

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

The Blessings of Temples in My Life

By Elder Helmut D. Wondra

Area Seventy

My love for the temple goes back to my childhood when I knew it only from pictures and stories. Every time my parents came back from a visit to the Bern Temple in Switzerland, they always seemed happier and brighter than before—and they always brought back delicious Swiss chocolate. This way I gained a very positive connection to the house of the Lord at a very young age.

At the age of 13, I had the opportunity to see and enter a temple for the first time. Even just by looking at the exterior I was moved by the sanctity and purity of the temple. In the temple itself, I felt close to heaven. These feelings have only become deeper and clearer over the years.

Above the doors of the temple is written: “Holiness to the Lord, The House of the Lord.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the Lord of the temple. These holy houses are consecrated to Him and our Heavenly Father. Temples are sanctified by the presence of the Holy Ghost. Christ is the source of the power and the light emanating from the temple. All symbols and covenants, all ordinances of the temple, point to Him and His great Atonement and help us to become more like Him.



*Elder
Helmut D. Wondra*



Springtime painting

By Gordon S Dawson

My name is Peter Smith. I am a member of the Aberdeen Stake. Five years ago, I suffered from lymphoma. The experience has taught me so many different things.

I would like to share a picture of springtime in Aberdeen.

Springtime is an opportunity to see Heavenly Father's handy work in all its splendour.

Our Heavenly Father has a divine plan. We may choose to have joy and to not look at His commandments as restrictions.

I find the most profound thing that springtime represents is the Saviour. It reminds me who He is and what He did for us.

There are many obstacles placed in our way for we are all in the 'school of life.'

God is a loving caring Heavenly Father and He gave His Firstborn Son to us as an example.

This springtime I pray we may all have great joy in choosing the right.

I leave you my testimony that our Saviour lives and our Heavenly Father looks after everything, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. ■

Our everyday life is often characterized by noise and turmoil. To leave it behind from time to time, to come to the House of the Lord and to open ourselves to an environment of peace and holiness brings peace to our soul.

In this pure environment it is easier for us to find answers to our deepest questions and concerns. In his first message as President of the Church, Russell M. Nelson promised the following:

"The ordinances of the temple and the covenants you make there are key to strengthening your life, your marriage and family, and your ability to resist the attacks of the adversary. Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to stay on the covenant path."¹

The fulfillment of the great promises of the temple depends on how faithfully we keep the covenants of the temple and how much we actually consecrate ourselves to the Lord and His work.

We do not have to be perfect to go to the temple and to receive the wonderful blessings that await us there. But we should strive for the necessary worthiness and bring the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.² For me, this means that I have to develop a malleable, soft heart—a heart that aligns with my Father in Heaven.

A contrite spirit means to me that I

adopt an honest attitude, that I am aware of my imperfections, and that I need the help of the Lord to return to my Father in Heaven.

The Lord has promised:

"Blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost."³

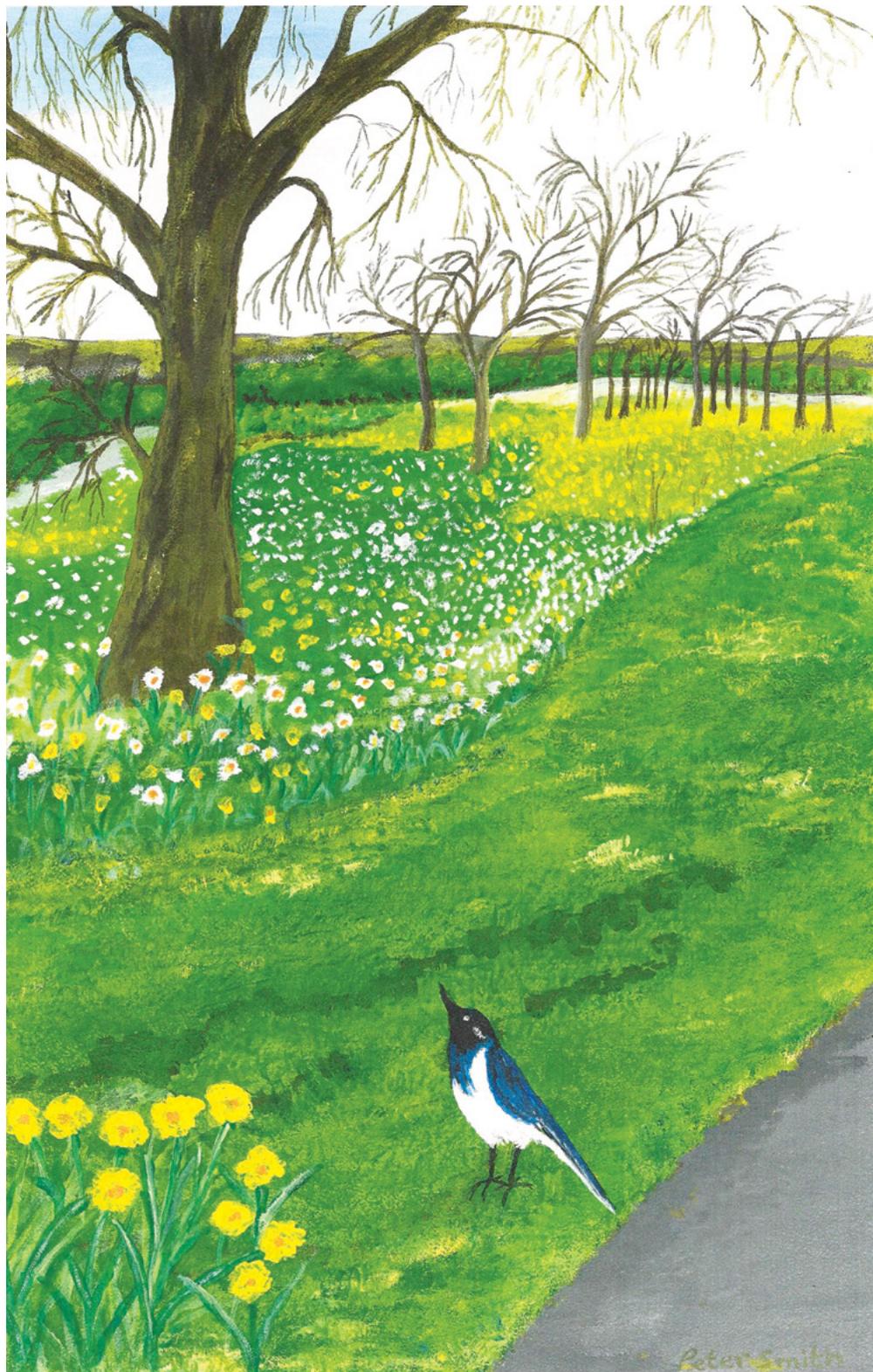
The greatest blessing I experienced in the House of the Lord was that I was able to lay the foundation of an eternal family together with my beloved wife. Because of the covenants of the temple and the sealing authority that is exercised there, we have the promise that our marriage will last for time and for all eternity, if we remain faithful to the covenants. We have the promise, that together with our loved ones, we may live forever in the presence of Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father.

The fulfillment of this promise is worth every sacrifice.

Let us be a people that comes to the temple as often as possible to be sanctified and cleansed, to receive revelation and power from on high, to serve our ancestors and, through the covenants of the gospel and the grace of Christ, to receive all the blessings our Heavenly Father has in store for us. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson in "Introduction to the First Presidency" (Worldwide Broadcast, Jan. 16, 2018), broadcasts.lds.org.
2. See 3 Nephi 9:20
3. 3 Nephi 12:6



He Is The Way

By Holly Stephenson

I was serving in the southern part of England when I had a crazy experience that taught me how to survive the rest of my mission!

I had been out for about four months and was assigned a new companion. We travelled on the bus for an hour to get to a member's home for dinner. It was a dark, wet, foggy, cold day and we were in need of good food.

Looking through the misty covered windows, we approached our bus stop and we stepped off.

I looked around at our surroundings to find that we are not at our desired location, not in the slightest! In a panic, we checked when the next bus was, but to our dismay, we had missed the last bus.

Uncertainty looming, we went to call someone for help, but sadly—there was no service on the phone. We were in the middle of nowhere! As time passed, we decided our only solution was to walk. We saw the sign for our destination, “Bordon 1½ miles” and thought, “Okay, let's go!”

We began walking along the curb of a busy two-lane road. There was no path, no light, just faith to keep us on track. We tried the flashlight on our phones to use as a guide for where our feet should step, but for some of you

who know what missionary phones are like, that wasn't much of a help! Instead we turned on our iPads and used the light that shone from there as a guide. This seemed to work pretty well.

Just imagine two sister missionaries, walking along the side of a dirt track road, distressed, holding an iPad in full display with a picture of Jesus Christ shown on it—that was the exact scenario.

As we continued walking along the road, we began to feel a little bit of confidence that we'd be fine and that we'd survive the ordeal. Whilst following the light coming from the photo of Jesus Christ, I jokingly said to my companion, "Sister, we are literally following the light of Christ right now!"

Amongst the laughter, we steadily followed the light every step of the way until we finally reached the end of our journey, realising that we had reached our destination safely because of that simple beam of light.

Later that evening, I began reflecting on the events that happened that day. To this day I still reflect back on what I learned from that frightful event. The idea of the light that the photo of Jesus Christ beamed to bring us to safety and the pure joy it brought to our hearts as we reached our destination.

I learned He is there, He is real, and He is the way. We may not

know where we are going, what lies ahead, or whether we are going the right way at all, but one thing we can be sure of is that when we follow Jesus Christ, we WILL reach our destination safely and rejoice when we get there. Jesus Christ isn't our last chance to our Heavenly home, He is our only chance.

His message was not, "Stand back, I'll handle this." Rather it was, "Come, follow me." His love and His atoning sacrifice give us safety and surety that we won't be in darkness for long, but that the light of His love and example will help us get back home.

I look back on what happened that night and what it meant to me. It meant that I came to know who Jesus Christ is as a person, what His purpose is in my life and what I need to do to keep Him in my life. It's expected of us to take a little step into the uncertainty of life, but we do it with Christ, not on our own. We are designed to be great, but we are even greater with Jesus Christ there guiding us along the way to perfection and eternal joy.

I'm so grateful for that there is an actual person who can make all that happen. That's pretty cool. Think about what Jesus Christ means to you and remind yourself of that every day. He is our greatest hero, our best friend, our way back. All we need to do is follow His light. ■

Lost Patriarchal Blessings

By Frank Blease

Whilst serving as Stake President in the Preston England Stake, one of the members in Lancaster, Brother Roy Ward, contacted me to say that he had lost his patriarchal blessing. He had gone through the appropriate channels and was told that there was no record of his blessing in the archives of the Church. He was distressed about this and approached me as his priesthood leader to know if there was any way he could ever retrieve it. I was sympathetic. After all, they are wonderful inspirational documents relied upon for guidance and comfort. However, I was at a loss as to how to help him.

About a fortnight prior to his request, an elderly sister from the Preston Ward, Alice Hughes, was having her house cleared because she was moving permanently over to family in the United States. Her husband, Ronald, was the first patriarch in the Preston England Stake. His collection of books and Church memorabilia, such as a set of plates commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Church in Great Britain, were taken over to the Preston Chapel and were laid out in the library at the Preston Ward for members to take if they wished.

I noticed with interest in a large-sized black leather triple combination, that Brother Hughes's bookmark was placed at the start of section 88 in the Doctrine and Covenants, which was designated by the Prophet Joseph as the "Olive leaf . . . plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord's message of peace to us." It struck me how appropriate it was that the bookmark would be placed at that point in a patriarch's scriptures.

Sometime later, when the house clearance was complete, I was passed a large grey three-ring binder that had been lying in a cupboard for many years. It contained 18 patriarchal blessings pronounced by her husband. Sadly, he had passed away before submitting them, so they lay forgotten about in that cupboard for many years. I checked through them and lo and behold, not only was Roy's blessing was among them, but also his wife's was there! I scanned them and forwarded them to him. He called me to express what a joy this was! He thought they had been lost forever, but here it was to his utter amazement, joy and relief. After checking that no one else's blessings currently in the stake were there, I submitted them to Church headquarters.

When I think about the timing of this, coinciding with Sister Hughes' move, I came to the conclusion that the Lord had been aware of Roy's



prayers and pleadings and intervened on his behalf for his blessing to be brought to light.

I found this experience to be one of those uplifting moments during my time as stake president. ■

Walking by faith, not by sight

By Geoff Shenton

This is my conversion story to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As a blind person, I'm so grateful for the opportunities the gospel has given me.

I met my wife, Judith, at Wigston Day Centre, Leicester in November 1981.

Judith was on placement for her pre-nursing course and I was attending the centre twice a week. Judith told me she was a member of the Church and I gave her a hard time but respected her because there was something different about her. After six months of friendship, I asked her to send the missionaries to see me. After the first discussion, I was sceptical about the Joseph Smith story. Unbeknown to me, one of the

missionaries told Judith I would join the Church. After a while, she said "if the Church isn't for you, then we have no future together." That made me think very seriously about the Church, especially Judith, as I didn't want to lose her!

On Judith's birthday, she said she was going to a church activity and said bluntly, "if you want to see me, you can come with me, or you won't see me on my birthday!" I was stunned! It was a YSA fireside—and I was impressed! I liked everything I heard; their testimonies and their company. I was invited to stake conference and I also attended a cottage evening where I requested the discussions again—my interest was growing! Judith kept a distance



throughout, asking the missionaries to let me learn at my own pace. After reading 2 Nephi 31:5–6 (why Jesus needed to be baptised to fulfil all righteousness) I was asked about baptism. After much prayer, I said ‘yes’ and was forewarned about opposition from the adversary. My baptism date was set, but I then began to doubt my decision and asked my mum what I should do. She said, “If you don’t do it, you’ll regret it for the rest of your life.” My doubts were dispelled and I was baptised by Judith’s father.

Many years ago, I recall receiving a blessing that told me when I would eventually attend the temple, I would see things that physically sighted people would not see and I testify that this has happened to me. I have had the privilege to serve as a counsellor on two bishoprics, high priests group

leader, elders quorum president, ward mission leader, Sunday school president, primary teacher and also in many other ways.

I’m so grateful for the gospel and for my eternal companion, Judith, who was instrumental in helping

me to come to know my Saviour Jesus Christ. ■

Geoff and Judith are the proud parents of two sons, Jonathan and Oliver, who have both served full-time missions. They are also the grandparents to Isaac, Noah and Theo, three-year-old adorable triplets adopted by Jonathan and his wife, Hannah.

Ebenezer Beesley and Wooburn Green

By Jill Morgan

The name Ebenezer Beesley may be familiar from the LDS Hymnbook, as the composer of a number of our current hymn tunes. These include “High on the Mountain Top,” “Welcome, Welcome, Sabbath Morning,” and the sacrament hymn “Reverently and Meekly Now.” Ebenezer Beesley was an Englishman,

born in Bicester (Oxfordshire) in 1840, but grew up in Wooburn Green, Buckinghamshire (about 5 miles southeast of High Wycombe).

His musical abilities evidently developed from a very early age. It is said that when he was only 6, he could sing all the different parts of the songs being rehearsed by the choir which

met in the Beesley home. Such was his talent that a group of local women apparently offered to provide the funds for him to become a chorister at St George's Chapel, Windsor. His parents declined the offer however, and shortly thereafter joined the Church.

Ebenezer's parents had been Wesleyan Methodists before being introduced to the restored gospel. When they were baptised in 1849, they were the first local residents to join the church, and Ebenezer's father, William, was called as the first branch president for Wooburn Green. This was only the third branch of the church to be organised in nineteenth century Buckinghamshire, the first two being Edlesborough and Simpson in the north of the county. Despite considerable opposition from the local clergy, criticism in the local press, and almost half of the early members emigrating, the branch seemed to have thrived and remained in existence for at least the next twenty years.

Ebenezer was a shoemaker like his father. In the 1851 census, at only ten years old his occupation was already listed as 'Shoe Closer.' The next we knew of him was his marriage in March 1859 (age 18) to Sarah, the eldest daughter of the second branch president for Wooburn Green, Henry Hancock. Only eight days after their marriage the newlyweds were on their way to the Salt Lake Valley, leaving

Liverpool on the *William Tapscott* with over 700 other new converts from Britain and Europe. They crossed the plains in the George Rowley handcart company, and Sarah reported that they suffered greatly from shortage of food and water, as well as the heat along the way.

Once in Utah, they settled in Salt Lake City and Ebenezer continued to work as a shoemaker, but was very active in various community musical groups, as he sang and played the violin and flute. He also composed songs for the Sunday school and the *Juvenile Instructor*. In 1880, he was called to be the director of the Tabernacle Choir and served in that position until 1889. He was one of a committee of five—which included Evan Stephens

and George Careless—who compiled *The Latter-day Saints' Psalmody* of 1889. This was the first official LDS hymnbook to include music as well as words, and more than a dozen of Ebenezer's tunes were included.

But Ebenezer didn't forget his origins. Among the hymns which we sing today, and for which he composed the music, are: "Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words" (a tune named "Bicester," recalling his place of birth), "'Tis Sweet to Sing the Matchless Love" (a tune named "Hancock"—his wife's maiden name), and "God of our Fathers" (hymn 76) which he named "Wooburn Green" after the place where he grew up, first displayed his considerable musical talent, learned his trade, and met and married his sweetheart, Sarah. ■

Wandsworth Family History Workshop

By Sylvia Anderson

Recently, in Nightingale Lane, South West London, a family history workshop that provided something for everyone, from beginners to the more experienced, was run. It taught how to begin your family history journey and how to use the resources that are available.

Presentations were given by Brother and Sister Curley, Sister

Sharon Tomlin and Sister Christine Reid from the London FamilySearch Centre, currently located at the National Archives, Kew, London.

Two ancestry sites were used during the workshop, FamilySearch, and Geneanet.

One participant, Brother Nathan Gauge-Klein, had been searching for a German ancestor who had moved to



Left to right: Karen Adams, Nathan Gauge-Klein, Helen Mohammed, Sharon Tomlin, Sister Curley, Sophia Alexis, Christina Chan, Irene Semakula.

England in the nineteenth century for a while and it was becoming a frustrating task to find him. However, the workshop helped him email a connection in Germany and he then gladly received information that led him further to discover his German ancestors.

For those exploring their African/Caribbean ancestry or connections to the Caribbean, Sister Sharon Tomlin began her presentation with a very interesting, historical overview of the inhabitants of some of the Caribbean Islands. She then highlighted additional sources to FamilySearch from which important records can be found. This was also a practical session benefiting others, including, Sister Christina Chan.

Sister Chan found details of her husband on the passenger list of the ship on which he travelled to England, including a photograph of the ship. This is something she will be able

to add to her family tree. I think it is fair to say everyone was excited to see this especially as it showed what can be achieved with patience and perseverance.

The organisers, Karen Adams, Sophia Alexis and Helen Mohammed, did a tremendous job in organising the event. ■

New *Ensign* Article Submission Website

By Chelsea Craven

We are introducing a new way to submit stories to be published in the *Ensign* United Kingdom inserts. This will make sharing your stories more fun and simple.

The website was created by Jason Watling after requests to make it easier to submit stories. On the home page, towards the bottom, are all the required forms that you need to download and then upload with your submission. This keeps everything in one place, and with one click, you can send

all attachments to the editing team.

The *Ensign* UK inserts are for your stories shared in your own voice. Please use this tool to uplift each of our brothers and sisters in our faith within the UK.

We will post how-to videos to help you navigate through the website. The URL for the website is **ensignsubmissions.co.uk**. If you have questions, contact us through the LDS UK Facebook page (**facebook.com/LDSUK**) or by email at **UKIEnsign@ldschurch.org**. ■