

AKRON OHIO STAKE

#LightTheWorld

by Elizabeth Nielson

Many local Latter-day Saints were inspired by the Church's #LightTheWorld Christmas initiative this holiday season.

Now in its second year, the initiative is based on the scripture found in Matthew 5, "Ye are the light of the world." The goal was to inspire individuals to serve more like the Savior during the 25 days of December leading up to Christmas.

A calendar on the Church website listed a new scripture every day along with ideas on how to implement it. Church members could choose to participate daily or choose various days as they were able.

The Juhasz family of the New Portage Branch were among those who participated daily. "We watched each video one day in advance as part of our family scripture study and discussed the suggestions of how to carry it out the next day," said Sister Barb Juhasz. "My kids always looked forward it."

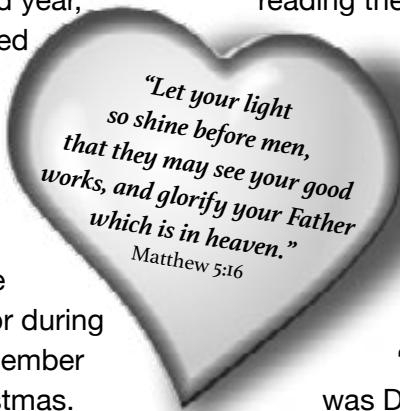
Church members who use social media were encouraged to post their experiences using the #LightTheWorld hashtag. Sister Juhasz enjoyed using the hashtag and seeing the resulting dialog online, particularly on Day 22 ("That which ye have seen me

do even that shall ye do") when she started a conversation about seeing Christ-like attributes in the people around us. "I loved reading the responses," she said. "Doing this initiative has been a great way to learn how to focus on His attributes and apply them in our lives."

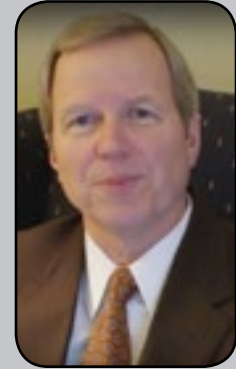
"Our favorite day was Day 19 ("Rejoice and be exceedingly glad"). My daughter and I wrote a letter to a young woman in our branch who has been bullied at her school because of her ethnicity. We wrote letters to encourage her, to let her know how much we love her. And I made her a 'daughter of a king' sign to hang in her locker to remind her every day of her worth in the eyes of her Heavenly Father."

The Adams of the Akron Ward also used the initiative to focus more on Christ during the holidays. On Day 9, the scripture reference "I was sick and ye visited me" inspired them to bring a card and a gift to a friend who had just had surgery. "It was something small but the kids loved doing it," said Sister Beth Adams. "They loved seeing her smile when we stopped by."

"The kids tried to remember



Stake Presidency Message



President Talley

<https://youtu.be/rEaMQ6RqqOo>

to look at [the calendar] on the fridge before school each day. Then we would talk about what they did during dinner. Altogether we really loved the program and hope the church does something similar next year."

The Public Affairs Committee asked some of the missionaries serving in our stake to share their experiences with #LightTheWorld.

Elder Weekes and Elder Kennedy, Canton Ward: One Sabbath Day in December, we were traveling down a street towards an appointment we had with an investigator. As we were walking, we saw an elderly sister raking her leaves in her large yard. We quickly ran across the street and offered our help. She

continued on next page

#LightTheWorld *continued*

first tried to dismiss us, saying she did not have any money to offer us. We told her that was no problem, and basically grabbed the trash bags and rake out of her hands. As we were serving, she was saying how glad she was for the help and was very curious as to why we were doing this, in shirts and ties no less! We did what little we could, and we planned to return and help her more. When we came back, she was practically waiting for us with her equipment, and we got back to work! When we finished, we all sat down on her porch and shared the Restoration to her. She was so open to it, thanks to our willingness to 'do good on the Sabbath day.'

Another day, we were knocking on doors, and before we could walk up the porch, another sister stopped us, demanding why we were out and about. When we explained that we had a special message from God about Christmas, her countenance changed completely and she let us into her home. We first shared the amazing video on mormon.org, and she loved it so much. She continued to listen to us as we bore testimony of the Restoration and the Book of Mormon. Later, we started reading the Book of Mormon for the first time with her whole family. We would not have gotten into that door if we did not have the special message that lit her world.

Sister Cox, Massillon Ward: I saw so many members and less-active members who were so touched by the #LightTheWorld message. It was amazing to see the light that Christ truly can bring into our lives. The most amazing opportunity I had was to share it with one of my investigators. The visit was not going very well, and it seemed like we were losing her a little bit. The spirit was out of the room, and it was hard for anything productive to happen. But when we were finally able to show the #LightTheWorld video with her, the spirit was brought back in the room so quickly. Her countenance changed significantly, and I was able to see, if only for a moment, a light in, what seemed to be, the darkness.

Sister Wooten and Sister Pentz, Wooster Ward: The day of "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," we had an experience with some members of our ward. We went and raked leaves for their neighbors who were selling their home. While we were working

MISSIONARIES RETURNING



LIANN MARIE TOMKINSON

15 JANUARY 2018

FROM

**WASHINGTON EVERETT
MISSION**



**ALEXANDRIA BETHANY
SHOCKEY**

25 JANUARY 2018

FROM

KOREA DAEJEON MISSION

several people came walking by asking who we were and what we were doing. After they talked with us, the whole neighborhood went out and raked each other's leaves. It was an amazing experience.

When we committed [at the beginning of the month] to follow Light the World, it seemed like Heavenly Father just lined up ways we can follow the event calendar. One day we came in contact with a homeless man. He had been investigating the church but had lost contact with the Elders when he lost his home. By some miracle, we regained contact by being prompted to call a random number found at the church. When we regained that contact we came to find that he was taking a risk by going to Chicago to find work. Unfortunately, he wound up homeless with four bags of luggage on the streets of Chicago without food or shelter. He hadn't eaten in four days and he called to find comfort talking to us because he was very scared. We both prayed that somehow he would find something to eat and a place to sleep. Heavenly Father prompted us to get some advice from a sister in our ward. She immediately offered to buy him a pizza. After much coordination, he was able to find food, and on top of that our prayers that he would find a job were answered: he was hired and given an advanced paycheck. That night we realized that we had not consciously participated in the Light the World activity for that day. Much to our surprise, we took a look at what it would have been and it was "For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat." Heavenly Father really does use you when you commit to serve.

RELIEF SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

by Sister Denna Coburn,
Stake RS President

BEE ANXIOUSLY ENGAGED, our theme for the January 20th Stake Women's Conference is an invitation for the sisters in our stake to unite in opportunities to reach out and serve our community. "As the Epistle of James notes, service is the very definition of pure religion (see James 1:27).

In a talk titled 'Be Anxiously Engaged' Elder Russell M. Nelson spoke of the collective value of each small contribution of honeybees. A honeybee, he said, over its short lifetime contributes just one-twelfth of a teaspoon of honey. While this small amount may seem insignificant to the total, each contribution is vital to the life of the hive.

Our goal for this conference is to combine our small individual efforts to send a message of love and hope that will bless our community. We will be making donations to Open M, Akron Children's Hospital, and Summit County Child Services. It is also hoped that sisters attending will be uplifted and strengthened through the classes that are being offered. Our hope is that both of the two great commandments, loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves will be testified to with our hearts and our hands.

Relief Society was founded on the principle of charity, a principle exemplified by our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is Him that we follow.

2018 Akron Stake Relief Society Women's Conference

BEE ANXIOUSLY ENGAGED



Saturday, January 20th 2018
10 am- 1pm
Akron Stake Center- 106 East Howe Road Tallmadge

Renée Welsch

Keynote speaker
Accomplished Gospel Singer
Foster Parent and Adoptive Parent

Classes, Service Projects, and Lunch

Journaling with Julia Waggoner- Simplify your Home with Sarah Seifert
Family History with Peggy Lauritzen- Nutrition and exercise with Michelle Kjell

DIAPER DRIVE

Bring any size of diapers to donate to Summit County Child Services

Fleece Blankets-- All About Me Posters--Teaching Dolls



"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward."

D&C 58:27-28

Do you work or serve at an
organization that is not listed on



The Akron Stake will introduce
JustServe.org to your contacts.

Email your information to - lewisk@ldspublicaffairs.org

Ward Window

~ Massillon ~

by Dawn Varner, Massillon Ward Primary President

The Primary Presidency of the Massillon Ward wanted to have a Christmas activity that involved the children in some type of service - ideally, a “children helping children” activity. They learned of an activity the New Portage Branch had done last year for the International Institute of Akron where they assembled activity kits for refugee children. It sounded like the perfect activity for the Massillon Ward Primary and one that could be done on Sunday during sharing time. When Bishop Taylor heard what the Primary was planning to do, he wanted to open it up for the entire ward. So at 6 p.m. on Sunday, December 10th, the Massillon Ward gathered for a Christmas party and assembled activity kits for refugee children.

Ward members donated items and the Primary used their remaining budget to purchase additional items. The Primary Presidency made sure that none of the items had Christmas or religious pictures or stories. Great care was taken so that activity kits would not offend anyone’s religious beliefs.

Each kit consisted of a 2-gallon Ziploc bag which included — 1 coloring/activity book, 1 pack of crayons, 1 pen or marker, 2 storybooks, 2 games or toys, 1 treat, 1 car or truck, and 1 stuffed toy. Fifty-six kits were assembled and leftover items were donated to Salt Box Ministries in Canal Fulton.

In order to make the kits more personal for the children, a Primary photo



was taken the week before which showed the children of the Massillon Ward holding “WELCOME!” signs. Using that photo, the children (and some adults) made cards for the kits with the group Primary picture on the front of the card and colored block “WELCOME!” letters on the inside of the card. They added their name and age and put the card in a bright-colored envelope before inserting it into the activity kit. After the kits were assembled, Bishop Taylor furnished cookies, cider, and hot chocolate for ward members.

The refugee kits were delivered to the International Institute of Akron the next day, December 11th. When refugee families come through the International Institute of Akron the adults are required to go through a lengthy 3-day orientation process.

The children, who have not yet been enrolled in school, have nothing to do. The activity kits will give the children something to occupy their time while their parents are in meetings.



STAKE CALENDAR EVENTS

January 2018

Sunday, January 7

Fast Sunday

Sunday, January 14

Ashland Ward Conference

Worldwide Devotional for Young Adults 8-9 p.m.

Saturday, January 20

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

Stake Women's Conference/Tallmadge 10 a.m. -2 p.m.

Sunday, January 21

Standards Night/Tallmadge 7-9 p.m.

Saturday, January 27

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

Quad Stake Youth Dance/Youngstown 7-10 p.m.

February 2018

Saturday, February 3

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

Worldwide Face-to-Face Event for Youth: An Hour with President and Sister Russell M. Nelson 1-2 p.m.

Sunday, February 4

Fast Sunday

Saturday, February 10

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

Stake Youth Ice Skating Activity/ Alice Noble Ice Arena, Wooster 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 17

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

Saturday, February 24

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

March 2018

Saturday, March 3

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

RootsTech Family Discovery Day 1-6:15 p.m.

Sunday, March 4

Fast Sunday

Saturday, March 10

Quad Stake Youth Event/Kirtland Stake Center Time TBA

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

Saturday, March 17

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

Friday, March 23

Mormon Tabernacle Choir Performs Handel's Messiah

Broadcast 9:30-10:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 24

Stake Young Men's Basketball/TBA 8 a.m. - noon

Sunday, March 25

Akron Ward Conference

Friday, March 30

President's Ball/TBA 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 31

General Conference Saturday Morning Session 12-2 p.m.

General Conference Saturday Afternoon Session 4-8 p.m.

General Priesthood Session 8-9:30 p.m.

Self-Reliance Spotlight

Stake Update

December 20th marked a significant milestone for our Stake Self-Reliance program. It was the date of our first graduates of the new program (congratulations to the Ashland Personal Finance Group for leading the way)! The remaining groups are on track to complete their sessions here in January. As we mentioned last month, we are planning to start the next round in mid-to-late February. It's time to start getting excited. More to come...

Principle #3 – Manage Money

“When we become burdened with excessive debt, we have ... placed ourselves in self-imposed servitude, spending all of our time, all of our energy, and all of our means to the repayment of our debts. ... It is essential that we ... develop a spending and savings plan—a budget—and distinguish between wants and needs.”

Robert D. Hales, “Seek and Attain the Spiritual High Ground in Life,” CES address, Mar. 2009

Two Invitations

- 1) If you aren't already doing so, start this week to keep track of all your income and spending. Review your list each week and consider any adjustments you'd like to make.
- 2) Ponder on the opportunity for yourself or someone you know to participate in the next round of self-reliance groups. Begin now to prepare for this opportunity.

Family History Corner

by Jeanne Peugh,
Director



New Year's Resolution

As we start the New Year and reflect on the goals we have accomplished in 2017, let us consider Family History work as part of our New Year's resolution. The Lord promises us, as we do our Family History Work, doors will be opened and information will become available to us. I can testify to this because I have had it happen to me many times. It doesn't matter if your family has pioneers in the gospel, there is still work for each of us to do. This work is just as important to us, as to our ancestors, and especially to our Heavenly Father. We need to follow the direction of our leaders and make this one of our priorities for 2018 and we will feel joy. If you need help, you should have consultants in your wards/branches to help, and you may always contact the Stake Family History Center for additional help.