

# Willow Canyon First Ward

## January 2015 Theme – How we believe in Christ

In Matthew Chapter 3 we have this account of the baptism of the Savior:

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, *Suffer it to be so now*: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Here are some questions about our belief that you may often hear regarding our beliefs of the Godhead and being Christians:

1. How do we believe that God and Christ are one?
2. How does our belief differ from other Christians and why?
3. What's the Nicene Creed?
4. How do we answer when someone says we are not Christian?
5. Are there scriptures in the Bible that talk about three separate and distinct members of the Godhead?
6. How do mormons explain an embodied (but glorified) God?

For answers and a testimony from an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ – let me refer you to Elder Jeffrey Holland's talk given in October 2007:

As Elder Ballard noted earlier in this session, various cross-currents of our times have brought increasing public attention to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Lord told the ancients this latter-day work would be “a marvellous work and a wonder,” and it is. But even as we invite one and all to examine closely the *marvel* of it, there is one thing we would not like anyone to *wonder* about – that is whether or not we are “Christians.”

By and large any controversy in this matter has swirled around two doctrinal issues – our view of the Godhead and our belief in the principle of continuing revelation leading to an open scriptural canon. In addressing this we do not need to be apologists for our faith, but we would like not to be misunderstood. So with a desire to increase understanding and unequivocally declare our Christianity, I speak today on the first of those two doctrinal issues just mentioned.

Our first and foremost article of faith in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.” We believe these three divine persons constituting a single Godhead are united in purpose, in manner, in testimony, in mission. We believe Them to be filled with the same godly sense of mercy and love, justice and grace, patience, forgiveness, and redemption. I think it is accurate to say we believe They are one in every significant and eternal aspect imaginable **except** believing Them to be three persons combined in one substance, a Trinitarian notion never set forth in the scriptures because it is not true.

Indeed no less a source than the stalwart Harper's Bible Dictionary records that "the formal doctrine of the Trinity as it was defined by the great church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries is **not** to be found in the [New Testament]."

So any criticism that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not hold the contemporary *Christian* view of God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost is *not* a comment about our commitment to Christ but rather a recognition (accurate, I might add) that our view of the Godhead breaks with post-New Testament Christian history and returns to the doctrine taught by Jesus Himself. Now, a word about that post-New Testament history might be helpful.

In the year A.D. 325 the Roman emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea to address – among other things – the growing issue of God's alleged "trinity in unity." What emerged from the heated contentions of churchmen, philosophers, and ecclesiastical dignitaries came to be known (after another 125 years and three more major councils) as the Nicene Creed, with later reformulations such as the Athanasian Creed. These various evolutions and iterations of creeds – and others to come over the centuries – declared the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be abstract, absolute, transcendent, immanent, consubstantial, coeternal, and unknowable, without body, parts, or passions and dwelling outside space and time. In such creeds all three members are separate persons, but they are a single being, the oft-noted "mystery of the trinity." They are three distinct persons, yet not three Gods but one. All three persons are incomprehensible, yet it is one God who is incomprehensible.

We agree with our critics on at least that point – that such a formulation for divinity is truly incomprehensible. With such a confusing definition of God being imposed upon the church, little wonder that a fourth-century monk cried out, "Woe is me! They have taken my God away from me, and I know not whom to adore or to address." How **are** we to trust, love, worship, to say nothing of strive to be like, One who is incomprehensible and unknowable? What of Jesus's prayer to His Father in Heaven that "this is life eternal, that they might *know Thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom *Thou* hast sent"?

It is not our purpose to demean any person's belief nor the doctrine of any religion. We extend to all the same respect for their doctrine that we are asking for ours. (That, too, is an article of our faith.) But if one says we are not Christians because we do not hold a fourth-or-fifth-century view of the Godhead, then what of those first Christian Saints, many of whom were eyewitnesses of the living Christ, who did not hold such a view either?

We declare it is self-evident from the scriptures that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are separate persons, three divine beings, noting such unequivocal illustrations as the Savior's great Intercessory Prayer just mentioned, His baptism at the hands of John, the experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the martyrdom of Stephen – to name just four.

With these New Testament sources and more ringing in our ears, it may be redundant to ask what Jesus meant when He said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." On another occasion He said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Of His antagonists He said, "[They have] ... seen and hated both me and my Father." And there is, of course, that always deferential subordination to His Father that had Jesus say, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God." "My father is greater than I."

To whom was Jesus pleading so fervently all those years, including in such anguished cries as "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" and "My God, my God, why hast thou

forsaken me?" To acknowledge the scriptural evidence that otherwise perfectly united members of the Godhead are nevertheless separate and distinct beings is not to be guilty of polytheism; it is, rather, part of the great revelation Jesus came to deliver concerning the nature of divine beings. Perhaps the Apostle Paul said it best: "Christ Jesus...being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

A related reason The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is excluded from the Christian category by some is because we believe, as did the ancient prophets and apostles, in an embodied – but certainly glorified – God. To those who criticize this scripturally-based belief, I ask at least rhetorically: If the idea of an embodied God is repugnant, why are the central doctrines and singularly most distinguishing characteristics of all Christianity the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the physical Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ? If having a body is not only not needed but not desirable by Deity, why did the Redeemer of mankind redeem **His** body, redeeming it from the grasp of death and the grave, guaranteeing it would never again be separated from His spirit in time or eternity? *Any who dismiss the concept of an embodied God dismiss both the mortal and the resurrected Christ.* No one claiming to be a true Christian will want to do that.

Now, to anyone within the sound of my voice who has wondered regarding our Christianity, I bear this witness. I testify that Jesus Christ is the literal, living Son of our literal, living God. This Jesus is our Savior and Redeemer who, under the guidance of the Father, was the Creator of heaven and earth and all things that in them are. I bear witness that He was born of a virgin mother, that in His lifetime He performed mighty miracles observed by legions of His disciples and by His enemies as well. I testify that He had power over death because He was divine but that He willingly subjected Himself to death for our sake because for a period of time He was also mortal. I declare that in His willing submission to death He took upon Himself the sins of the world, paying an infinite price for every sorrow and sickness, every heartache and unhappiness from Adam to the end of the world. In doing so He conquered both the grave physically and hell spiritually and set the human family free. I bear witness that He was literally resurrected from the tomb and, after ascending to His Father to complete the process of that Resurrection, He appeared, repeatedly, to hundreds of disciples in the Old World and in the New. I know He is the Holy One of Israel, the Messiah who will one day come again in final glory, to reign on earth as Lord of lords and King of kings. I know that there is no other name given under heaven whereby a man can be saved and that only by relying wholly upon His merits, mercy, and everlasting grace can we gain eternal life.

My additional testimony regarding this resplendent doctrine is that in preparation for His millennial latter-day reign, Jesus has already come, more than once, in embodied majestic glory. In the spring of 1820, a 14-year-old boy, confused by many of these very doctrines that still confuse much of Christendom, went into a grove of trees to pray. In answer to that earnest prayer offered at such a tender age, the Father and the Son appeared as embodied, glorified beings to the boy prophet Joseph Smith. That day marked the beginning of the return of the true, New Testament gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the restoration of other prophetic truths offered from Adam down to the present day.

I testify that my witness of these things is true and that the heavens are open to all who seek the same confirmation. Through the Holy Spirit of Truth, may we **all** know "the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom [He has] sent." Then may we live Their teachings and be true Christians in deed, as well as in word, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Happy New Year! from Bishop Milne

## Happy Birthday!



### January 2015

- 1 Warren Metcalf
- 4 Doris Mendenhall
- 7 Ella May Valentine
- 10 Mont Deming  
Natalie Nielson-Riep
- 12 Manette Murri  
Zander Olsen
- 14 Zach Rigby  
Kendon Riep
- 15 Chyrrel Cook  
Brenda Rodgers  
Dustin Kramer
- 19 Lora Lee Holt  
Danielle Ellis
- 20 Warren Schmidt
- 22 Donna Strong
- 23 Kathleen Barnhart  
Martin Strong  
Tessa Ellis
- 24 Chandler Glauser
- 25 Remy Guy Kramer
- 26 Holly Miles
- 27 Charity Hawkins

## Employment

For employment opportunities and information, please contact Lane Clark at: [info@SmashCRM.com](mailto:info@SmashCRM.com) or call him at his home 801-571-7857.

## Relief Society

We'd like to thank Donna Strong, Jane Johnson, Deanna Nielsen, and Marilyn Crapo for their many years of dedicated service in the Relief Society. They have worked many more hours than we can know for our benefit. Many times they have worked for us, when they had burdens themselves. They are wonderful examples of good women and devoted Relief Society workers. May the Lord bless you for this service. Well done!

We'd also like to thank those who provided food for the Schmitt family or helped in any way. Especially to Terri Williams and those who helped in the kitchen, setting up tables and chairs, serving, and cleaning up. Our hearts and our prayers go out to Sallie at this time.

We'd like to welcome the new presidency—Vivienne Sullivan, president, Kaylin Nydegger 1st counselor, Charity Wilcox 2nd counselor, and Gina Messerly secretary. We'd like to ask the other board members to continue on working in their callings, doing a marvelous job as always.

May the Spirit of Christ remain in your lives and homes this coming new year and may you have every needful blessing you desire.

Love,  
The Relief Society Presidency

## A note from Marilyn Crapo

Many thanks to all my friends who have prayed for me and who have brought me food or called to see how I was. I am so grateful to all of you and so appreciate your thoughtfulness and your love. I hope to see you soon. Have a wonderful New Year and stay healthy. One tip from me to you to avoid what I have been through: Try to get rid of the stress in your life. It can do bad things to you. Even if you think you are not stressed, simplify your life.

## Young Men

### Priests/ Teachers

January 8 - Baptisms for the Dead - 6 p.m.  
January 14 - Cooking Merit Badge - 6 p.m.  
January 21 - Combined Activity  
January 28 - Family History - 7 p.m.

### Deacons

If any members in the ward have needs for help at their house, the Deacons Quorum is ready to help. Please contact Greg Miles or Jack Nydegger.

Deacon's January reading schedule

Jan 5 Jeremiah 14  
Jan 11 Jeremiah 51  
Jan 18 Ezek 33  
Jan 25 Hosea 9  
Feb 1 Malachi 4 — DONE!

The Deacons will finish the Old Testament on Feb. 1st. All Deacons agree that this has been a tough goal to achieve.

## Cub Scouts

There are big changes coming for the Cub Scouts in 2015. More information will be coming in future newsletters.

## Family History

If anyone would like to learn to index as part of the Family History program, please contact Gwen Brandt at 435-770-3410.

## Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your contributions for the February newsletter no later than January 27th to [dbmahler@velvetshadow.com](mailto:dbmahler@velvetshadow.com). All auxiliaries are encouraged to contribute to the newsletter each month.



## Missionary Addresses

### Elder Zach Rigby

South Carolina Columbia Mission  
110 Oak Park Drive, Suite B  
Irmo, SC 29063-6110

### Elder Nelson & Sister Kim Leshner

Ensign Ranch Mission  
3551 Hundley Road  
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### Elder Jerry & Sister Charlene Farr

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### Sister Sarah Jones

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Sugar Land, TX 77478-2804

### Hermana Samantha Josie Ellis

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apartado postal 249-2010  
zapote  
san jose, costa rica

### Elder Jared Rigby

Mississippi Jackson Mission  
1875 Burnham Road  
Brandon, MS 39042

## Young Women

January 8 - Baptisms for the Dead  
January 14 - Favorite Things  
January 21 - Combined Activity with YM  
January 28 - Personal Progress  
with Chloe Smith

Congratulations to Joyce Walkenhorst for doing such a great job of following her doctor's orders so her broken leg could heal more quickly than anyone expected. She is back to walking on her own and even driving again! Welcome back!!

## Choir

Thank you to our ward-family Choir for all the beautiful, uplifting music that they provide for us! Please know that we are grateful for your wonderful contributions to our Sacrament Meetings!



## Primary

The theme for the year 2015 is "I Know My Savior Lives".

The theme for January 2015 is "We believe in God the Eternal Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ".

The scripture for January 2015 is "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost" (Articles of Faith 1:1)

We have thoroughly enjoyed working with your children in 2014 and look forward to a great 2015. For the 2015 theme we have given each child a block with a picture of Christ and the children on the front and the theme on the back. Parents we would like the children to put this somewhere that they will always be able to remember that Christ lives and loves each one of them. Having a picture of Christ nearby keeps us more focused on what we should be doing and who we should be centering our life around.

We are thankful for the opportunity to work with your children in Primary and are grateful that we can learn so much from them. We appreciate all of the children and their willingness to help us out when asked to do something.

Thanks  
The Primary Presidency

## Empty Nesters

FHE will be held January 12  
at 7:00 pm.

Gary and Susan Johson  
will be hosting.

We are enjoying reading the  
"Autobiography of Parley P Pratt."  
We welcome all Empty Nesters  
to join us on the  
second Monday of the month.