

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

The Sabbath Day at Home

By Elder Alessandro Dini Ciacci, Italy
Area Seventy



Elder
Alessandro
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In his April 2015 general conference talk, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” then Elder Russell M. Nelson invited us “to examine [our] feelings about, and [our] behavior on, the Sabbath day.”¹

He counseled on how to seek inspiration to keep the Sabbath day holy and said: “I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted a *sign* between me and my Heavenly Father [see Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20]. With that understanding, . . . when I had to make a decision whether or not an activity was appropriate for the Sabbath, I simply asked myself, ‘What *sign* do I want to give to God?’”²

Those words caused me and Sara, my wife, to consider what sign we were giving to God by the things we did on Sundays. We realized we didn’t need to make great changes but felt we should start paying more attention to the little things. We already went to church every Sunday. We refrained from working on the Sabbath, playing sports, studying, or any other activity that would cause someone else to work on the Lord’s day. So we sought inspiration to understand what steps we needed to take in order to follow this invitation by a living Apostle.

One Sunday afternoon our children asked us to play one of their

favorite board games. The purpose of this game was to answer correctly as many of the questions as possible. The questions were always too hard to answer for children, but the real reason why our children liked playing this game was the bright light and the loud noise of the big buzzers allotted to each player.

I was ready to tell them to choose a different activity, when Sara announced we were going to play the game the children had suggested but on two conditions: (1) she would be asking all the questions; (2) we would not be using the questions on the cards, but she would create four new categories and they would be all gospel centered. As we got everything ready, I wondered how Sara would manage coming up with so many gospel-related questions, knowing all the right answers and making sure each question matched the level of each child. On top of that, she would have to do it all on the spot. I thought, “This is going to be a disaster.” As we started playing, however, it soon became apparent that the desire of a mother to let her children play and the desire of a daughter to obey her Heavenly Father’s commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy had given the Holy Ghost the chance to inspire a parent in finding a way to both

sanctify the Lord’s day and also make it a delight for her children.

I was then reminded of the words spoken by Nephi: “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.”³ When the Lord asks something of us, whether directly or through our leaders, sometimes we think we can’t do it, but if we ask for inspiration and are willing to act, He will open a way right where we thought there was none.

Sunday is a day we look forward to. On this special day we strengthen our relationship with God and with the Saviour by going to church and partaking of the sacrament. On this special day we strengthen our family by engaging in wholesome family activities that bring us closer together and to God. Spending time together on Sundays in ways that help us remember and honour God has helped us make this day truly “a delight.”⁴ ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 129.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” 130.
3. 1 Nephi 3:7.
4. Isaiah 58:13.

Mission Raises Funds for St Michael's

By Nicholas Read

The Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ is still rolling forth, sweeping every country and sounding in every ear. Most often what opens those ears is a simple act of charity.

Last year Brent Brown travelled from the USA to the UK on vacation with his wife. They visited sites he had known from serving his mission in England nearly 40 years earlier, and specifically St Michael Anglican church on top of a hill in the majestic Lake District in Cumbria. There the local vicar had agreed with the then mission president, Ellis Ivory, to host a mission conference in the 12th-century church.

Now four decades later, Brother Brown found that St Michael and All Angels was raising funds to repair its ancient bell tower but was far from its goal. Upon his return home, he called on other missionaries who had served in the England North West Mission (now the England Manchester Mission) to help.

They responded generously, a sum of £15,000 was collected, and arrangements were made for the gift to be presented. This presentation was made

on a bright Thursday morning in June, as bells pealed from the belfry to call people from the village up the hilltop.

Parishioners, village residents and some unsuspecting tourists were on the church grounds when representatives of the local Kendal Branch and Preston England Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints joined President and Sister Ulrich of the England Manchester Mission, a number of missionaries, and an LDS choir formed for the occasion. BBC TV and Radio Cumbria covered the event. Reverend John Dixon of St Michael and All Angels opened the meeting by explaining he had first wondered if Brother Brown's email promising such a large sum might be an Internet scam! He told the audience that although he has delivered many sermons about charity, even he didn't immediately recognise it from a stranger.

He encouraged all to be open to giving and receiving every good gift and offered his deep gratitude for the donation, which has brought the fundraising near to achieving its full goal.

President Ulrich read a moving letter from Brother Brown, then added that as children of a kind Father in Heaven everybody is part of the same family, and every act of kindness rendered to another is a manifestation of that love.

He explained how the village of Hawkshead and its picture-postcard setting of hills, lakes and forests are choice creations unto the Lord and that He smiles upon those who inhabit the land.

An account was given of how missionaries first came to the region in July 1837, exactly 180 years ago. From there the restored gospel spread from village to village until there were more Latter-day Saints numbered in Britain than in America.

President Ulrich told the congregation that the tale of these families, their faith and love will be celebrated in song and dance at this summer's LDS British pageant, to be held in the first two weeks of August at the site of the Preston England Temple in Chorley. One parishioner was heard to say, "We'll hire a bus so we can all see it!"

A number of performers in the British pageant joined local Church members to sing "How Great Thou Art." The donation cheque was then presented, but instead of ending the

Members, dignitaries and friends at the fundraising service at St Michael's



meeting as planned, members of the congregation moved to ask if they could open their hymnals and join in a song of praise. Both faiths united their voices in a rendition of “Nearer, My God, to Thee,” and every heart was touched.

Reverend Dixon invited President Ulrich to deliver a sermon to his

congregations in the near future, repeating the example of Christian fellowship shown by their predecessors. Indeed, a hymn written in 1782 by Baptist minister John Fawcett explains well that “blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.” ■

Banbury Girl Performs Ballet at Royal Albert Hall

By Des Waddington

Kerenza-Marie Houston, aged 10 and a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Banbury, Oxfordshire, was really excited to dance ballet at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

Kerenza-Marie has been taking ballet classes for six years, and this performance was something that she had been looking forward to for several months; it has been the highlight of her hobby. In total, about 60 girls from the LoveBallet Dance Company performed a piece called “Dancing for George”—a tribute to George Michael—as part of a special event organised by the Mardi Gras Company, involving 1500 dancers from 20 different dance schools from around the country.

Speaking about her performance, Kerenza-Marie said, “I was really nervous before I danced, but once I got started, I managed to relax and

get more confident. Afterwards I was really pleased to have been able to do it. It was amazing to be able to dance in front of 5,000 people.”

It is Kerenza-Marie’s ambition to become a prima ballerina when she is older, and she would love to dance the part of the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*.

Marie Houston, Kerenza-Marie’s mother, said, “We were incredibly proud of Kerenza-Marie, as she had previously been rather shy. With a little faith she was able to achieve something that she didn’t think was possible. Her involvement in Church activities has helped her gain confidence—for example, singing with the other children and delivering short lessons.”

Marie added, “This has been a great first step towards her achieving her ambition to become a prima ballerina.” ■



ANDREW HOUSTON

Kerenza-Marie outside the Royal Albert Hall

Slovak Saints Shine Brightly

By Roger Stanton

How do we find employment for people out of work in these difficult times? How do we help our members retain a healthy work ethic? How can we find work assignments for those on Church assistance? After much discussion and prayer, the Lord confirmed our answer.

giving assignments to live the gospel more actively. Daily prayer and scripture study were top of the list. Family home evening, home teaching, meeting attendance are still reported every week by members. This still left us short of a meaningful and rewarding work project.

His disciples. "This is what we will be doing at the shoeshine," he said. Tears were shed and enthusiasm was indicated that the idea was a good one.

Following the guidance of the self-reliance manual on running a business, we had our members conduct a survey in the Rotherham city centre. We wanted to know how many people were wearing shoes we could polish. We found that 60 percent of passersby are potential customers. We had work to do finding a place in Rotherham's outdoor market; teaching members how to professionally clean and polish shoes and improve their English was the next task. We spent all our branch budget on polish, brushes, banners and flyers. A couple of weeks before Christmas we were ready to launch our shoeshine company.

Members work in three teams. The first shift is from 8am until 1pm, a second shift runs from 1pm until 4pm and the mid-day shift from 10am until 2pm covers the busy time. So far, English has improved, pride has been maintained and the community has been served and has shown their appreciation for the work the Church is doing. Members of the Slovak branch have already donated through their shoeshine efforts £800 to the Yorkshire Air Ambulance Fund. We are in the Rotherham outdoor market opposite the Rotherham visitors' centre every Tuesday. Come and visit and bring your shoes with you! ■

Slovak members at the shoeshine stall



About a year ago we started our self-reliance meetings for the Slovak branch (Sheffield Fourth Branch) in the Rotherham chapel. We started by teaching good housekeeping skills, budgeting, savings, food storage, basic life skills, job seeking and of course a one-hour English class taught by our wonderful missionaries.

As time went by and progress was made, we decided to concentrate on

While looking for work opportunities on the internet, I came across a chap with a shoeshine stand in America. I was sure that we could do this in England. I put the idea to our members, who at first were not sure they could do this. We looked at the film of the shoeshine on the street in America. This encouraged a little more confidence.

It all changed when our Sunday School teacher referred to a picture of the Saviour cleaning the feet of



DIANE SMITH

From left to right: Jean Dean and Scott Mann MP with the five-generation family history plan

MP Visits St Austell and Receives Personal Family History

By Diane Smith

North Cornwall MP Mr Scott Mann attended the family history centre of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in St Austell to receive a framed picture of his family history. Members of the congregation Lucy and Jean Dean researched Mr Mann's family history to trace his five family generations, which he was delighted to receive.

Mr Mann also toured the meetinghouse on Kingfisher Drive to discover more about the beliefs and practices of the Church. Due to the rural nature of Cornwall, St Austell Ward's boundaries are among the

largest in the UK, covering half of Cornwall and containing four different parliamentary constituencies. Mr Mann was able to meet various members of the congregation, including some of his own constituents who travel up to an hour each way to attend church every Sunday.

Sister Jean Dean and her husband, Terry, are long-term members of the St Austell Ward and helped to build the current chapel. As ward temple and family history consultants, they offer an extremely popular free-of-charge monthly genealogy service at St Austell Library. ■

Toby Perkins Chooses Staveley for a Helping Hand

By Jeremy Kay

Last year when members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints presented Toby Perkins MP with a voucher for 100 hours of community service within his Chesterfield constituency, they were pleased when he requested Mormon Helping Hands for Staveley Cemetery as their annual community project.

On Saturday 3rd of June, Bishop David Lawrance, with members and missionaries of the Chesterfield Ward, aged from 7 to 81 years old, spent a sunny day in Staveley Cemetery. Church members cleaned moss from unreadable tombstones, reassembled damaged or vandalised gravestones, planted bulbs and flower seeds and cut back branches where they obscured graves. Headstones were also photographed and uploaded to billiongraves.com, making it easy for family historians to search for their family members with the information now secure and easily searchable online.

Bishop Lawrance remarked, "As followers of Jesus Christ, this Helping Hands activity gave members an opportunity to enjoy working together. We believe we are our brother's keeper and that families can be forever, so as

we respect our dead, help improve the local area and help family historians, who would have thought we could have had such a marvellous day?"

Previous local Mormon Helping Hands projects have included cleaning, restoring and photographing over 1,000 eroding sandstone gravestones with Reverend Jo Morris at St Bartholomew's Church yard in Old Whittington; a total grounds makeover at the rear of St Patrick's Church in New Whittington; replacing fencing with Derbyshire

County Council Rangers on the Chesterfield canal; helping perform maintenance for the Eyre Chapel Trust at Newbold; and assisting a restoration with Bolsover Drama group.

Mormon Helping Hands projects are also used globally in response to many emergency and disaster situations in conjunction with the Red Cross and

other charities when teams of dedicated volunteers swiftly help in their local communities in many ways. ■



JEREMY KAY

Church members from 7 to 81 years old working together on the Mormon Helping Hands activity

Youth Create Wildflower Bed in Local Park

By Debbie Twigger

Up to 80 young men and women aged 14 to 18 years from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Northampton England Stake made a wildflower bed by the boat lake in Abington Park, Northampton, for a special Mormon Helping Hands activity day of service in the

community. They worked tirelessly for several hours to complete the project, which is now appreciated by the local neighbourhood.

On the Saturday afternoon the Mayor and Mayoress of Northampton, Cllr Chris and Lynne Malpas, joined the teenagers for the opening of the wildflower bed and

awarded each youth a Mayor Bear badge. Jed Waddington, stake Young Men president, commented, 'We are so proud of the youth for volunteering to help in a local park, representing the Church through their Christlike example.' The Mayor and Mayoress had previously attended the Sunday session of stake conference earlier in January and were impressed by the number of youth in attendance. ■

Youth from the Northampton annual youth conference at the Mormon Helping Hands activity with the Mayor and Mayoress of Northampton



ARTHUR NEWBURY

Rugby Couple Brave Heat and Spiders to Help Others

By Neil Plumbley

Missionary work is normally something that is associated with young men in white shirts with black name tags knocking on doors. But retired Rugby, Warwickshire, residents Keith and Christine Withington have taken the brave step of volunteering to serve a full-time mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Adelaide area of Australia.

This self-funded venture will see them leaving friends and family to focus

on people that need help. The weather in Adelaide can reach 40c in the summer, and that is something that this couple are not used to. Keith Withington said, "We have been preparing to serve a mission for the Church for a number of years. That preparation has involved both studying and saving". Keith added, "We will be engaged in helping people from all walks of life and taking the opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them."

Whilst they will be able to Skype with family members from time to time, they will not see them in person for 18 months, until they return home.

For many years now, older retired couples have been encouraged by the Church to serve missions, like their young counterparts, and there are currently nearly 7,000 mature missionaries serving around the world in many capacities. When missionaries apply, they can express a preference about what type of mission they would like to serve, but all are prepared to go and do whatever the Church asks them to do.

Keith explained, "For many years we were determined to serve a mission, to be able to take the Church's teachings to others and testify of the truth of it. We are really looking forward to serving, and we know we will gain great satisfaction from assisting others, but we are not looking forward to the spiders that they have in Australia!" ■

Christine and Keith Withington as they take a short break from their missionary duties in Adelaide



COURTESY OF THE WITHINGTONS



◀ Rob and Judy Davies standing in front of the font where Thomas Davies was christened in Upton Magna in 1812

A sketch of Thomas Davies ▶



IAN CHALLINOR

J'LYN DAVIES

Thomas Davies, First Convert in Shrewsbury

By Ashley Green

On Sunday evening 14th May, after a stake conference in Newcastle-under-Lyme, about two dozen members of the Shrewsbury Ward accompanied Rob Davies and his wife, Judy, on a 90-minute walking tour of Church history sites near the town centre.

Two months earlier, Judy Davies (an American Latter-day Saint) had emailed the family history centre in Telford to ask for a guided tour following the life of Thomas Davies, the first convert to the Church in Shrewsbury. Judy's husband, Rob, is a great-great-grandson of Thomas Davies.

Fortunately, a 1997 detailed account of the Saints in Shrewsbury was a huge help for Rob and Judy's journey. The account features the baptism of Thomas Davies in the river Severn by Elder Thomas D. Brown on 27 July 1847—just three days after the Mormon pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. The 1997 account is titled “From Shrewsbury to Salt Lake City—A Mormon Sesquicentennial

Celebration” by Gordon W. Beharrell, the father of the current bishop in Shrewsbury.

The tour started near St. Mary's Church, where Thomas and his wife, Mary, were married on 24 November 1834. Then the group proceeded to the Union Wharf, where the Shrewsbury Branch met in 1851, and concluded with a short devotional near the site of the former canal buildings in Castlefields, where Thomas and a few other investigators were first taught the gospel by Elders Thomas D. Brown and Thomas Thomas. Rob and Judy bore their testimonies and emphasised the far-reaching consequences of that early missionary work. They and hundreds of their faithful LDS relatives cherish the gospel legacy bequeathed to them by Thomas Davies and other pioneer ancestors.

Rob and Judy have given the Shrewsbury Ward a memento of their visit—a framed sketch of Thomas Davies by their teenage granddaughter J'lyn. ■

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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