

AKRON OHIO STAKE

Stake Presidency Message: Worship

At the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, even though it is but a remnant of the outer retaining encasement of the destroyed Herod's temple, endless Jewish and other faithfuls throng to approach the God of Israel there—touching and wedging written notes between the stones, praying and bowing, crying and wailing.

Not far off in the Holy City, multitudes from all over the world pay homage at the Garden Tomb and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where our Savior's body purportedly lay after His crucifixion. Although at most only one of the two sites was the real scene of the resurrection, and angels had already rhetorically asked: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5), many a Christian pilgrim has felt the reality of our risen Lord there.

Special places augment our spiritual sensibilities, and our sacred memories often carry a location stamp. What are we to do then, when we're restrained or even severed from our churches and temples—places where the Spirit of the Lord constantly attends, where saving ordinances are administered, families sealed, service consecrated, and hymns of praise and broken hearts offered unto our Creator?

To the distressed, poor Zoramites who had been cast out of their synagogues, Alma taught what Zenos taught, that they can pray to or worship our God whether they be in the wilderness or field or house or closet (Alma 33:3-7). To that list, we may, of course, add a certain grove in Palmyra or any grove, Liberty Jail or any jail, a temple altar or a personal altar. For God is not limited by time and space, only our heart and mind.

Prophetically, our leaders have prepared us to worship without the anchor of designated places. We now know our anchors can or should be our home, Come Follow Me (the study and the doctrine), and the Presence of the Lord (versus His past). Such a realization may well be part of a possibly indispensable spiritual survival skill set in the calamitous end time.

The Lord has promised that when we gather in His name, He will be in our midst (Matthew 18:20). But He also promised that when He knocks and we open the door, He would enter and sup with us and we with Him (Revelation 3:20).

When we can't go visit a dear friend, we want to get him to come to us. If we cannot go to a burning bush to worship, and even if we can, on our invitation, the Burning Bush will gracefully come to us. Instead of lighting up the holy ground (Exodus 3:5), He will light up our sanctum within where we will come to know Him, thank

Him, and unavoidably, profoundly love Him. And thus, true worship, without the aid of environment or any outward magnificence or eloquence, takes place on our inner ground; and thus, our inner ground becomes one of the holy places where we are commanded to stand (Matthew 24:15) in the face of desolation.



President Wen

In the overarching Book of Mormon vision, we noticed two groups of people reaching the Tree of Life. One group stayed, and the other, despite their having tasted the Tree's fruit, still managed to fall away. The first group did a few things differently than the second group, one of which was falling down at the Tree (1 Nephi 8:30). Both groups traveled the same distance, so it's unlikely that one group was feeling more exhausted. Falling down being the act immediately preceding worship (see, for example, 1 Nephi 11:24 and 3 Nephi 11:17), it should be a good guess that the first group fell down because they were overwhelmed by reverence, awe, and the love of God, while the second group, even standing at the Tree, never felt "it" and was, absurdly, casting about their eyes (proving again that venue is not what matters most). Note to self: fall down, worshipfully, or fall away.

There's another kind of falling down that some of the truest worshippers undergo. Who can forget the publican who stood afar smiting his breast (Luke 18:13) or the woman who stood behind weeping, washing the Savior's feet with her tears (Luke 7:38)? These, too, had fallen, but they had fallen because of sin. And in the pangs of sin and under the weight of an unpayable debt, they, trembling, cried out to their Redeemer. And notably, it is in the act of such brokenhearted and contrite worship that they'll find transformation and salvation. For we, in time, will become what we truly worship.

Come, whether in place or in spirit, gathered or scattered, let us worship our God—no matter where, no matter what!

Akron Ohio Stake for the Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,
our Facebook page provides stake news,
Come Follow Me insights, ideas for
home church, etc. Or look for us
on Instagram @akronohiostake.



YOUNG MEN

Dear Akron Ohio Stake YM,

It was my hope that this article would be highlighting the first Annual Stake YM Camp. I was excited to participate with each of you in some fun outdoor activities, filling our bellies with some delicious food and spiritually feasting on the word of God. As of now, it appears it may be several more months before we are able to gather again at the Stake level as YM, which means we will have to delay plans for some more fun upcoming stake YM/YW activities.

Despite the challenging times we are living in, this is still a great time to be alive! Prophets all through time have prophesied of the second coming of our Savior Jesus Christ. Each of us has the privilege of being one of His chosen servants to prepare the world for this blessed day! With this privilege comes great challenges and a great responsibility.

Consider the youth theme chosen by our inspired leaders, “Go & Do.” The doctrinal foundation for this theme is 1 Nephi 3:7, in which Nephi was given a task of great significance for the spiritual welfare of his family and the generations to come. His willingness to accomplish this task was unwavering, and his faith that a way would be shown to him was sure, and his motivation to “go and do” was dogged and determined.

Each of us has been dealt a set of circumstances and challenges not of our choosing and what some of us might feel is a hard thing to do. Many of you are unable to participate in activities you love. Some have been unable to experience “once in a lifetime” events because of COVID restrictions. While others may find themselves feeling lonely and missing the interactions with their friends and family.

This inspired theme that was chosen for us at this time and the example of Nephi is a testimony to me that our Heavenly Father knows us and is very aware of the challenges we face. As we look to the example of Nephi and how he handled opposition and challenges, we can see that Nephi faced these challenges with power, peace, and confidence. He knew that his ability to accomplish the given tasks came from a higher power. This power resides within each of you, and you have access to the same Godly power that allowed Nephi to accomplish the things which the Lord commanded. Nephi didn’t fear or stress about the challenges he faced; rather, he had peace. This is the peace that the Spirit speaks to our heart through the comforter,

which is the Holy Ghost. We are entitled to the feeling of peace as we seek personal revelation from the Lord. Finally, Nephi exemplified confidence. This confidence came through his obedience and witnessing for himself that God will provide a way for us to accomplish that which he commands. As we follow through and do the simple things that God has asked us to do; daily prayer, scripture study, Come Follow Me, participating in the new youth program by setting goals and working to become more like Jesus Christ, we too will develop confidence. This confidence will give us the strength to move forward when there is so much uncertainty before us.

I pray that you will be like Nephi as we navigate the COVID challenges and the many challenges yet to come. Will you be unwavering in your willingness to move forward? Will your faith be sure and true? And will your motivation to accomplish the Lord’s work to prepare the world for His return be dogged and determined like Nephi? If you do, you, too, will develop power, peace, and confidence that will be a blessing to you for the rest of your life.

I want you to know that your Stake Young Men Presidency loves you! We think of you often, we miss your special spirits, and we pray for your success. We look forward to gathering again soon, and we look forward to seeing how each of you has grown in wisdom and stature as you have faced the challenges placed before you.

With Great Love,
The Stake YM Presidency
Brother Most, Brother Oda, Brother Morey,
and Brother Flory



North American Northeast Area Plan

Gather scattered Israel on both sides of the veil.

3. Find and take the names of ancestors to the temple and perform their ordinances.

Family History Corner

by Jeanne Peugh, Director



Fifty-six men signed the document on August 2, 1776, or, in the case of some, shortly thereafter. They pledged their lives! And at least nine of them died as a result of the war. If the Revolution had failed, if their fight had come to naught, they would have been hanged as traitors. They pledged their fortunes! And at least fifteen fulfilled that pledge to support the war effort. They pledged their sacred honor – best expressed by the noble statement of John Adams. He said: “All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I hope, in this life, I am now ready here to stake upon it; and I leave off as I begun that live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God, it shall be my dying sentiment, Independence now, and INDEPENDENCE FOREVER.” (Works of Daniel Webster)

What kind of men were they? Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists, eleven were merchants, and nine were farmers and large plantation owners, men of means, well educated. But they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured.

There should be no doubt what our task is today. If we truly cherish the heritage we have received, we must maintain the same virtues and the same character of our stalwart forbears—faith in God, courage, industry, frugality, self-reliance, and integrity. We have the obligation to maintain what those who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and sacred honor gave to future generations. Our opportunity and obligation for doing so are clearly upon us. No work is greater than finding our ancestors and completing their work. (Ezra Taft Benson)

I encourage you to go to “Relative Finder” and see how many signers of the Declaration of Independence you are related to.



Erekson, Ole , Lithographer. Portraits & autographs of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. , ca. 1876. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003666901/>.

PathwayConnect

Congratulations

to this year's Pathway Finishers!

Amalia Lorenzana – Akron Ward
Susan Fenton – Canton Ward
Eric Heller – New Philadelphia
Bobbijo Hostler – New Portage Branch
Alicia Rafferty – New Portage Branch
Michael Rafferty – New Portage Branch
Kirsten Fitzgerald – Tallmadge Ward
Marilyn Meeks – Wooster Ward

Great Job!

ARE YOU A CANDIDATE FOR PATHWAY?

Potential candidates:

- Been away from college or haven't started, but always wanted an education?
- Not sure what direction you want to take in your education, but want to get started
- Concerned for tuition cost
- Need to learn core skills
- Need to develop confidence and/or deepen testimony

PathwayConnect could be just what you are looking for! Visit www.byupathway.org or call Elder and Sister Jentsch at 330-631-7845 or 330-813-0877

UPDATE for 2020-2021 Pathway year

Due to Covid-19, the once a week gatherings for the upcoming year will all be done virtually. When you register, you will choose, for example, the year (2020), term (Fall), program (18-30, 31+), missionary (Jentsch), day of week (Thursday), gathering start time (7:00 pm) and time zone (EST).

To ensure a gathering that incorporates our stake, this would be what you would choose. Other choices of day and times are available. If you do choose another group, please let Elder and Sister Jentsch know so they can still lend support.

BRECKSVILLE HOME STORAGE CENTER

The center continues to be open on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Masks must be worn and only accepting credit card payments. Sale items this month are Carrots \$7.75; Black Beans \$5.75. For questions or to make an appointment on Wednesday or Saturday, please leave a message at 440-526-4057. Messages will be returned on Wednesdays.

New Self-Reliance Class!

The Akron Ohio Stake has been invited to participate in a pilot for a new self-reliance class – Emotional Resilience. Topics include:

- Building Emotional Resilience
- Healthy Thinking Patterns
- Our Body and Emotions
- Managing Stress and Anxiety
- Understanding Sadness and Depression
- Overcoming Anger
- Managing Addictive Behaviors
- Building Healthy Relationships
- Providing Strength to Others
- Moving Forward with Faith

This is a very timely and inspired program. We will be holding one or more virtual groups, which will be announced soon. You will need access to a computer and the internet. Perhaps you feel that you don't need to improve in these areas, but keep in mind that you can always learn skills to help you be a better minister to others. Below is a link to the manual that you can review. We will be getting hard copies that can be delivered to you if you choose to join a class.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/self-reliance/course-materials/emotional-resilience-self-reliance-course-video-resources>

Survey

Thank you to all who participated in our self-reliance survey. We had a great response with 209 people taking

part. Here are some highlights from the survey:

Do you have a desire to further your education by earning a certificate or degree?

62% - No desire. 12% - Strong desire.

Are you looking to improve your job situation?

61% - No desire. 13% - Strong desire.

Do you have a desire to improve your understanding of the gospel?

55% - Strong desire. 3% - No desire.

Do you have a need to improve you and your family's financial situation?

38% - No need. 18% - Strong need.

Do you have a desire to learn how to improve your emotional resilience to better cope with life's challenges?

28% - No need. 17% - Strong desire.

Twenty people requested to be contacted for more information.

Contact your ward Self-Reliance Specialist, or myself, for more information on joining a self-reliance group or Pathway. If you have any other questions or concerns, please let me know.

For more information on becoming or helping others become more self-reliant, see:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/self-reliance/blog>

The Lord has declared,

It is my purpose to provide for my saints

D&C 104:15

