

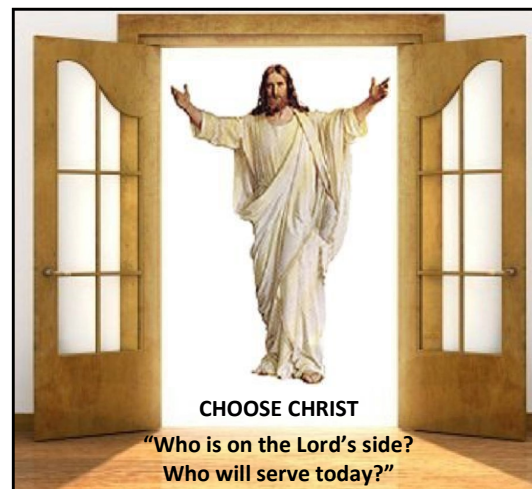
ZION'S PATH

Since 2005, a publication of the

**Church of Jesus Christ
Oak Grove Restoration Branch**

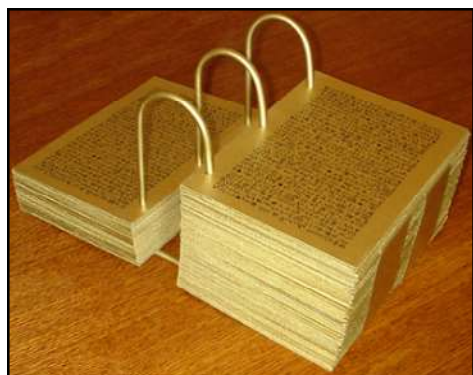
**Volume 19, Issue 1
January/February 2023**

***"... and He will teach us of His ways, and
we will walk in His paths ..." Isaiah 2:3***



**BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS (ALL AGES)
TO FAMILY WORSHIP AND SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES
9:00am—10:15am**

Adult Class—The Book of Mormon

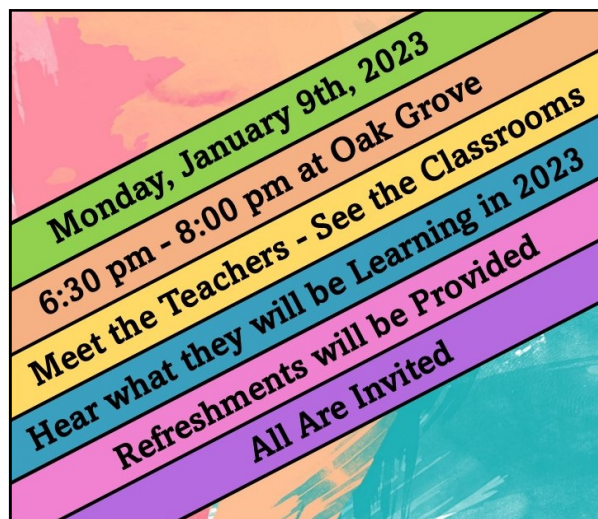


Did you know that Joseph Smith, Jr., following a vision from God, was directed by the angel Moroni to the gold plates—the Book of Mormon—nearly 200 years ago, on September 23, 1823? Often called the “Keystone of our Religion,” the Book of Mormon has stood the test of time, despite the efforts of many critics and naysayers.

Beginning January 8th, Elder Eric English will lead an Adult Church School class in a study of this marvelous book, which clearly points us to a personal covenant relationship with Jesus Christ.

Come join us as we look at how we got this book, its storyline of our forefathers, and the principles and prophecies within its pages. Along the way, we’ll uncover evidences of its divine authenticity and answer some of the common criticisms against it. We hope you’ll join us in our class each week (except first Sunday—Sacrament Sunday—each month).

Sunday School Open House January 9



**Some Sundays we have:
—Combined Youth Class
—Junior Church**

*“Study to show thyself
approved unto God.”
2 Timothy 2:15*

*“Seek learning even by study,
and also by faith.”
D&C 85:36a*

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Choose Christ!

--- by Mark Griffin, Associate Pastor

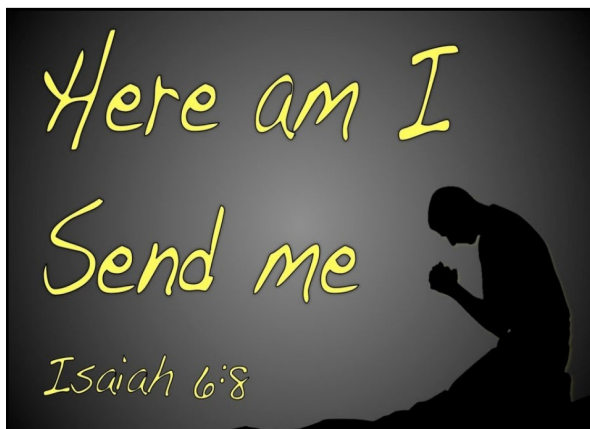
The Pastorate brings you greetings and glad tidings as the Lord ushers us into a new year. Our hopes and prayers are that each of you drew closer to your Heavenly Father during this last year and recognized His loving hands embracing you in your walk with Him.

Our overall theme for 2023 is "Repent and Come unto Christ" - so few words, yet an invitation, if accepted, that will change the course of your life forever. This invitation holds promises eternal and blessings unending; could there be any greater an invitation?

"Nevertheless, I will be merciful unto them, saith the Lord God, if they will repent and come unto me; for mine arm is lengthened out all the day long, saith the Lord God of hosts." (2nd Nephi 12:41)

From the prophet Isaiah: *"Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."* (Isaiah 6:5)

Isaiah recognized himself as being unworthy and in need of repentance when standing in the presence of the Lord. And when the Lord asked *"...whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"* Isaiah said *"Here am I, send me."* (Isaiah 6:8) Isaiah chose to obey God!



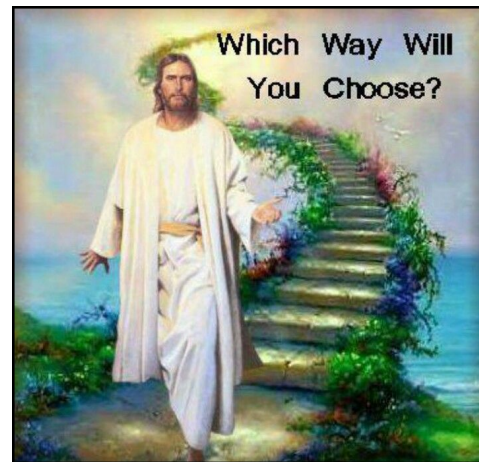
Do you have a personal testimony to share?
Please contact Debbie Norman
for Zion's Call.

So here's the good news: By repenting and coming unto Christ, we "Choose Christ"—our January/February monthly theme.

"... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15)

In choosing Christ, we will not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). In choosing Christ, His yoke will be easy and His burden light (Matthew 11:30). In choosing Christ, where He is, we may be also (John 14:3). Christ waits for us to choose Him.

"Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men; for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith, Repent, and I will receive you." (Alma 3:57)



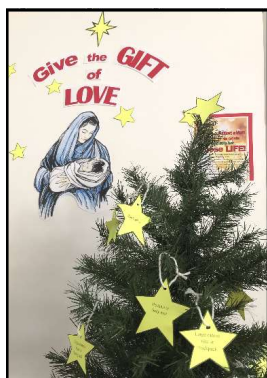
We look forward with anticipation to the coming year as we choose to walk the Old, Old Path together with our friends most dear, with our loved ones we cherish, and—most importantly—with our Heavenly Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

OGRB Pastorate

Presiding Elder: Mark Nunn
Associates: Elder Mark Griffin
Elder Jeremy Lidberg
Priest James Bullard
Elder Charlie Booth

Baby Blessing at OGRB

On Sunday, November 13, Olivia Leigh Griffin, infant daughter of Chris and Racheal Griffin, was blessed by her grandfather, Elder Mark Griffin, and Elder Mike Lidberg.



Project Christmas Starlight

During December, a small Christmas tree was placed by the sanctuary doors. Small stars on the tree listed items to help fill a care package for women in crisis pregnancies who choose life for their unborn babies. The items were taken to Resource Health Center in Lee's Summit (formerly Rachel House) as incentives for these women to choose life for their unborn babies. Resource Health also offers many other services, including counseling, ultrasounds, education and mentoring for moms and dads dealing with crisis pregnancies. Our church family enjoys assisting in this effort!



by Sheri & Mark Nunn



On Monday, December 12, 2022, a group of twenty-five met at the Grain Valley Theatre to see "White Christmas." The group included senior adults from OGRB, along with a few other church members, friends, and family.

After the movie, as we gathered in the lobby, we met a gentleman who said he knew we were a group by how we greeted each other as we entered the theater. He kindly offered to take our group picture and took a video of us as

we clowned around waiting for stragglers to join for the group picture.

Debbie Mulheron began singing "White Christmas," and everyone quickly joined in. We all got a good laugh when we repeated the same verse twice because some of us couldn't remember the correct order of the two verses.

What a special blessing we had to be able to share some fun time together!

Question Time: Why Get Baptized? — by Elder Eric English

In today's **current culture** of skepticism and even antagonism toward organized religion and the ordinances associated with it, this question of "why baptism?" is becoming a far more common question in the minds of many.

"Why isn't it enough to just believe in God?" Or, "It's my personal faith and I've had an experience with God, so I'm good with Him and don't see a need to have to go to church or do all of those traditional things like baptism."

If we were dealing with this question **fifty years ago**, the discussion would likely be very doctrinal in nature. It would be an appeal toward those who already have a foundational belief in God and recognize the authority of the Bible; the discussion would be an exercise in sharing the evidence from Scripture that shows that simple belief or belief + assent + trust in God isn't all that's required on the journey.

We would point to **Acts 2:36** that states that to come to Christ, you must accept Him as both Savior and Lord, meaning that it isn't all that's required for salvation to simply believe and trust in Him, but that He must reign in our hearts and lives and that we must follow His commandments.

Then we would go to **John 3**, where Jesus tells Nicodemus "Ye must be born again," not physically, but spiritually through the baptism of water and the Spirit. Perhaps the discussion would then go to the example that Jesus set for us where He went to John to get baptized himself. **So, if Jesus is really our Lord and if He commanded it and if He even went so far as to set the example of it for us, then the real question is "Why NOT get baptized?"**

But in today's modern culture, it's important to also consider the resistance towards organized religion in general and the desire to remain independent and on an isolated journey of "self discovery" and individual belief. Baptism is an opportunity to publicly display to your friends and family that you have made a commitment to follow Jesus of Nazareth. It's full of imagery as we are symbolically laid into the grave like our Savior and then symbolically raised from that grave with new life in Christ.

Even authors of cheap, self-help books teach that in order to stick with a goal that we set for ourselves, we must tell someone else that will be able to help hold us accountable to that goal.

Baptism is a way to outwardly align yourself to Him and to join alongside fellow believers on this journey back to Him; it also is a rite of passage to join the Church. And fortunately for us, we don't purely rely on the strength of our own will—or our will plus the accountability of other believers—but we're also given the **gift of the Holy Spirit** to support us in our Christian walk.



It's been said that a faith that is cheap and easy and doesn't require anything of us can't possibly be a truly saving faith. It won't survive the tests of time and trial. How selfish and unfulfilling would an individual faith walk be if we didn't also have the opportunity to come alongside others to support one another on this adventure?

In today's society of cheap and easy promises and the relative acceptance of breaking those promises with little or no justification or consequence, it might be worth considering the ancient practice of baptism that still seems very relevant today.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15)

Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John 3:5)

The Freeze Point — by Susan Freeze

After teaching this fall about “Keeping Your Heart,” I had to reevaluate my thoughts. The scripture says, *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”* (Proverbs 4:23) I realized that so much of what we think and feel is controlled by our mind. My research showed that there is actually a huge brain-heart connection. Obviously, God knows and shares this in scripture.

As I continued to read, I found that 40% of people with heart disease have some type of depression. (The Heart Mind Connection by Windsor Ting, MD and Gregory Fricchione, MD.) I found that others with heart disease often suffer from anxiety. I don’t have diagnosed anxiety, but I can be an anxious person.

All this information made me pause. If there is such a great connection between our heart and our brain, then what is the key? It all comes down to our thoughts. What do we think about? The Hebrew word used for heart in the scripture in Proverbs is *Leb*. It means heart, feelings, intellect, thoughts and the center of anything. So that word “heart” could also be interpreted as our thoughts. Everything that you do starts with an idea or a thought. Controlling our thoughts requires a great deal of self-control.

“No area of your life is untouched by your thoughts. You have 50,000 thoughts a day. Approximately 90 percent of the thoughts you had today are repeats from yesterday and the day before.” (from The 4:8 Principle by Tommy Newberry)

There are many articles about **the battlefield of the mind**. Truly there is a battle for your mind and soul. The scriptures again point this out to us. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds), Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Wow! God wants us to hold every thought captive—every thought, not just some of our thoughts!

What does God want us to think about? He tells us in Philippians 4:8 *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report—if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”*

I used to pray that the Lord would renew and transform my mind as the scripture says. I did not know that I had the ability to transform my mind, but after teaching on guarding your heart, I realized that we can control our thoughts and God expects us to do so.



Often we think about New Year’s resolutions in the physical sense. This year I would challenge you to test your self-control muscles. Research shows as you practice self-control, you can strengthen it! Choose to control what you think about. Choose to shut down negative thoughts about yourself, others, your relationships, church, and your job. There is a saying: “Change your thoughts, change your life.”

“And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God is.” (Romans 12:2)

Thanksgiving Dinner at OGRB

About 110 members and friends attended the annual Thanksgiving dinner at the church on Saturday evening, November 12.



Christmas Musical Worship Service (watch on ogrb.org "Videos")

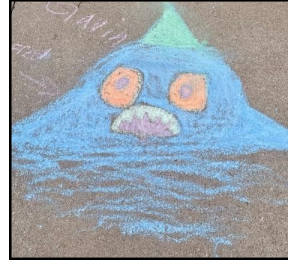
On Sunday morning, December 18th, the OGRB Choirs presented a musical Christmas worship service. Under the direction of Debbie Mulheron, the Bell Choir played for 15 minutes prior to the start of worship. The adult choir, under the direction of Valerie Lidberg, with piano accompaniment by Rachel Horn, presented several songs. Elder Mark Griffin shared the spoken word.

A brass ensemble played several numbers, closing with the congregation singing along as they played The Hallelujah Chorus from The Messiah. Also, for a song sung by the women of the choir, Laurie Huseby played the flute and Mark Griffin played the guitar.



Harvest Party — by Julie Anderson

The OGRB Harvest Party was held on Saturday, October 29th. Jared and Katie Mulheron did such an awesome job! We had a costume contest, sidewalk art contest, pumpkin carving contest, chili cook-off, dessert contest, a maze (requiring flashlights), bouncy castles, food, hot chocolate and cider, and lots of fun! The Lord sent us a beautiful sunset as a backdrop. [There were about 50 in attendance, including children and adults.]



Winning sidewalk chalk drawings:
Left: Gavin Mulheron Right: Marleigh Norman



Upcoming Events

- Jan 7** OGRB Adult Choir singing for a **Worship Service at the Stone Church in Independence 5:30pm**
- Jan 8** Potluck after morning worship
Special evening service 6:30pm at OGRB
by Zioners/Zion's League
- Jan 9** OGRB Church School Open House
6:30-8:00pm (refreshments to be served)
- Jan 14** OGRB Seniors 55+ Winter Potluck
11:30am at the Church
- Jan 15** 4:45pm Priesthood and spouses devotion
5:00pm Elders/Aaronic Priesthood class
- Jan 15** Priesthood Meeting after pm service
- Jan 22** Special evening service by Spiritual
Stewardship Group #3—6:30pm at OGRB
- Jan 28** Men's Retreat 8:00am—3:00pm at OGRB

- Feb 4** RWC Winter Gathering at Colbern Road
9:00am—noon
- Feb 5** 4:45pm Priesthood and spouses devotion
5:00pm Elders/Aaronic Priesthood class
- Feb 12** Potluck after morning worship
- Feb 18** CMRB Priesthood and Wives Banquet
- Feb 19** 4:45pm Priesthood and spouses devotion
5:00pm Elders/Aaronic Priesthood class

2023 SPRING RETREATS AT ODESSA HILLS

THEME: KEEP YOUR EYES UPON JESUS
(Hebrews 12:2)

Older Youth ~ March 10-12

Senior High ~ March 17-19

Junior High ~ March 24-26

Junior ~ April 15-16



*"I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord."
(Psalm 122:1)*

**THIS NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE
ON OUR CHURCH WEBSITE.
*Tell your neighbors, friends and family!***

Worship Schedule		Sacrament Service 1st Sunday of each month
		8:00 am Priesthood Prayer Service
Sunday Morning Early Worship	9:00 am	9:00 am Time of Quiet Meditation
Church School	9:15 am	9:15 am Prayer Service
		10:15 am Song Service
Sunday Morning Worship Service	10:30 am	10:30 am Sacrament Service
Sunday Evening Worship Service	6:30 pm	6:30 pm
Wednesday Evening Prayer and Testimony Service	7:00 pm	



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Watch most of our services by going to
our church website! (Click on "Video")

Zion's Path

Women's Department News

Women's Christmas Party

On Saturday, Dec. 3, Chris Allen hosted the OGRB Women's Christmas party. Lisa Postlethwait presented a "snowflake" devotional. [Eyes closed with scissors and instructions—all the same resources—many outcomes. Think of God's Words and our varying responses.]

We enjoyed delicious snacks! There was a "stealing" gift exchange.



Women's Department Meeting—by Delores Champ-Heater

On Thursday evening, November 12, the women met at the church. After a taco salad supper, Kristen Davis led our card-making craft. There were eight ladies present, including Kristen Davis, Lisa Postlethwait, Chris Allen, Sheila Lidberg, Edie Cutshall, Delores Champ-Heater, and Chasteen Maier—plus her friend Tiffany from the Grain Valley Branch.



'Love' and the Gift of Friendship—Lisa Postlethwait

We have been talking about the gift of friendship. In John 15:12-15, Jesus talks about this. We are commanded to love one another. And not the 'love' that a lot of us in the world are familiar with. Not in an "I love tacos! I love cats! Oh, and I love my neighbor, too!" way of thinking. We are commanded to love the same way that Jesus loves us. Sometimes I really struggle with this. I don't always know with my heart that Jesus loves me, even though my head says that He does. So it can be hard to understand how to 'love' others.

Jesus loved people. He came to Earth in the flesh and experienced the struggles of life. He helped people. He healed people. He taught people. He wept for people. He hung on the cross and He died for people. Then He rose from the grave and is alive even now. And He still loves us. He loves each and every one of us—even me, even you. He loves us all so much that He doesn't 'just' want to be our Savior. He wants to be part of our family. He wants to be our friend. The Savior of the entire universe said He wants to be our friend! He wants to laugh with us. He wants to have those late night talks with us. He wants to give us advice. He wants

to help us with our daily struggles. He wants to help us love others and become friends with them, too. He wants to share with us everything His Father in Heaven has told Him. Because he wants us to be able to live with Him in Zion.

I don't have all the answers to the question of how to love like Jesus did. I can try my best to emulate Him, but somehow I need to get both my head and my heart to understand the love that God and Jesus have for us. If you and I struggle with this same situation, I would challenge us all to take this to God and ask Him in prayer, through the name of His most loving Son Jesus, to teach us about love and the gift of friendship.



Youth Page January-February 2023

Zioneers/Zion's League News — by Hannah & Miriam Holmes

In November, the Zioneer's and Zion's League had a progressive dinner.

The first place we went was Mark and Sherri Nunn's house for appetizers. Sherri had made delicious pinwheels and pineapples for us to eat. After eating, we talked a little longer and finished with us singing "Sanctuary." Mark closed us with a prayer.

The second place we went was Mick and Becky Ballantyne's house for the main meal. Becky put together a taco bar with all sorts of different taco toppings. We all enjoyed visiting while eating our tacos. After dinner, we all took a picture together and headed off for dessert.

We arrived at Flip and Susan Freeze's next. There, we enjoyed a smore's bar with tons of choices! There were chocolate covered cherries, different candy bars, bananas, and more, along with the normal smore's ingredients. When our dessert was finished, Flip talked to us about love and forgiveness and we ended the evening with a prayer.



We headed back to the church, where our parents picked us up in the pouring rain. We enjoyed our time visiting with other Saints and are thankful that we were able to spend time together. Thank you to the hosts for providing a delicious meal!

*"And they did fellowship one with another,
and did rejoice one with another,
and did have great joy."
(Helaman 2:121)*



*"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost . . .
And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,
and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:38, 42)*

Children's Christmas Program

The Children's Christmas Program was held in the evening on December 18, 2022. It included all the children in attendance that evening. They acted out a play showing a family at Christmas time searching for the Christ child. We also had special music by Carianne, Jacob, Benjamin and Sam. The program can be viewed on our website: ogrb.org/Videos

