

## AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### The Spirit of Christmas

By Elder Patrick Bouteille, France  
Area Seventy



Elder Patrick  
Bouteille

Isn't the Christmas period wonderful? Everyone's heart seems to soften, and kindness takes a more important place in our lives. It is a period when we take more time to express our love for our family, our parents and our friends.

The world in general is also very busy with the buzz of presents, good dinners and various invitations. And if we are not careful, that can also be the only importance Christmas has for us.

As disciples of Christ, we need to look for what constitutes the true spirit of Christmas.

I love President Howard W. Hunter's invitation:

"If you desire to find the true spirit of Christmas and partake of the sweetness of it, let me make this suggestion to you. During the hurry of the festive occasion of this Christmas season, find time to turn your heart to God. Perhaps in the quiet hours, and in a quiet place, and on your knees—alone or with loved ones—give thanks for the good things that have come to you, and ask that His Spirit might dwell in you as you earnestly strive to serve Him and keep His commandments. He will take you by the hand and His promises will be kept."<sup>1</sup>

That invitation should cause us to reflect on the way we want to prepare things at the end of this year.

I remember the Christmases of my childhood. They were simple, happy and family-oriented.

I also remember being very touched by my first Christmas on my mission in England. My Swedish companion, Elder Nilsson, and I decided to reserve our evening for doing good to those around us. On that Christmas Eve we visited a member in hospital, tried to bring joy to sad people on the streets, and gave little presents to people who got only little attention.

Ringling the doorbell and then hiding to be able to watch the joyful faces of those who opened the door filled us with gratitude. It was cold that evening, but our hearts burned within us . . .

Later, my wife and I wanted to establish a family Christmas tradition:

On Christmas Eve, together with our children, and the missionaries when they can, we love to prepare biscuits, chocolates and candies. We sing Christmas carols in several parts and then we plan the end of our day.

Then we go and visit members and neighbors and sing the wonderful Christmas tunes with their touching words, giving them our candies.

Some years ago, we went to an acquaintance of my wife. Her state of health was irredeemably declining. I didn't know her personally, but when we started to sing I saw her face light up and I was able to detect a few moments of joy in her so difficult situation. Tears of gratitude rolled down her cheeks.

These sacred moments for our family help us to remember the words of Isaiah: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."<sup>2</sup>

"May we, through simple acts of kindness, charity, and compassion, fill the world with the light of His love and healing power."<sup>3</sup>

I testify that Jesus is the Christ, that He is the Saviour of all mankind. His love for us is immense.

I pray that each of us may organize ourselves and prepare in order to feel the true spirit of Christmas. ■

#### NOTES

1. Howard W. Hunter, "The Real Christmas," *Ensign*, Dec. 2015, 80.
2. Isaiah 9:6.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Fill the World with Christ's Love," *Ensign*, Dec. 2014, 5.

ILLUSTRATION BY TED HENNINGER



# UK Assists European Refugees

In the spirit of true service and discipleship of our Saviour Jesus Christ, many wards and branches around the UK responded to the plight of the refugees over the summer and autumn months with donations and support. Here are a few edited stories about the various efforts of stakes.

## Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland

By Margo McClumpa



*Members of the Dumfries Ward at the local meetinghouse help to collect donations for European refugees.*

The plight of refugees struggling to get to a country where they can live in peace is well known throughout the world, but after seeing the recent refugees across Europe, Moxie DePaulitte from the charity group 'Dumfries and Galloway Refugee Action' decided to help alleviate their suffering. Bishop Goodare of the Dumfries Ward, Edinburgh Scotland Stake, gave permission for the church building to be used as a collection hub for donations for refugees.

"Within 48 hours 2,000 people had signed up to offer help and give donations. This was not a Church initiative. Several of our Church members wanted to help in whatever way they could," he remarked.

Within four days of the plea for donations, hundreds of bags of clothing, camping equipment, toiletries and sleeping mats arrived at the church. Food items were donated by local supermarkets.

During the time that the church was open for donations, members, friends and neighbours worked side by side sorting clothing. Parents brought their children to help in this community service project. Church youth assisted in sorting clothing and bagging items. LDS missionaries also helped in this endeavour. A lady volunteer spoke of being hugged by other volunteers and "was so glad to be part of a church that opens its doors when help is required." Another declared, "It was faith promoting." ■

## Wales

By Tracey Prior

After receiving guidelines from the Europe Area Presidency on providing assistance for the refugees in Europe, the Merthyr Tydfil stake made plans to help. On Sunday 20th September local Church leaders within the area began the appeal for donations, and by Tuesday 22nd September, over two tons was ready for collection. The next day President Govier, with the assistance of Joshua Pulman and David Roberts, drove a member's van over 200 miles collecting the donations, finally delivering them to the Welsh Refugee Council in Swansea.

President Govier remarked, "I just want to say a big thank-you for the donations made by the wonderful members of the Merthyr Tydfil Wales Stake to assist refugees currently living within the boundaries of our stake."

The local lead for the Welsh Refugee Council, Lina Liu, commented, "You and all your members in the Church truly did a wonderful

*From left to right: Ian Govier (stake president), Lina Liu (Welsh Refugee Council), David Roberts and Joshua Pulman with the two tons of donations from local Church members in South West Wales*



thing. Your generosity will directly benefit all the refugees and their families in Swansea who access our services. We have started giving things

out to clients who are in the greatest need. Your help means a lot to them. Most of them flee from Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Ethiopia

etc., and your support has helped and will definitely help them to go through the transition period a lot more smoothly." ■

## Huddersfield

By Eileen Webb

A special effort has been made in Huddersfield to help refugees who are fleeing their war-torn home countries. Diane Brill of the Huddersfield 2nd Ward, moved by the plight of the refugees, asked the members to bring whatever donations they could to the meeting-house. Clothes, bedding, and foodstuffs were all quickly collected and were then taken to the Carlile Community Interest building in nearby Meltham, which had

been designated as a collection point for the area.

Under the direction of Bishop Sam Bridgstock, members of the Meltham Ward rallied to the cause, together with local neighbours, who descended on the centre and completed all the packing.

Mr Richard Noon, the coordinator at the centre, was very impressed with the willingness and industry of the members who helped. On the centre's Facebook page was the comment, "Thanks to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a religion that is always the first to help." ■



ALAN WEBB

**Huddersfield members with the boxes of donations at the local collection point for refugees**

## Dundee

By Sara Campbell

Dundee Refugee Support urged the people of Dundee, The Lord Provost and local faith leaders, including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to 'Light Up the Law' at a special gathering to highlight the plight of those in need of refuge in the current crisis across Europe. Hundreds gathered to remember those who are once again risking their lives in hope of a better future. Speeches were given from local community groups, trade unions, charities and faiths. President John Keogh of the Dundee Stake presidency of the Church quoted the President of the Church, President Thomas S. Monson: "You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give."<sup>1</sup>

The Dundee Refugee Support group encouraged the community to make a donation of supplies, including tents and sleeping bags, and to volunteer some time to help sort and pack for such a worthy cause. ■

### NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, "In Quest of the Abundant Life," *Ensign*, Mar. 1988, 3.

## Tunbridge Wells

By Shawna Denny

Primary children of the Tunbridge Wells Ward recently pitched in to provide a helping hand to Syrian refugees in Hungarian refugee camps. Collecting items from members and sorting them on the day, they proved to be a valuable asset. Working with local group RefugEase, the children

collected items such as clothing, nappies, wipes, sleeping bags, sanitary items, toothpaste and toothbrushes, to name a few. The combined efforts managed to fill two months' quota for hygiene products for the Hungarian refugee camps.



ANGELA FRIEND

**Tunbridge Wells Ward Primary children with the donations for refugees at RefugEase**

“They all worked very hard and were absolutely exhausted, but after working two hours straight, the children asked if there was anything else they could help with. People were in awe,” Primary leader Angela Friend said. “Others were impressed and kept asking, ‘Who are

## Northampton

By Debbie Twigger



**From left to right—President Traci De Marco of the Northampton stake Relief Society and Sister Liannea Erickson, first counsellor, with the donations for Calais Action Initiative**

The women of the Northampton stake contributed clothing, food and footwear to Calais Action Initiative over the October general conference weekend in response to stake Relief Society president Traci De Marco’s request. Sister De Marco commented, “We see this as a great opportunity to come together as daughters in the gospel, realising our Relief Society motto that ‘Charity Never Faileth,’ and feel of the blessings that come from helping our less fortunate brothers and sisters, who right now really need our help.”

you people?” Over 2000 participants from the local community joined together in the charitable cause and helped to collect approximately eight tons of needed goods over the period of a month, a load that was transported to the camps in twelve trucks. ■

With an email sent out to all ward RS presidents and a post on the stake RS Facebook page two days before the general women’s session of conference, the donations gratefully received were taken to the collecting point at the University of Northampton on the Monday—a very fast turnaround. ■

## Basingstoke

By Christine Delve

Sisters from the Basingstoke Ward and their local community friends have been busy collecting donations for women and children affected by the European refugee crisis. The response to the collection was overwhelmingly generous, with many kindly donating coats, hats, shoes, nappies, wipes, clothes, tents and toys for the women and children in Calais, Syria and two Greek Islands.

A Just Giving page was set up to fund the shipment, and a total of £213 was raised. Local businesses were approached, and the very generous Local Parcel Network Limited offered to fund and deliver 13 of the boxes to Kos, Greece.

The young women organised the donations into 7 bin liners and 23 boxes for transportation. The aid has now been distributed to help the refugees in Calais, Syria and the Greek Islands of Lesvos and Kos. ■

## Loughborough

By Julie Harrald

The work done in Loughborough was organised by member Michelle Richey, who felt the need to respond to the crisis. She sought out an organisation to work through and selected CalAid, as they had an infrastructure set up to receive and deliver donated goods. Priesthood leaders were happy for the meetinghouse to be used as a collection point, which was publicised in the local newspaper and promoted at Loughborough University, where Michelle works.

The appeal was posted on the ward Facebook page with details of exactly what items were required, the time when the chapel would be open for dropping items off and a request for help with sorting the goods on 3rd October.

Local Church leaders allowed the use of the building, and goods were donated by both members and the public, including coats, blankets, sleeping bags, tents, rucksacks, towels and men’s clothes. In the end, there were about 15 boxes, which were delivered to the CalAid collection point later that afternoon. ■

**Loughborough Ward members with the donations for CalAid in support of refugees**



## Church Hosts Interfaith Council of Wales Eid al-Fitr Event

By Martin Turvey

On 5th August 2015, the Church had the opportunity to make the Cardiff Chapel available to the Interfaith Council of Wales for an event honouring Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan. Julie Jones, a member of the Merthyr Tydfil Ward and the Church's representative on the Interfaith Council of Wales, conducted the meeting, doing so as part of her Interfaith role.

Addressing those present was Stanley Soffa, Jewish representative on the Interfaith Council, Saleem Kidwai OBE, General Secretary of the Muslim Council of Wales, and Ali Hammuda. Mr Hammuda talked of the meaning of Ramadan and the importance of fasting to the Islam faith. He pointed out that while it's popular to talk about the physical benefits of fasting, the purpose of fasting is really spiritual. He said it is a time when we focus on generosity

and humility and put aside CVs, biographies and wealth.

Also attending was Mohammad Ashgar AM, member of the Welsh Assembly. Mr Ashgar called for unity between faiths, unity within faiths, and treating each other as brothers and sisters.

Following the meeting, a dinner was held for those in attendance. At 9pm, the Muslims in attendance excused themselves from the main dinner and were able to use the foyer area of the chapel to conduct their prayers.

This was the first time such an event had been organised, and represented a growing

involvement of the Church with the Wales Interfaith Council. After the event Sister Jones commented, "In an increasing secular world, we need to rejoice and bond as religions, sharing good practice whilst rejoicing and working together."

President Jason Spragg of the Cardiff Area Presidency added, "This was a unique evening of the celebration of EID where we saw many wonderful people of different faiths gathered under our roof coming together as friends and brothers and sisters."

ITV Wales also ran a report on the 6pm news. ■



*Members of the Interfaith Council of Wales having dinner at the Cardiff Chapel of the Church for Eid al-Fitr*

## England London South Mission Multistake Women's Conference

By Fleur Kitsell

The England London South Mission held its first multistake women's conference at the Reading Chapel. It was organised by the stake Relief Society presidents of the nine stakes within the England London South Mission (Plymouth, Bristol, Poole, Portsmouth, Reading, Staines, Crawley, Wandsworth and Maidstone) and was supported by each stake president as well as Elder Clifford Herbertson, Area Seventy, and his wife, who both spoke at the conference. The purpose of the conference was to provide an opportunity for learning, to

increase faith in the gospel and by so doing to help the women strengthen their homes, families and communities.

The conference was held in March, which is the month that the Relief Society was organised and is also the month in which the International Women's Day is celebrated. The conference was organised in the spirit of the statement made by Emma Smith, the first Relief Society general president: "We are going to do something extraordinary. . . . We expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls."<sup>1</sup>

Organizers recognised that the conference needed to provide something beyond that which could be provided at the individual stake level.

All nine Relief Society presidents took part in the planning and organisation. The theme—"Then shall thy confidence wax strong," from Doctrine and Covenants 121:45—was chosen after much discussion and prayerful consideration. The conference began with all 469 sisters meeting in the chapel for opening exercises and an inspiring talk by Sister Herbertson. Following



**The nine stake Relief Society presidents at the England London South Mission's women's conference with Sister Herbertson, (centre front)**

her remarks, each sister then attended 4 workshops, and all returned to the chapel to hear a final uplifting and motivating talk by Elder Herbertson. There were five workshop themes: "The Atonement and Grace," delivered by Denise Wilkinon (Reading Stake); "Choosing Our Level of Spirituality," by Jane Dixon (Plymouth Stake); "Courage and Confidence," by Fleur Kitsell (Portsmouth Stake) and Natasha Morgan (Maidstone Stake); "Communication and Relationships," by Terrie Atkins (Crawley Stake) and Fiona Phillips (Staines Stake); and "Eve in the Garden," by Nicola Bridgewater (Bristol Stake).

The day was busy and uplifting, with sisters being excited and grateful to attend a conference especially for them, during which they could learn new things, make new friends, participate in discussions, and generally have a productive, enjoyable and uplifting day free from their usual responsibilities. Such was the popularity of the conference that the original 350–400 places were increased, and still there were women unable to register for the event because all spaces had been booked.

There is a plan to hold the conference again in 2016 and make it even better! ■

#### NOTE

1. Emma Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom, The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 14.

## NEWS FROM IRELAND

# Hike Commemorates 175th Anniversary of First Baptism in Ireland

By Linda Coulter and Ben Noble

**T**wenty young men and leaders from Belfast, Northern Ireland, followed the route taken by Elder John Taylor in 1840 as they took part in a walk to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the first LDS baptism in Ireland on 31st July 1840.

During a short opening devotional at Albert Basin in Newry, some of the history of the event was shared, courtesy of the Church History Department. The group then made their way to Newry Court House, where John Taylor preached the first LDS sermon in Ireland on 28th July 1840. As at other stops along the way, a short Church history vignette was shared to recount a story from 1840.

The youth and leaders embarked on the 11-mile hike to Loughbrickland, following the trip that John Taylor, William Black and Thomas Tait had taken on their journey from Newry to Lisburn. Just like those early missionaries, after a 5-hour walk, they came over the brow of a hill and saw the lake directly in front of them. It was in this lake that Elder Taylor baptised

Thomas Tait, the first person to be baptised in Ireland. At the loughside, the group met in the same field where, in 1985, Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicated Ireland for the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In return for her kindness in allowing the group to use the field at Henning Farm, the young men carried out a service project for the owner, Ms Heather Henning. They refurbished sheep pens used to house the sheep in the field. They pulled off old roofs and replaced them with new waterproof roofs, repaired old timber wall panels, pulled out overgrown weeds and nettles and painted the pens.

After the service project and a much-needed dinner, the group participated in a commemoration devotional, with Heather Henning as their guest. More of the history from the day was shared, and full-time missionaries taught the young men about preparing for missionary service. The Belfast stake president, President James McCrudden, shared and discussed the dedicatory

**Twenty young men and leaders from Belfast on the 175th anniversary commemoration hike**



prayer. A re-enactment of the first baptism was held, and James Crawford of Bangor 1st Ward was baptised by Lee Brussard from Coleraine Branch.

Stake Young Men president Ben Noble remarked, "As the young men embarked in the footsteps of those early missionaries, learnt the history

of the Church in their land and served a friend of the Church, they became better prepared for their future missionary service." ■

## Bangor 20th Anniversary

By Linda Coulter

Members of Bangor 1st and Bangor 2nd wards met together with families and friends on Friday, 26 June, for a BBQ to celebrate the anniversary of the creation of the two wards 20 years ago. At that time, Bangor Ward had been growing for many years and it was decided that a second ward was required to accommodate the increasing membership.

Old photographs and a brief history of the Church in Bangor

lined the walls of the cultural hall, bringing back many happy memories to the older members of the wards and chuckles from younger members at seeing how the older ones looked 20-plus years ago. The weather stayed fine, and a good time was had by all. ■



*Brother Clem MacDonald cutting the cake made by Paula Sue MacDonald to commemorate the Bangor 20th anniversary*

JULIE-ANN FERGUSON

## Hearts of the Children Turn to Their Fathers with Sunderland Stake Youth Temple Challenge

By Rosie Jenkinson

In a special recent invitation, youth of the Sunderland Stake were challenged by stake president Scott Spencer to personally find at least one ancestor's name to take to the temple on their next temple visit. Following this call to action, there has been a significant increase in young men and young women accessing FamilySearch.org and engaging in their family history.

For two months leading up to the next temple visit, youth attended

activities, met with ward family history consultants, talked with family members, and gave of their personal time to find at least one ancestor's name to take to the temple. During this special time, the spirit of Elijah worked with the youth to help them discover that if they "bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be [their] joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:15). This joy increased as many youth found more than one

ancestor whom they could perform the work for in the temple.

On the 9th May, the youth travelled to the Preston Temple, where 28 young men and young women received baptism and confirmation ordinances for the family members they had found. The Spirit was strong as the youth gathered together, and there was also a noticeable increase in parents who wanted to attend the baptism with their children. In addition to the youth who took on the temple challenge, older Primary children preparing to enter the temple when they turn 12 years old also completed the challenge and came to see the temple.

Just as it was spoken of in Doctrine and Covenants 110:14–15:

*The youth from the Sunderland Stake at the Preston Temple*

“Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—

“To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers.” ■



KURT SCOTT

## Poole Stake Primary Temple Day

By Jayne Kyprianou

On a beautiful, warm, sunny Saturday, children, parents and leaders from the Poole England Stake visited the London Temple and took part in the annual stake Primary temple day.

The activity consisted of four workshops for the children to attend, including a workshop where the children had to answer two questions:

1. How does the temple make you feel?

2. Why do you think the temple is important?

When they had written down their answers, they then went and touched the temple as encouraged by President Monson and had their photos taken.

In one of the other workshops the children learnt about John Rowe Moyle, “Only a Stonecutter”. As part of the workshop the children were able to act out some of Brother Moyle’s remarkable story.

The event finished with the children hearing a few words from stake president John Crew.

“On this occasion we were few in number, but the children had a wonderful time. They felt of the Spirit that comes from being at the temple, and we were so proud of their behaviour and attitude.” ■

### Editors’ Note

The editors, **Jason Watling** and **Debbie Twigger**, invite all news stories, articles and photographs to be sent to [ukiensign@ldschurch.org](mailto:ukiensign@ldschurch.org). Stories should be in Microsoft Word, 350–500 words, with photographs in jpg format, around 3–4mb in size. Please submit stories for the News section as close to the event as possible.

The signed written permission of all participants in the photograph, as well as the photographer and author, is required for the Church to use the article.

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JAYNE KYPRIANOU

*Primary children at the London Temple on the Poole stake Primary temple day*

EUROPE AREA (ENGLISH)