blessed by the Holy Spirit moving amongst us because of your faith and
dedication. As the Lord reminded us, "I came to do the will of the Father, because My Father sent me; and my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, I might draw all men unto me." The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, looking for you, desiring to draw each of you back into His presence. Never forget: the voice of the Lord is calling you: "Arise, and get thee into the mountain." May we never stop climbing the mountain to reach the pinnacle, into the waiting arms of our Heavenly Father.

What a joy it was to share this week with each of you. Thank you for allowing me to join you on this journey. May the Lord bless you and keep you, now and forever more.

Your Brother in Christ, Richard Paris
Junior High Camp was held from June 27 through July 4 this year at the Remnant Church campgrounds in Blackgum, Oklahoma. The campgrounds were developed specifically for the gathering of the youth to learn about Jesus and to grow closer to Him. Over the years the campgrounds have also been the site of many spiritual blessings to the Church at men’s and women’s retreats, and the genesis of the renewal of the Church with the “Blackgum Experience.” It is with this history supporting them that the youth gathered in anticipation of being able to draw closer to the Lord and see the work He has for them to do. The week of fun and learning did not disappoint. As the youth came together, the presence of the Lord was known.

The camp was directed by High Priest Corwyn Mercer with Elders Darrin Moore and Dustin Westbay, Deacons David Patrick and Jared Hoover, Josh Madding, and Bishop Ben Galbraith serving as male counselors. The female counselors were Melody Moore, Dani Patrick, Gabrielle Mercer, Katelyn Mercer, and Samantha Holt. Danelle Woodruff traveled from Indiana with her two children but, due to illness, had to leave at the beginning of the week. We were sorry to see her and her children leave early. Christy Williams provided great care of the campers as the camp nurse. Diana Galbraith and Sariah Hoover provided the meals with the help of cook-in-training Molly Moore. Sarah Bass and Kielah Zahner served as counselors-in-training and brought great energy to all that they were asked to do.

Darrin Moore and Jared Hoover provided an outdoor survival class while David Patrick and Katelyn Mercer provided an archery class. Dani Patrick provided an arts/crafts class and Dustin Westbay and Josh Madding provided an acting class. Dani Patrick provided an arts/crafts class and Dustin Westbay and Josh Madding provided an archery class. Christy Williams taught a basic first aid class while Ben Galbraith provided spiritual watch care as the camp pastor. Corwyn Mercer taught the theme class on “Jesus” with the text of the book of James, Chapters 1 and 2, as the basis for the class. Gabrielle Mercer provided the campfires with the great support of her sister, Katelyn. Samantha Holt did a great job on the camp log with the support of Melody Moore and her photography skills. All these staff members gathered to serve thirteen girls and seventeen boys. We planned for twenty campers and hoped for twenty-five. God is good all the time! I am thankful for the children that came and the opportunity to serve them. Thanks for the wonderful staff that worked together to show these children what a people after God’s heart looks like.
In July, many of our youth from the Remnant Church, as well as friends and family from other denominations, attended Vacation Church School held at the Gathering Place. This year’s theme was, “The Armor of God.” Our songs, lessons, and fun activities were based on the theme in Ephesians 6 as well as the following scripture in Micah 6:8: “What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”

The youth were enthusiastic about learning what it means to put on the whole armor of God. In class, they learned through the stories of Samuel, Paul and Ananias, Enoch, and Jesus on how to be prepared to be in the army of God. The lessons from these biblical stories taught about building good character, obedience, faith, integrity, compassion for others, servitude, forgiveness, and humility. The youth learned what these traits, and each piece of armor, have in common. Through the testimony of Deacon David Tims and his recent motorcycle accident, the youth saw how important it is to have a relationship with God in addition to wearing physical “armor” in life. The Uncle Charlie and Sally skits, written by Ardyce Nordeen, gave us a glimpse of how the old Bible stories still apply in our situations today at school, church, home, and in this world.

The perfect accompaniment to our lessons was the making of our “armor” in crafts class, playing fun games in recreation, and singing songs about God’s promises.

During this week, each of the staff members and youth learned, most importantly, how the Lord loves each one of us and desires for us to live in harmony in His army. Many thanks to all of those who dedicated their time and efforts to Vacation Church School and our youth.
The High Priests Quorum

– Quorum President David Van Fleet

The high priests have met four times between conference and the beginning of August to discuss the “Letter of Instruction” written by President Joseph Smith III, studying recommendations for enriching prayer services, and listening to Elder Alex VunCannon’s two-part class titled, “Church of the Firstborn.” The high priests are now reviewing a proposed resolution to convert President Smith’s 1912 “Letter of Instruction,” which can be found in Volume 6, pages 560 – 575 of Church History, into a resolution to serve, if approved, as permanent guidance to the Church in the matter of succession in presidency. The RLDS Church followed the procedure contained in this letter in the selection of Frederick M. Smith, Israel A. Smith, and W. Wallace Smith, but of course Wallace B. Smith was ordained as president of the Church while his father, W. Wallace Smith, was still alive. However, this guidance has not been accepted as binding previously, and making this a lawful process unto the Church will help ensure smooth transitions in the future.

The high priests are also studying ways to enrich prayer services based on internal discussions and several written references, including Harry Doty’s book, Prayer Meetings. The high priests will meet again in September to revise and/or complete their recommendations and submit them to the First Presidency for their review. It is hoped that the already uplifting prayer services held in the branches of the Church can be raised to “Himalayan” levels.

The classes by Elder VunCannon were found to be insightful and faith-strengthening and, as a result, his class will be repeated in a three Sunday evening class at First Branch in Independence, Missouri. The dates for this class are October 11, 18, and 25 at 6:00 PM CDT. Everyone is welcome to attend, and it is planned that these classes will be carried on live-stream for those living out of town.

Music Department

– Sister Barbara Sherer

It’s been a busy year for the musicians in the Center Place. Their talents are so appreciated by the Saints. The musical drama, “Journey to the Land of Promise” at April’s General Conference, was amazing. It was exciting to see the new and young talents blossom as they magnified their gifts of music for all to hear and see.

Members of the Remnant Church have been invited to participate in a Hymn Fest of Thanksgiving on November 14, a Saturday evening at 7:30 PM at the Stone Church. Sister Alice Beebe will direct a combined choir for all to come and sing. Two rehearsals will be scheduled in the near future. What a wonderful chance to sing in a choir in the Stone Church. What a wonderful opportunity to share once again with those who share our early years of the Restoration. What a wonderful opportunity to bask in the beauty of the Stone Church and let memories flow. I’m excited. I hope you are also. Come join in a night of Thanksgiving. An audience and singers are needed.

The Children’s Hymnal Committee has been hard at work. We have chosen the songs and are in the process of getting the copyrights for them, along with getting them into a final format and ready to print. Andrew VunCannon is working hard getting the songs ready to go. We have had lots of fun reminiscing about what songs we liked as children, along with looking at many new songs. Excitement is building as we close in on completing this project. Several of the new songs have been tried with the youth at reunions and camps, and we are encouraged at the response. The songs in this hymnal will be emphasizing the distinctions of our faith. Hopefully they will be sung and memorized so they might find a place in the hearts of our children to help them in their childhood days and carry them on to another
generation. Several workshops will be held to help everyone learn them. Members of this committee are Sisters Ardyce Nordeen, Cindy Patience, and Barbara Sherer.

A hymnal committee consisting of Apostle Terry Patience, Sister Linda VerDught, Patriarch Carl VunCannon, and myself felt we should first check on the cost of reprinting our “Hymnal of the Remnant Saints” on to a lighter paper. After reviewing the cost with the First Presidency, it was determined to wait for any reproductions of the hymnal at this time.

There are approximately sixty new hymnals available for purchase at $7.00 each with shipping cost added if needed. Piano hymnals will be printed at the headquarters office on an as-needed basis. That cost will be determined at time of printing.

Priests’ Quorum
– Quorum President Keith Cruickshank

In an effort to further increase the ministry of the Aaronic Priesthood, the Priest’s Quorum, along with other men comprising the rest of the Aaronic Priesthood quorums, was invited to stand in front of the congregation before the Summer Series evening service on July 12. They offered silent prayers for the service and for the ministry of angels to come and reside with the Saints during that service. This summer the Aaronic Priesthood also did this same priesthood activity at several reunions and camps. On July 1, as President of the Priest’s Quorum, I also visited the Sperry, Oklahoma Branch and attended their priesthood meeting.

Women’s Council
– Sister Marci Damon

The Women’s Council is excited to share their plans and programs for the up-coming months. In April we said good-bye to two very active members of the Council. Beckie Hogan’s smile and “We can do this!” attitude will be greatly missed, but we wish her the very best in her future endeavors in serving the Lord. Christy Williams was chairperson of the Council for four years. Her dedication and hard work will be deeply missed, but we wish her the very best in her future service for the Lord. The Council added to their members Sisters Connie Boswell from Center Branch and Deborah Schuelke from First Branch. The Council also has a new chairperson, Sister Marci Damon.

The Women’s Council has been busy putting together a mission statement and handbook for guiding the Council in their work. The Women’s Council mission statement is: “To aid the women of the church in developing their spiritual gifts and talents for the building of Zion.” This handbook will provide members with guidelines for selecting new members, running meetings, and defining job descriptions. It is the desire of the Council that this handbook will help members better understand their duties and service while participating on the Council.

Programs of education, fellowship, and worship are being planned for the upcoming months. The Council members are looking at two opportunities to provide educational classes. The first will be during the October Women’s Retreat, on October, 2-4, 2015, and the second will be in February, 2016, a one day workshop. The Council is anxiously working on themes, class material, and even investigating the use of live-streaming for the workshop. This will allow the women in outlying branches, and those that are isolated, to be able to watch the sessions. We are also hoping to be able to set up a way for women watching the live-stream to send in questions and make comments. Please keep these two opportunities to learn, worship, and fellowship in your prayers as the Council continues their preparation for the retreat and workshop; more news to come!

The opportunities to fellowship, visit, and lift each other’s spirits is always important and the Women’s Council is planning something very special for the Women’s Reception at the 2016 Conference in April. We are hoping that as many ladies as possible will be able to attend this particular reception this coming conference. We do not want to let the “cat out of the bag,” so please do not try to get any of the members to spill the beans, but we do hope that no “Sister in Christ” will miss out on this very special activity at Conference.

Another project by the Council will be to update and enlarge the Women’s Council page on the Remnant Church’s website. It is the desire of the Council to be able to provide informational articles that will be of benefit to individual branch Women’s Departments. The first article to be placed
on the website will give guidelines on how to set up a visiting program in your branch. The article will give directions on how to set up and run a program where visiting will occur for those who are sick (in a hospital or rehab center), those who are college age youth, and those who are “home bound.” We encourage all leaders of their branch Women’s Departments to look at this information and use that which would be of most benefit to their branch.

The Council would also like to take this time to briefly introduce the women on the Council. The Council is comprised of two representatives from Blue Springs Branch, Center Branch, and First Branch, and one representative from Bountiful Branch. Each woman will serve for a total of four years on the Council. Please allow each sister on the Council to introduce themselves to you.

Sister Ardyce Nordeen is from the Blue Springs Branch. She states that serving on the Women’s Council is an honor and a privilege. It is a somewhat new dimension for her since most of her service in the Church through the years has been child-centered, but she is excited and challenged by the opportunities to work side-by-side with sisters in the faith to do the Lord’s will in these last days.

Sister Pat Walsh is also from the Blue Springs Branch. Pat and her husband, Rod, moved to Independence in 1974. They have attended the Blue Springs Branch since the mid 1990s. She is a retired first grade teacher from the Independence School District. Although a relatively new member of the Women’s Council, Pat has enjoyed working with, and learning from, this dedicated group of women. She looks forward to continued service as the Council works together on ideas for helping all women of the Church use their gifts and talents for the building of Zion.

Sister Connie Boswell is from Center Branch. Connie was born and raised near Lamoni, Iowa, and is the sixth generation in the Restored gospel. She has lived in the Independence, Missouri, area since 1989. Connie is a self-employed artist who loves painting and playing the Native American flute. Connie is married to Bill Derr who is branch president of Center Branch.

Sister Cindy Patience is also from Center Branch. The 2015-2016 year will be the last year she serves on the Women’s Council. She has felt blessed to have been a part of the planning and carrying out of the events offered for our women. She has learned that you can continue to serve in the midst of trials and challenges. It is her prayer that the Lord will use the Council as He sees fit to uplift the wonderful women of this Church. If there is one message that she would leave for the handmaidens right now it is to prepare. First of all, prepare your hearts to endure and to share; prepare for Zion; prepare your families and your homes temporally and spiritually in order that our neighborhoods can be shining lights in times of trouble and that generosity and love will prevail.

Sister Alisa Friedrich is from First Branch. She resides in Blue Springs, Missouri, with her husband, David, and their pets. She is a Library Media Specialist at Sni-A-Bar Elementary in Grain Valley, Missouri. She is currently serving her fourth year on the Women’s Council. She appreciates the opportunities she has had to help organize and attend programs and retreats for the women of the Church and is thankful for the growth they have provided her. She also enjoyed helping coordinate a Zumba class on Monday evenings at the Conference Center. She is thankful for all the wonderful Saints she has met on her journey with the Council and appreciates the opportunity to serve.

Sister Deborah Schuelke is also from First Branch. She was born in Hobbs, New Mexico. Her family moved to Midland, Texas in 1960 where she met and married Roger Schuelke. They have three sons who live in Texas with their families. The Lord led Deborah and Roger to the Remnant Church in 2005. They followed the Lord’s plan to gather in 2010 when they moved to the Center Place. She is thankful for the opportunity, with the Lord’s help, to work on the Women’s Council.

Sister Marci Damon is from Bountiful Branch. She has had the wonderful opportunity to assist in developing and organizing some of the various programs that the Women’s Council have provided over the last several years. In serving in this capacity, she has learned that the Lord will guide your every step when you step out in faith and do the best that you can do. It is her hope that the Lord will continue to guide her as she serves on the Women’s Council.
First Michigan Branch – Sr. Kathleen Haley Reporting

Apostle Bob Murie asked a question to start one of his recent Communion addresses: “Are you the same person today as you were yesterday?” If the answer is yes, then there has been no growth. We need to grow or learn something new each day. We need to repent of our sins. We have to show the world that we have truly repented. We do not need to take Communion to repent, we can do that anytime. Each day, we need to progress toward perfection. Communion is done so that we can remember the covenant we made with Jesus Christ at the water’s edge of baptism. For true repentance, we are told to “go and sin no more.”

This Mother’s Day we had a testimony service remembering the upbringing and the lessons that our mothers gave us. We took time to praise God for the mothers we had and for the faith that they taught us.

Memorial Day—a holiday for most people—but it comes with an expensive price tag, the cost of many lives over the years. There are very few left who remember WWI, and but a few left who served our country in WWII. There have been other wars and conflicts since where many have given their lives, limbs, or minds for our safety. Their families have also suffered a great loss. To all of them, we’d like to say a huge THANK YOU. I would also like to say thank you to all those who serve on the police and fire departments in this country. They also put their lives on the line for us. There really are no words that adequately describe our heartfelt feelings—so again I’ll say THANK YOU--AND MAY GOD BLESS AMERICA AND MAY AMERICA BLESS GOD.

Seventy Raymond Setter brought us a powerful sermon recently, “This Do—Stand Steadfast.” We need to remain faithful and endure to the end and be ready to accept and teach the influx of people that will be coming that the Lord is preparing in different faiths to accept His gospel at the end of times. Remember what Christ said, “Other sheep I have that are not of this fold.”

Satan waters down the message but GOD CHANGES NOT. Talk to God always. Before starting any type of project always ask yourself, “What would Jesus do?” God will answer and show us the way. We have to be tuned in to God, and obey His voice.

Bill McAllister went through his second back surgery in a month. Please pray for Bill that this time his back will be corrected.

We started “Christ in America” in the “Go Ye and Teach” slides. Constantly, there are new evidences coming forth all the time to confirm this. Very interesting!

Elder Jim Malmgren brought the communion address recently and did a wonderful job. Our special music for the service was “The Lord’s Prayer” which is Jim’s favorite hymn. He read from III Nephi 12: 26-29 which sums up the reason for the Communion. The remembrance of what Christ did for us by dying on the cross should make us humble and very thankful. By His action we know that He loves us very much. We need to show our love for Him by the service we do in His name.

Apostle Bob Murie taught a class on a past Sunday, asking us, “Who Closed the Cannon of Scriptures?” It was very interesting. I have always been taught that “God changes not. He is the same today, yesterday, and forever.” It only stands to reason that, if God spoke to the people all down through the ages, why would He change today and remain silent? There has been so much written that we do not have yet, so it makes sense that there is so much more to come.

We spent Father’s Day honoring our fathers by giving testimonies of them and of the values that they instilled in us. We also talked about our faith in our heavenly Father. We honor Him by following His Word.

We were also very happy to hear that Patriarch Dick Wilson came home from the nursing home. He has been through so much but we know that the Lord was also there with him. Sunday was also his birthday and, of course, Father’s Day and the first day of summer. What a beautiful day!!

We are very fortunate in this border area of Michigan and Ontario to be able to celebrate the birthdays of our
two great nations. Happy Birthday to Canada on July 1 and Happy Birthday to the United States of America on July 4. We love both of these friendly nations and pray that God will continue to bless them and that they, in turn, will thank the Lord for all His blessings.

In a Communion address, Priest Karl Bell relayed a story about a man who always prayed. One day someone asked him what he gained from praying all the time. He answered, “It’s not what I’ve gained but what I’ve lost. I’ve lost my fear (Jer. 33:38ff; Eph. 6:10-15) by putting on the whole armor of God. I’ve lost my anger by coming out of the darkness (Eph. 4:22ff). Bitterness is out of my life by accepting and acting on God’s Word. It’s an order by God to obey His commandments by controlling our emotions.

Apostle Murie, in his Communion remarks, which were along the same line, said that we should leave our bad emotions at the Church door and seriously consider whether or not to pick them back up when we leave. My question is, “What attributes have we lost through our prayers?

It’s Geneseo reunion time again. Three of our four priesthood members were able to go this year. They all came back with glowing testimonies of their experiences. They are also eager to attend again next year. We thank the Lord for the unity that exists there.

Praise the Lord! We will now be meeting for our worship services at the Holiday Inn at Haggerty Road and Grand River in Farmington, MI. We have chosen to meet on the first and third Sunday of the month. Meeting twice a month is far better than not meeting at all. May God’s Spirit be with us and bless us abundantly.

Sperry, Oklahoma Branch – Sr. Debbie Eastin Reporting

May’s rainfall brought relief from a three year drought in the State of Oklahoma. The Sperry area received a near record high of 15 inches of rain. By Memorial Week the lakes, ponds, and creeks were full or overflowing. Floodwater blocked roadways, damaged homes, and laid waste to spring crops. Being a blessed and provisioned people, our losses were minimal. The weekend of May 23 brought clear skies and the Blackgum Campground clean-up took place as scheduled. Seventy Roger Tracy, High Priest Elbert Rogers, Priest John Seaton, and new member Stuart Tindle joined others in preparing the ground for June events. Roger Tracy reported three new signs were placed at the campground: “Moroni Was Seen Here,” “Two Angels Stood Here,” and “Angels Sang with Us.” Sunday’s guest speaker, Elder Alex VunCannon, arrived safely to present the message and part one of a series on prophetic lineage.

June was all about camps, reunions, and blessings. Senior High Camp kicked off on June 13 with Alex Tibbitts and Christian Dobson attending from the Sperry Branch. Attending the Idaho Reunion were Elder C.H. Whiteman, Pat Whiteman, and Patti Jobe. On June 20, the Oklahoma Reunion started with attendance by 18 members of the branch. The families in attendance included the Rogers, Van Meter, Powers, Tibbitts, Holt, and Tracy. On the heels of the Oklahoma Reunion was the Junior High Camp. Sperry attendees were Parker Tibbitts, Caitlin Dobson, and Haylin Butler. Those I spoke with enjoyed the camps and reunions and felt blessed to be there. The best quote came from High Priest Elbert Rogers: “The reunion was low in numbers but high in Spirit.”

June blessings came in many forms. On Sunday, June 14, Alex VanCannon taught further on the ‘Calling of Prophets,’ and President James VunCannon brought the message. Scarlett Heilman, daughter of Lisa Heilman and Brandon Fitzgerald, was blessed by High Priest Elbert Rogers and Seventy Roger Tracy. The blessing was preceded by special music from the Children’s Choir. Following the service, guest and members gathered in the gym for a luncheon feast. Included in the lineup of desserts was a special cake presented to Matthew Jobe in recognition of his graduation from the University of Oklahoma with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. Certainly we were fed meat for our spirits and our flesh that day.

Although few in numbers due to reunion, Priest John Seaton provided the Father’s Day message on June 21. Presiding High Priest Steve Van Meter recognized the fathers with most children, the oldest, youngest, and newest member. All the men in attendance received a gift of a chocolate bar with message to take home.

In July, Independence Day celebration took center stage the first week as an abundance of fireworks lit the night skies. However, the focus turned quickly back to the needs of our congregation. On July 11, twenty men gathered together for a workday and Aaronic Priesthood meeting with Bishop Dan Keleher and Priest Keith Cruickshank. The day started with a hearty breakfast before class and dividing into work groups. The exterior of the building was spray washed, the storage shed was repaired as well as other maintenance work completed. (A big THANKS to all who attended and labored.)
We were further blessed with visits on July 19 and July 26. Elder Alex VunCannon presented the conclusion of the series on prophetic lineage for Sunday School and the Sunday message. Despite little sleep the night before and a boring car drive, he presented a wonderful message and demonstrated a true desire to serve the Lord. Prayers were offered for his safe return home. The blessings and Spirit continued the next Sunday. Mike Zahner, Roger Tracy, John Seaton, and Elbert Rogers sang a song that captivated our hearts and ushered in the Holy Spirit. Patriarch Leland Collins presented a sermon and his testimony. The service was uplifting and a fine conclusion to the quarter.

**Rogers, Arkansas Branch – Sr. Lucy Minardi Reporting**

It’s the busy time of year again. Several members have been on vacation this summer. Jim and Lucy Minardi, along with Laura and Lukas, traveled to Gulf Shores, AL. Rob and Bev Parrish visited the East Coast. Nita Cook attended the reunion at Independence. Other members have entertained family, so our attendance has fluctuated this summer.

We have had several guest speakers during the summer months. Apostle Terry Patience ministered to us earlier this summer. We were also blessed to have Seventy Roger Tracy on May 17 and Bishop Dan Keleher in June. Seventy Matt Goodrich, his wife Esther, and his mother-in-law also visited with us, providing music and an inspiring sermon.

Our Sunday School class is studying the Book of Mormon. Jim Browning is our teacher and we have enjoyed discussing our lessons each week.

We invite all to come visit us. We have some wonderful things to do in our area. Crystal Bridges Art Museum is fantastic, and a new children’s museum just opened in Bentonville. We also have Beaver Lake nearby. So, if you are vacationing in our area, make sure to come to church!!

**Southern Indiana Branch – Sr. Rebecca Paris Reporting**

Greetings from Southern Indiana to all of our friends around the world! Our summer has gone by all too quickly here. Most of our schools in the area had about 7 weeks of summer break from the second week of June until the last week of July. School is back in session and summer is now just a happy memory of no homework and family time together.

Nathan Paris will be a part of the high school play and will also be running with the cross country team. He recently joined a traveling baseball team as well to improve his skills in that sport. He will be preaching his first sermon for us in December. We look forward to seeing him bring the spoken word to our group!

Rachel Paris has graduated high school as Salutatorian of her class and is leaving the area to start her experience at Western Kentucky University. She will be greatly missed! We know she will enjoy meeting so many new people and learning all about theater and communications. We wish her good luck and know the Lord has a special plan for her life!

Courtney Caffrey is starting her third year of college. She will be doing internships this school year for her degree in social work.

Tristan Caffrey is starting his sophomore year of high school. His ankle, which he broke in April, has healed fine and he was able to wear regular tennis shoes on both feet just in time to start the new school year. Praise God!

Riley Woodruff started high school this year and made the high school volleyball team! Congratulations!

Kevin Woodruff made his middle school tennis team! Awesome!

Richard and Rebecca, along with Rachel and Nathan, had a great time journeying out to Oklahoma for Senior High Camp this summer. Many hearts were softened, and the Spirit of the Lord blessed us with many rich experiences and testimonies.

We want to thank the Lord that Brian Caffrey, an elder at our congregation, has been given the option to work 2nd shift at his work so he will be able to join us more often on Sunday mornings. He had been working the 3rd shift.

Southern Indiana congregation is looking forward to hosting High Priests Rod Walsh and Jack Evans in August and then seeing Priest Josh Turner in September. We always love having visiting ministry and invite anyone traveling through the Louisville, KY, area to let us know. Our church is located just 15 minutes away from Louisville.

Richard Paris is looking forward to being a part of the baby blessing of William Kevin Romer in August. It is always a joy and a blessing to witness this beautiful ordinance of a newborn baby. We send our love and
prayers to each of you. We hope to meet someday in Zion.

First Branch – Sr. Brenda Evans Reporting

First Branch members have had a multiplicity of rewarding Church activities this summer.

Many of the branch members attended two or more of the reunions held in Iowa, Oklahoma, Illinois, and the Center Place Reunion held at First Branch, Independence. Each reunion was spiritually uplifting. The Oklahoma Reunion was directed by First Branch member, Apostle Don Burnett. The Geneseo, IL, Reunion, directed by First Branch member Elder Robert Moe and Apostle Robert Murie from Michigan, was probably the largest reunion in attendance as it was advertised as the “Geneseo Outreach Reunion” and invited members of churches throughout the Restoration to attend. The spirit of peace, unity, and harmony prevailed throughout the classes, the spoken Word, and the fellowship. Those attending recognized the special quality and worth of the week and there were many who spoke to this reporter of their desire to come back for next year’s reunion!

Youth camps involved several First Branch members, either as campers or staff members. The Remnant Vacation Church School was also staffed by several First Branch members and was held in the First Branch Worship Center. The children were treated to wonderful experiences of learning.

The Center Place’s summer preaching series is held at First Branch on Sunday evenings. Apostle Terry Patience, Patriarch Leland Collins, Apostle Don Burnett, President Ralph Damon, Presiding Bishop Kevin Romer, Seventy Ray Setter and President Fred Larsen have brought ministry in June and July. August speakers will include President Jim VunCannon, Presiding Patriarch Carl VunCannon, Seventy Roger Tracy and a closing service with High Priest Elbert Rogers preaching.

First Branch has been the scene for two weddings this summer. Tim Harrington and Cyndi Vreeland were married June 27 in a beautiful and sacred ceremony. The second joyful occasion was held July 26 when First Branch members Ken Byrd and Roxana Fishel were united in the sacrament of marriage by High Priest Kevin Romer. Ken and Roxana wanted to include their Church family as much as possible and invited members of First Branch to direct, coordinate, decorate, and participate in this sacred ordinance. May God’s blessings continue to pour out on Ken and Roxana and the people of First Branch as we knit our lives together in love and service to each other and to our Lord and Master.

Magic Valley, Idaho Branch - Br. James Watkins Reporting

The Idaho Saints have just completed a beautiful retreat out at the Brackett ranch. We met Friday, July 31 through Sunday, Aug. 2. We met to further our understanding of consecration, the gathering to Zion, and the temple rights as they were brought to the Church by Bishop W. Kevin Romer. Sadly, Bishop Romer was unable to come to Idaho as he was admitted to the hospital again for tests. We did watch his sermon on these subjects through the live-stream. Bishop Romer e-mailed information to Seventy Jim Watkins to further assist in explaining these subjects. We are all praying for Kevin’s healing.

The retreat was very well attended by the Idaho Saints. We look forward to another one in three months!

Carthage, Missouri Branch - Br. Dustin Westbay Reporting

The Carthage Remnant Branch has had a busy summer. We sent one senior high student, Jason Tevebaugh to Senior High Camp and Jeremiah, Jacob and Joshua Rea attended Junior High Camp. All of them had an amazing time at the camps and made lifelong friends.

Our little branch has a big beautiful addition to it, a gorgeous new Church sign, proudly displayed on the north side of the building.

Dustin and Tina Westbay are excited to share that they are in the process of adopting Daisy’s half brother. They are very appreciative of all the thoughts and prayers that have been with them through this process and welcome prayers in the next couple of months through the different court hearings to come.

Sister Jeannette Westbay is looking forward to her retirement on October 1 after working for the county for 35 years.

Life has been good to us and we look forward to more blessings that God has in store for our little branch.
How have you been feeling lately? Have you felt happy to be alive or has there been some sadness in your heart? Are you wondering why? Have you spoken ill of someone? Do you feel sorry for telling some truths, or half-truths, out of turn? Did you have an argument with someone that has not been properly resolved? Are you carrying a grudge for something that someone said about you or that you think was said out of spite?

These are all questions that you should ask yourself if you are hurting in your heart. Are you feeling a little depressed? Maybe you have injured someone by speaking an unkind word. Or you have been hurt by something that has been said against you.

There is one thing that you can do to resolve the situation. Go to the other party and talk about your feelings. I know, that is a very hard thing to do, but maybe, just maybe, the other person is feeling the same way about you. This is what the Lord requires you to do. You do not need to carry this in your heart. Over time, the feelings just fester and become almost unbearable.

When our hearts are burdened with discouragement, dislike, mistrust, and hurt, it is hard to find room to let the Savior come in. He cannot dwell where sin exists. Harboring these bad feelings just shuts the door on God. We are required to go to our enemies, ask for their forgiveness, and love and forgive them.

The Lord says, “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men” (Doctrine and Covenants 64:2e). What a wonderful piece of advice. He is taking the weight off our shoulders and is carrying the load for us. We are being asked to leave it in His capable hands.

But sometimes that is a very hard thing to do. We have a tendency to want to pick the load up again and continue to carry it. If we find satisfaction with this cumbersome load, and it continues to grow in our hearts, what room do we have left in our hearts for the Savior?

How is your heart? Is it heavy with discontentment? Does it have any hatred in it? Are you being seen as a happy person? If not, isn’t it about time you tried to lighten your load by seeking out the party that has injured you and make amends with them, or at least try? Remember, they just might be feeling the same way about you! By doing this, you will allow the Spirit of the living God to enter into your being and bring you comfort and peace. The deep sense of joy that you will feel is a gift from the Heavenly Father. Your step will be lighter and your spirit will be filled to overflowing with the true love of God.

Moments with the Master
A Remnant Church daily devotional, available now by subscription!

You may order issues sent to your home for the months of July through December, 2015. The cost per subscription is only $10.00. Fill out the form below and send it, with your payment, to: Ardyce Nordeen, Remnant Headquarters, 700 W. Lexington, Independence, MO, 64050. Make checks payable to the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and note for: MWTM. Order one for yourself and another for a loved one!

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I remember looking back on my life at all the many different times and different people that I have walked with down the sidewalk, down a hallway, or down a trail. I remember being a little girl and walking with my friends to school. We wanted to be together so we would walk next to each other, instead of one behind the other. No one wanted to be the one that had to walk behind the others, so we would walk arm in arm, down the sidewalk. We would bunch up and walk so close together so that we could squeeze as many of us as we could onto the sidewalk. I remember when I was dating, how we would walk, hand in hand. I remember helping at Vacation Church School and holding the hands of little kids as we would go from class to class.

What do all of these have in common? I wanted to be with these people. I wasn’t satisfied to walk by myself, to be left out, and I certainly wasn’t satisfied to walk behind them. I wanted to be with them, next to them, even hold their hand! I wonder if I want that same relationship with the Lord? Do I want to be with Him, next to Him? If I walk next to Jesus, what do I need to change in my life,? What do I need to remove? What do I need to add? If I were to walk with Jesus, would He ask me to do something that I might be too afraid to do? Do all these concerns make me want to be by myself instead of with Jesus? Or, do I want to do whatever it takes to walk hand-in-hand with Jesus?

Walking with someone is personal. It implies a relationship that is familiar, even cherished. Is my relationship with Jesus a personal, treasured relationship? Is He my best friend? Am I willing to do whatever my friend, Jesus, wants me to do? Jesus is standing with His hand out-stretched, waiting for us to take hold of it and walk with Him. He knows that things can be difficult and that we can get upset, or discouraged, but He is still there. He has said that He will walk with us anywhere; we just have to take His hand and follow Him.

As I thought more on this idea, I pondered, what does my best friend, Jesus, want me to do? He wants me to walk with Him each day, so what do I need to do? If it is something really big or really hard, will I be able to do it? As I kept thinking about this, a thought came to me: keep learning, keep trying, keep improving, and keep growing. Don’t get discouraged, keep trying each day to be a little better, and don’t give up. Don’t give up!

I remember as a kid walking with my dad and stopping to look at something while he kept walking. I would hear his voice, “Come on, Marci,” then he would turn around with his hand outstretched. I would come running up to him and grab his hand and then we would continue on. I believe that is what the Lord does with us. He turns around and says, “Come on, catch up to me,” with His hand outstretched for us to take.

Jesus doesn’t want us to get sidetracked with things that can slow us down and keep us from walking hand-in-hand with Him. What sidetracks me? Being too busy with “stuff” (music, video games, TV, etc.) that I don’t pray, or study my Scriptures, or go to Church? Being too afraid that I am going to fail that I don’t even try to change and do better? Being selfish and only thinking about myself, instead of remembering that there are other people who need my prayers, my help, even my smile? I hope you know how much Jesus would love to walk with you, hand-in-hand, every day of your life. He is waiting with His hand outstretched. Will you take it and walk with Him.

Testimonies from Senior High Camp

Keilah Zahner’s testimony: I had the privilege of being at both Senior and Junior High camps this year. I got to know what it is like to be both a camper and part of the staff. After being at both camps, I would have to say my favorite part about camp is the actual ride there. The reason being, the closer you get to the campgrounds, the more you feel God’s Spirit pouring into your heart. When those front two wheels of the car touch the campgrounds, God’s Spirit just hits you. It is very overwhelming; there’s a lot of joy and calmness that comes over you.

This year, at Senior High Camp we got a bunch of rain! It rained every day but the last couple of days of camp. At first, I thought the rain was going to ruin the week. But by the middle of the week I realized...
that it was just God bringing us closer together. We weren’t scattered everywhere around the camp. We were all together the whole time, allowing us to get to know each other better, and to see and be a part of everyone’s testimonies. Because of the rain, there was a stronger bond between all of us. When the last day came, I cried like a baby. It wasn’t necessarily the people I missed, but it was the Spirit I was going to miss. I was camp sick! I just can’t get the same Spirit at home like I can at camp, so I cried every night until Junior High Camp.

I was so excited to be going back and this time around I was a “counselor in training.” I couldn’t wait to see the kids experience the same Spirit and joyfulness that we had at Senior High Camp. I was privileged to see them grow spiritually and accept Jesus Christ in their lives. The night that David Patrick shared at campfire, I couldn’t help but cry. That same Spirit I had been missing for a week came back and filled my heart. Not only did it fill my heart, but it also touched some of the junior high kids. I was so blessed to be there when the kids experienced the Lord and the Holy Spirit. I just can’t wait to go back next year!

Sarah Bass’s testimony: I look forward to Senior High Camp every year and it brings me joy that I can’t explain when I reach those campgrounds. But this year, when we got to the campgrounds, I had this feeling that this year was going to be different, that something was going to happen that I wouldn’t forget. The first two days of camp went well, as they usually do, but this time we had a lot of rain which was keeping us inside and keeping campfire inside also. Campfire is my favorite part of camp, not just because of all the fun and good songs we sing, but because I have had all my great experiences at campfire. Sunday’s campfire went very well, but Monday’s was out of this world. Monday night we watched “God’s Not Dead,” one of my favorite movies, but this time I was paying attention to everything that was said.

After the movie, we were asked to stay in our seats. I felt the Holy Spirit was there with us, and I was certain something was going to happen. Richard Paris, Dan Keleher, Terry Patience, and Corwyn Mercer began offering special blessings to whoever wanted them. As I sat there, I had this urge to go up every time someone was done with their blessing, so I decided I would go up for a blessing. But as I was sitting there, I thought, “I will wait until there’s a long pause and then I will go up.” Well, pretty much every one had gone and I was sitting there talking to God in my head, saying, “Okay, I know you want me to go up there, but please let Corwyn bless me.” As I was repeating this in my head, there was a pause in the people going up and I felt this push on my shoulder. As I was walking up there, I had this feeling I was going to get my wish. As I walk up there, Corwyn and Terry came forward to bless me. I felt the Holy Spirit as they blessed me; in fact I was shaking. I was still shaking when they finished and I knew the Lord had just spoken to me through these two wonderful men. I stood up and hugged both of them, and also hugged Richard and Dan.

Again on Wednesday we had campfire inside because of the rain. Campfire was amazing as always, and when it came time for testimonies I felt I should share about my father. I didn’t think my sharing about my dad was important, but then I again felt this push on my shoulder which was telling me go, and I thought at that moment that if no one cared, I knew there was definitely one person who cared, and that was God and He was telling me to share. So I shared about how my father drinks and smokes all the time, and that the past two years he completely left my life. This year it hit me hard because I realized I didn’t have a father anymore, and I just thought that, since God took him out of my life, I didn’t deserve a father at all. About a year ago, my mom met this man named Geoff, and I now call him my stepdad. As I was sharing, God let me know that I did deserve a father and that’s why he brought Geoff into my life.

After I shared my testimony, I felt this big weight come off my shoulder. I didn’t have to worry about my real father anymore, and God had taken care of me. After campfire, Richard let me know that God is my real father, that He cares about me, and He will never leave me like an earthly father might. Richard also told me that one day God will find me a wonderful husband, I will be his princess, and he will take care of me. Corwyn grabbed me and told me basically the same thing Richard did, and at that moment I felt God was trying to tell me something - and I got the message!

I will never forget these wonderful experiences I had this year at camp because they are unforgettable to me and now I know God is my true father. He is marvelous and can do anything and I thank him every day for everything He has done for me. There is a saying from the movie “God’s Not Dead” and it is “God is good all the time, and all the time, God is good.” That statement is true and God proved that to me at camp this year.
Benjamin’s Family Is Saved
By Cindy Patience

Benjamin was full of excitement as he and his family loaded the wagons with supplies for their long trip from their home in a place called Hebron to a place called Goshen, near Egypt. There, his father Jacob, and his entire family would gather. There would be more than sixty-seven people who had been invited to come to Egypt.

Benjamin thought of the day that he recognized his lost brother, Joseph, and his embrace when they met again. Benjamin was Joseph’s favorite brother. But many years before, Benjamin’s other ten brothers had done an evil thing and sold Joseph into slavery. They’d put blood from an animal on his coat to make it look as if he had been killed. Joseph had been protected by God, and because he had interpreted dreams for Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, he later was given a ring by Pharaoh and made the second highest ruler of all of Egypt. Joseph stayed close to God. He was given dreams about a time when there would be no corn to eat for seven years. Joseph believed the dreams that God had given to him and was wise. He stored up seven years of grain for his people so that they would not starve during this time of trouble. Benjamin’s father, Jacob, had not wanted his family to starve. There was very little water to grow corn. The wells were running dry in Hebron as well as Egypt. He had heard about the corn that had been stored in Egypt and sent his sons there to buy corn. He did not know that Joseph was still alive.

Joseph had recognized his brothers when they came to him looking for food. But they did not recognize him. He had tested their love for Benjamin by pretending to arrest him for something he did not do. He learned that they had changed, so he told them who he was. Joseph loved his brothers and forgave them. Joseph sent them to get his father Jacob and all of his family. He sent wagons full of food and gifts with them. He told Benjamin and his brothers to bring their father, his family, and his animals to Egypt where they would have what they needed during the seven years of famine. Jacob was very happy when Benjamin and his brothers returned to their home and told him that Joseph was still alive.

The return trip to Egypt was a joyful one. The wives and children rode in the wagons and the men led the cattle as they drove them along. Benjamin was in awe when they stopped to camp at Beer-sheba where Abraham and Isaac, his great-grandfather and grandfather had lived many years before. There, Benjamin watched as Jacob made sacrifices to God. God told Jacob that he should not be afraid to go on to Egypt because God would make his family a great nation there and that one day they would return home. He gave Jacob a new name, Israel, and his family was known as the Israelites from then on.

When they arrived at Goshen, Joseph hurried out in his chariot to meet them. Once again, Benjamin wept with joy as he watched his father and Joseph embrace one another. Joseph took his father and brothers to see Pharaoh and Pharaoh told them that they could live in Goshen which was a rich, fertile land and near a river.

Benjamin stood by his tent and looked out at the good land and saw how relieved and happy his family had become. He was thankful for his brother Joseph who had been obedient and had been used by God. He was glad that Joseph had paid attention to God’s warning to prepare for the famine. He was thankful to be part of this good family called Israel. Mostly, he was thankful for the one true God who had prepared a plan to save and reunite his family.
Joseph saved his people with God’s help. He knew that there would be times when things would be hard and he prepared. God wants us to prepare our hearts and our minds to serve Him as well, like Joseph did.

Across
4. Pharaoh gave this to Joseph when he put him in charge of Egypt.
5. Joseph’s brothers didn’t kill him, they ___ him.
7. After God told Joseph about Pharaoh’s dreams he became in charge of this whole place.
8. During the seven years of this, Joseph had enough food in reserve to share with those in need.
10. It was because of this that Joseph ended up in Egypt.

Down
1. This is the name of the youngest brother.
2. Joseph did the right thing when he ___ his brothers.
3. Joseph received this from his father.
6. Joseph had a gift of interpreting these.
9. Joseph’s brother’s covered his coat in animal ___ so their father thought he was dead.

Word List:
Egypt famine Benjamin coat jealousy blood forgave ring dreams sold
2015 Priesthood Assembly and Women’s Retreat

October 2 - 4, 2015
The Gathering Place

The priesthood and women of the Remnant Church are invited to attend and take an active role in this annual opportunity for study, worship, fellowship, and communion with each other. Plans are underway to provide an outstanding opportunity for each attendee to gain further insights to their individual, as well as corporate, strengths and abilities to further the work of the Church in these last days. Schedules and agendas will be provided to the branches prior to the start of this long-anticipated weekend. See you at the Gathering Place – the “place to be.”

The First Presidency

The Women’s Council