

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Reach Out This Special Time of Year

By Elder Paul V. Johnson, United States of America

First Counselor, Europe Area Presidency

President Thomas S. Monson said: “There is no better time than now, this very Christmas season, for all of us to rededicate ourselves to the principles taught by Jesus the Christ. It is the time to love the Lord, our God, with all our heart—and our neighbors as ourselves.”¹ The Savior lived a life of service to others, and the Christmas season is a perfect time for us to minister to others.

President Monson also said: “My brothers and sisters, finding the real joy of the season comes not in the hurrying and the scurrying to get more done or in the purchasing of obligatory gifts. Real joy comes as we show the love and compassion inspired by the Savior of the World, who said, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done

it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done it unto me’ [Matthew 25:40].”² What better time to find someone who needs our ministering hands and hearts than this Christmas?

If we open our eyes and hearts, we can find someone to bless with our kindness during this special season. We can pray for inspiration about whom we should help. It may be a refugee, a neighbor, a member of your ward or branch, or a family member.

We can also pray for inspiration for how best to help. Someone may need a friend and we can be that friend. We may help someone who is lonely and needs some of our time. We may be able to bless someone who is struggling with the illness or death of a loved one. Someone may have financial challenges and we may be able to help a family enjoy some simple gifts for Christmas. We may find someone who has physical or emotional challenges and would be lifted by friendship, love and service.

The ministering we offer may be simple and not seem heroic to us but can still have a lasting impact. My first Christmas away from home was as a missionary in Norway. I had been in the country for about two months that December. I missed my family and our Christmas traditions. A member family was kind enough to reach out to my companion and me and invite us to spend Christmas Eve with their family. This family didn’t have a lot of money, but they had a number of beautiful children excited about Christmas. They were generous enough to share their delicious meal

Elder Paul V. Johnson



with us and to allow us to join in their Christmas celebration. They even gave each of us a simple Christmas gift. The kindness they showed over 40 years ago is a precious memory to me.

President Howard W. Hunter gave us a number of ideas of things we could do at Christmastime. Notice how many of these suggestions involve blessing other people:

“This Christmas, mend a quarrel. Seek out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion and replace it with trust. Write a letter. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty in word and deed. Keep a promise. Forgo a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Apologize. Try to understand. Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else. Be kind. Be gentle. Laugh a little more. Express your gratitude. Welcome a stranger. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love and then speak it again.”³

At Christmastime we celebrate the birth of the Son of God, our Savior. Let us reach out, as He would, to those who need to feel His love at this special time of year. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Christmas Is Love” (Christmas devotional, Dec. 2, 2012), broadcast.lds.org.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Spirit of the Season” (Christmas devotional, Dec. 6, 2009), broadcast.lds.org.
3. Howard W. Hunter, “The Gifts of Christmas,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2002, 18–19.

Christmas Gifts for Local Women's Refuge

By Debbie Twigger

Around 80 sisters from the Kettering Ward donated Christmas gifts for the local women's refuge at the annual Relief Society Christmas social. The sisters have an ongoing relationship with the refuge and give regular donations for the women and children who have left their homes to find safety. Leaders from the refuge have attended events at the Kettering chapel at Christmas and on other occasions to receive the gifts on behalf of the many women and children who are very grateful to receive them. ■



Left to right: Wendy Russell from the Kettering Relief Society presidency, Jenny Jarvis and Beverley Reynolds with the Christmas gifts for the women's refuge

DEBBIE TWIGGER

A Card from the Queen, Just One of Many Birthday Messages

By Des Waddington

It's not every day that a card from Her Majesty, the Queen, is delivered to one's home, but for Vera Brown of Risinghurst, Oxford, this happened recently on her 100th birthday. Born in Oxford, 100 years ago, Vera has lived a full and active life. She had many jobs during her working life, including serving as a nurse during the Second World War. She retired from work at the age of 65.

Vera joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints more than 25 years ago, and her favourite role in

the Church was serving as the pianist in the Primary. Working with the children is one of her fondest memories, and it was a role that she really enjoyed.

To help celebrate Vera's really special birthday, members of the Church in the Oxford area threw a party for her, and she was thrilled that over 70 people came along to join in the celebrations, some travelling great distances to be with her that day. Bishop Philip Toothill, leader of the local congregation, said, "Vera is

a tremendous example to everyone who comes into contact with her. She is loved and appreciated by so many people."

100-year-old Vera Brown, who celebrated her special birthday in September



COURTESY OF VERA BROWN

Asked what advice she would give to people who wanted to live a long and healthy life, Vera said, “This is a difficult question to answer, but people should keep walking.”

Elder Patrick Kearon, Europe Area President, sent Vera a lovely letter wishing her well, and she was really pleased to receive this, together with all of the other birthday wishes. ■

Young University–Idaho, Pathway is a one-year, low-cost educational program that offers online academic courses, religious education, and local face-to-face gatherings with other students” (“How Pathway Works,” *Ensign*, June 2016, 71).

From 12 September, when the new term started, a group gathered at the Hyde Park Chapel Visitors’ Centre, with another group meeting at the Wandsworth meetinghouse. There is also a virtual group that covers all of the United Kingdom that will be meeting online. This opportunity is now available for all members of the Church in the United Kingdom.

“The Pathway experience helps participants develop confidence, become self-reliant, build leadership experience, and gain employable skills while learning by the Spirit within the framework of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Two program versions are available: one for native English speakers and one for individuals with low English proficiency.

“After Pathway, participants may pursue a variety of opportunities, including applying to the BYU–Idaho Online Degree Program, where they can work toward a professional certificate or degree—and continue to pay the low Pathway tuition rate” (“How Pathway Works,” 71).

Graduates not in attendance: Danila D’Auria, Karen Castillo, Noemi Garcia, Wonecler Santos, and Diane May Hands. ■

Pathway Students Receive First Certificates

By Sister Kay Richards

On 3 September the first group of 17 Pathway students from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints in London completed their Pathway year and received certificates. “In partnership with Brigham

Back row from left: Alcione Oliveria, Pilar Iguasnia, Gladys Darko (facilitator), Fabrizio Ricciardi (stake presidency), Elder James and Sister Kay Richards (missionaries), David Anibal



Front row from left: Matthew Hogg, Janaina Bragga, Luciana Souza Leite, Elaine Araujo, Marie Salim, Gladys Okuonghae, Mabel Ogveide, Agnes Ivan, Paul Omo-Bamawo

High-Flying Local Priest Receives Media Attention

By Calvin Williams

Ross Williams, of the Milford Haven Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has been the subject of a lot of media attention after it was revealed that he had passed his driving test and gained his private pilot's license in the same week, shortly after his 17th birthday.

Ross's story has been featured in five local newspapers across South Wales. He had a national radio interview and was featured on the BBC and ITV news websites and is due to appear on television as part of a regional news programme. His significant achievement was also covered by a national newspaper.

Ross was praised by the media because he had worked very hard

at a local restaurant to pay for all of his flying lessons himself, and his achievement makes him one of the youngest qualified pilots in the British Isles.

Speaking about the media attention, Ross said, "I enjoyed the media attention but it reminded me that hard work and the talents that the Lord has blessed me with are what matters, not being in the news." Ross now plans to continue his training in different aircraft types. Currently a priest, Ross is preparing to serve a mission for the Church, just like his older brother, who is currently serving in the California Roseville Mission in the United States of America. ■



Ross Williams, priest from the Milford Haven Branch, passed his driving test and received his pilot's licence in the same week.

Chester Stake Helping Hands

By Tanya Devany

Dozens of members of the Chester England Stake donned their Helping Hands vests to follow King Benjamin's exhortation: "Succor those that stand in need of your succor; . . . administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need" (Mosiah 4:16).

There were projects to choose from around the stake. At Blacon Adventure Playground, a group of members repainted a large play barn interior, as well as clearing litter and painting fences. They thoroughly enjoyed their service—particularly the children, who got covered in paint and then went to the playground and got covered in mud! Gary Miller, a play leader at the playground, said, "I'm really grateful to the members of the Church that turned up today and literally brightened the place up by providing a much-needed repaint to the barn."

At Gwaith Powdwr Nature Reserve in Penrhyndeudraith, 34 volunteers from the Porthmadog Branch—an incredible number, given the branch's average sacrament meeting attendance of 42—were led by Rob Booth from Wildlife Trust Wales.

Blessed with dry weather and breathtaking views of the snow-dusted peaks of Snowdonia, they literally blazed a trail for others to follow: cutting back brambles, levelling earth,

CALVIN WILLIAMS

and clearing stones to create a new path for visitors to the reserve.

A veritable army of painters “brushed up” a considerable stretch of wooden railing with a new coat of paint. Another intrepid crew braved a steep trail down the cliffs to collect rubbish from the beach area of the reserve, giving wildlife a safer habitat and ennobling the view.

At Rhyl chapel, volunteers packed five hundred hygiene kits containing items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, plasters, soap, combs, facecloths and tissues. The kits were donated to two charities based in North Wales—UareUK (led by Jane Tornado) and ShareUK, whose volunteer Monica Hogg sent kits to Syria and Uganda.

At Brickfields Park, Helping Hands volunteers made a wildlife “habitat hedge”, instructed by Jim Kilpatrick from Denbighshire County Council. The group cut back brambles and thorny branches and used the branches for the new hedge. The hedge, nestled close to a pretty lakeside fishing point, is designed to serve two purposes: (1) to create a wind barrier for fishermen; (2) to attract thousands of beneficial insects. These in turn attract other wildlife.

Jim Kilpatrick, countryside warden for the area, stated, “Brickfields Pond is a popular site for visitors. Cutting back on the site is carried out in sensitive manner to ensure no disturbance to birdlife—however, each year there is a problem with getting rid of the

cuttings. These hedges allow you to use the cuttings to create an important habitat, therefore relieving the need to burn. The hedges also create a beneficial structure for the fishermen. The group worked extremely hard and left with a real understanding of the benefits of what they created.” ■



TANYA DEVANY

Jim Kilpatrick, countryside warden, with Helping Hands volunteers

Teenagers Attend Welsh Hindu Celebrations

By Jonathan McColgan

Teenagers Redd and Dan Jones from the Merthyr Tydfil Wales Stake recently attended the Hindu Council of Wales’ event Raksha Bandhan. This internationally celebrated Hindu event for the armed forces emphasises the core values of courage, commitment, discipline, respect, integrity, loyalty and duty that are at the foundation of all who serve. Also present were the current Mayor of Cardiff, Cllr Monica Walsh, and the Cabinet Minister for Health, Well-Being and Sport, Vaughn Gethin AM. During the Raksha Bandhan celebration female Hindu youth tied “Rakhis” (thread bracelets) onto the wrists of military personnel to establish a bond of friendship, brotherhood, and mutual protection and support between the British Hindu community and the armed forces. The attending dignitaries also received Rakhis.

Redd Jones said, “It was interesting to see how different religions are and makes you appreciate what you have yourself.” Dan Jones also recalled, “In

school we have learned about the Hindus. A sister would put a Rakhis on their brother or father’s wrist if they were going to war to defend them, and now they do it as a tradition in their faith.” Redd and Dan also enjoyed meeting Naran Patel from the Hindu Council of Wales. ■



JULIE JONES

Left to right: Dan Jones, Redd Jones and Naran Patel (from the Hindu Council of Wales)

Liverpool Area Women Help MerseyAid Charity Effort for Syria

By Yvonne Runcie-McMahon

Relief Society has a very simple and profound motto—“Charity Never Faileth”. The members of Relief Society, from several wards in the Liverpool England Stake, decided to respond to encouragement given by Church leaders to reach out and help refugees.

Working in collaboration with MerseyAid, a charity that is dedicated to helping refugees around the world, an event was organised to prepare hygiene packs for women in the Syrian refugee camps. Prior to the

event, the participants were invited to gather together items that would be placed in the ziplock bags. These items included toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap and other essentials.

The response was beyond what anyone had expected, with 242 packs being assembled. One kind donor handed in 400 toothbrushes and 400 tubes of toothpaste, meaning that there were some left over that were donated to a Wigan shelter, Warrington YMCA and Warrington Women’s Refuge. Carol Bass, president of Warrington



YVONNE RUNCIE-McMAHON

Hannah Woodruff from the Warrington Ward holding two of the hygiene kits

Relief Society, said, “I can’t imagine how pleased these women and children will be to receive what we take for granted every day but what they are desperately in need of.”

The hygiene packs were delivered to a warehouse in Huyton, Liverpool, prior to being sent to Syria. ■

St Albans Stake Calais Refugee Project

By Joyce Farnsworth

Members of the St Albans England Stake collected and assembled 200 food parcels for the refugees in Europe earlier this year. The food items for the parcels were collected over a three-week period, and then most were assembled at the chapel in Stevenage by young adults.

Karen Nemeth, a full-time senior missionary, expressed her feelings about the project: “The Calais

refugee project was a wonderful opportunity to help serve a need in a fellow brother or sister who is in a very unfortunate circumstance. As I packed box after box with basic food, I thought about the person or

Members of the St Albans stake who collected and assembled 200 food parcels for refugees



JOYCE FARNSWORTH

family that would receive it. I wondered what it might be like to be in such circumstance and how grateful I would be to have anyone show that they cared enough to do this for me. ‘Are we not all beggars?’ [Mosiah 4:19] came to mind.”

Church leader Paul Elvidge added, “It is imperative as Christians that we help those in need and to relieve hardship. The women from our congregations and our young adults have been an example to us in how they have responded.” ■

Helping Those in Need—an Answer to Prayer

By **Moira Dodkins**

It was late on a Saturday night in January 2016 when Sister Pam Dickerson, the Northampton stake welfare coordinator, received a phone call from a member who was returning from a Helping Hands project in Calais, France, asking if she could distribute 3 tons of surplus clothing being returned to the UK. She said yes, and immediately offered a prayer. She says the answer came very clearly. “Create love and goodwill to the less loved and needy.” From then on the miracles started to happen.

Having spent many years helping the underprivileged in the region, Pam had built up a reputation and a lot of contacts. Members of other charitable organisations—such as the Salvation Army, Leicester Homeless Society, and the Baptist and United Reform Churches—were invited to the chapel to collect bags of clothing that they could then distribute. The

charities came from Northampton, Rugby, Bedford, Kettering and Wellingborough.

Night shelters in Northampton and Rushden also received donations of clothing and shoes.

Along with all the donations, certain items were sold to vintage shop owners and other merchants. Altogether over £800 was raised to go towards another Helping Hands project in the future.

Many of those who came commented on feeling the Spirit in the building. They thanked the Church for its generosity in sharing, saying these clothes were an answer to their own prayers, as their cupboards were bare. Testimonies of Christ and His love for us were shared among fellow Christians and non-Christians all endeavouring to do His work.

“We shall never know the full extent of how many were helped,” said Sister Dickerson. ■

An Unexpected Blessing

By **Elder James Richards**

An unexpected blessing, sometimes called a miracle, came to me, James Richards, while serving in the England London Mission with my wife, Kay Merrill Richards.

On Sunday, August 7, 2016, Kay and I spoke at a fireside at the London Temple Visitors’ Centre. At the beginning of my talk, I said that I had served in the British Mission 54 years ago, and I asked if anyone in the audience had been living in the British Mission at that time. One person raised her hand. I asked her where she had lived, and she said, “I lived in the Wandsworth area.” I replied, “Really? I served in that area when I was on my mission. What is your name?” She said, “You knew me as Rosalind Miller and you taught me the gospel.” I was shocked and said, “I want to talk to you after the meeting.”

After I finished speaking I went to her and exclaimed, “I can’t believe I don’t remember teaching you on my mission!” She replied, “Yes. You were my missionary. You are the missionary that taught me the gospel.” I asked, “When did you get baptized?” She said, “I was only 16 years old, and my parents wouldn’t let me get baptized until I was 18. You taught me and my friend at the South London Ward

chapel. Your companions were Elder Burrell and Elder Lybbert. You were transferred to Borehamwood, and I didn't see you again."

Rosalind went on to tell me that she married Alan Carter, a member of the ward, and they were sealed in the London temple. She has 7 children, six of them have served missions and they are all active in the Church. She has 23 grandchildren. Her husband served twice as bishop of the Selsdon Ward, where she lives, and he recently died in December 2015. Later, she sent me a picture of a Carter family reunion with her, her husband and all

of their family together.

What a blessing to learn that a 16-year-old girl I taught on my mission had been converted to the gospel and that her entire life and her family's

life had been blessed by receiving the gospel and the ordinances of the temple.

This is one of the greatest joys of my life. ■



COURTESY OF ROSALIND CARTER

Rosalind and husband Alan Carter with their 7 children and 23 grandchildren



COURTESY OF ROSALIND CARTER

Left to right: Sister Kay Richards, Elder James Richards, and Rosalind Carter, who was taught the gospel by Elder Richards when she was 16 years old

Editors' Note

The editors, **Jason Watling** and **Debbie Twigger**, invite all news stories, articles and photographs to be sent to ukiensign@ldschurch.org. Stories should be submitted in Microsoft Word, 300–500 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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