

1st of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word

Theme: *Generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth – Words of Counsel, WC 2013*

Community of Christ, a divine vision is set before you. Presented over the years through various inspired phrases and symbols, it is expressed now through initiatives in harmony with Jesus Christ's mission.

As a spiritual venture, boldly follow the initiatives into the heart of God's vision for the church and creation. Then, in response to growing insight about God's nature and will, continue to shape communities that live Christ's love and mission.

Lovingly invite others to experience the good news of new life in community with Christ. Opportunities abound in your daily lives if you choose to see them.

Undertake compassionate and just actions that seek to abolish poverty and end needless suffering. Pursue peace on and for the Earth.

Let nothing separate you from this mission.

Continue to align your priorities with local and worldwide church efforts to move the initiatives forward. Additional innovative approaches to coordinating congregational life and supporting groups of disciples and seekers are needed to address mission opportunities in a changing world.

Free the full capacity of Christ's mission through generosity that imitates God's generosity. Discover deep joy and life's meaning by promoting divine purposes on Earth. Listen to the testimonies of those who are responding and follow your soul's yearning to come home to God's grace and generosity.

Remember, a basic discipleship principle is growing Christ's mission through both local and world mission tithes according to true capacity. Giving to other worthwhile organizations, while an important part of A Disciple's Generous Response, follows world and local mission tithing and should not diminish or replace it. If a law is needed to focus and balance response, then let these tithing principles serve that purpose.

Tithing is a spiritual practice that demonstrates willingness to regularly offer every dimension of one's life to God. When defined by faith, love, and hopeful planning, including resolving indebtedness, capacity to respond becomes much greater than initially assumed.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. How can you *free the full capacity of Christ's mission through generosity that imitates God's generosity?*

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ's mission.

2nd of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Encounter— a divine stirring of new questions and unsettledness—Exodus 3:1-15*

3Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. 3Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' 4When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' 5Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' 6He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

7 Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, 8and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. 10So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' 11But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' 12He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

13 But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' 14God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.'* He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you."' 15God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you": This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.'

Questions:

3. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
4. What ***new question*** would you explore or give attention to?
5. What concerns or situations are ***unsettling and keep you unsettled*** in a holy way?

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ's mission.

3rd of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Encounter—a divine stirring of new questions and unsettledness—Mark 4:35-41*

35On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”
 36And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” 39He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” 41And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. What ***new question*** would you explore or give attention to?
3. What concerns or situations in the congregation are ***unsettling and keep you unsettled*** requiring conversation to help us to face our fears and lack of faith?

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ’s mission.

4th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth* – Luke 6:27-38, 43-45

27 'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. 31Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. 36Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

37 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

43 'No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; 44for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. In this text, the word "good" appears 10 times. Take a moment to reflect on the word "good" and these questions:
 - How have you been blessed with "good?"
 - How can you share with others your "good" blessings?

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ's mission.

5th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Encounter—a divine stirring of new questions and unsettledness—Luke 7:36-50*

36One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. 37And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. 38She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. 39Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." 40Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "Speak." 41"A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" 43Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." 44Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. 45You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." 48Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. What ***new question*** would you explore or give attention to?
3. What can we learn from the Pharisee, Jesus and the woman that are ***unsettling and keep you unsettled*** for a deeper glimpse of how we are to live in God's Kingdom?

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ's mission.

6th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Encounter—a divine stirring of new questions and unsettledness—Enos 1:4-8*

4 Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forest; and the words which I had often heard my father speak, concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints had sunk deep into my heart.

5 My soul hungered; and I knelt before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for my soul.

6 All the day long I cried to him; and when the night came, I still raised my voice high, that it reached the heavens.

7 And there came a voice to me, saying, “Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.”

8 And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. What ***new question*** would you explore or give attention to?
3. What does Enos demonstrate for us about missional practices and being persistent amid ***unsettling questions***?

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ’s mission.

7th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth – 2 Corinthians 9:6-15*

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. ⁹As it is written, “He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” ¹⁰He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; ¹²for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. ¹³Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, ¹⁴while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. What ***new question*** about generosity would you explore or give attention to?
3. What is an *indescribable gift* you are thankful for? Offer a prayer of thanks.

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ’s mission.

8th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Encounter—a divine stirring of new questions and unsettledness—Matthew 5: 1-12*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. What ***new question*** would you explore or give attention to?
3. Remembering—“You have God-blessed eyes—eyes that see! And God-blessed ears—ears that hear!”—what is ***unsettling and keeps you unsettled*** that you would go to Jesus and have him teach you?

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ’s mission.

9th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Envision—a willingness to risk imagining new ideas—Acts 2:1-21*

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to imagine God’s future?
2. What is the chasm you see between our current reality in the congregation and the possibility of God’s future?
3. What ***new idea are you willing to risk sharing and imagining?***

Journal: Note new ideas or questions to risk imagining and exploring for Christ’s mission.

10th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth – Jacob 2:22-24* (Adapted)

“Think of your brothers and sisters as being like yourselves, and be familiar with all, and free with your substance, that they may be rich like you.

“But before you seek for riches, seek for the kingdom of God.

“And after you have obtained a hope in Christ, you shall obtain riches, if you seek them, for the intent to do good, to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. As you reflect on this scripture and two of the church’s mission initiatives—*Abolish Poverty, End Suffering – Christ’s Mission of Compassion* **and** *Pursue Peace on Earth – Christ’s Mission of Justice and Peace* how could you be more generous with your time, talents or money?

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ’s mission.

11th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Envision—a willingness to risk imagining new ideas*—Luke 17:5-10, 13:18-21

Luke 17:5-10

5The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” 6The Lord replied, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you. 7“Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, ‘Come here at once and take your place at the table’? 8Would you not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink’? 9Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? 10So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’”

Luke 13:18-19

18 He said therefore, ‘What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? 19It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.’

A definition of faith, from Martin Luther’s German Bible of 1522:

Faith is a living, bold trust in God’s grace, so certain of God’s favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God’s graces makes you happy, joyful, and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith. Because of it, you freely, willingly, and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace. Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire!

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to imagine God’s future?
2. What is the chasm you see between our current reality in the congregation and the possibility of God’s future?
3. What ***new idea are you willing to risk sharing and imagining?***

Journal: Note new ideas or questions to risk imagining and exploring for Christ’s mission.

12th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Envision—a willingness to risk imagining new ideas—*
“Now Let Our Hearts within Us Burn” Words: Geoffrey F. Spencer,
Hymn # 658 *Community of Christ Sings*, 2013.

Now let our hearts within us burn as with a cleansing fire.
 Your gracious Word has stirred in us a surge of new desire.
 Should vision fail and courage yield to careless compromise,
 then redirect our falt’ring steps to braver enterprise.

As in another time and place, along a forlorn road,
 the Lord’s renewing grace prevailed till newborn courage glowed;
 our worship here has lifted us from self-indulgent care
 and strengthened us to incarnate the priceless hope we share.

How can we now deny the voice that calls us from within,
 or blindly claim we need not bear another’s pain and sin?
 In hearts that beat exultantly renew your perfect will;
 and send us forth, restored again, our mission to fulfill.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to imagine God’s future?
2. What is the chasm you see between our current reality in the congregation and the possibility of God’s future?
3. What ***new idea are you willing to risk sharing and imagining?***

Journal: Note new ideas or questions to risk imagining and exploring for Christ’s mission.

13th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth—Genesis 1:24-31*

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. 26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." 27 So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." 29 God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. Take a moment to reflect on the abundance and generosity of God's creation before responding to this question:

What aspect of creation fills you with gratitude?

Journal: Note new ideas or questions to risk imagining and exploring for Christ's mission.

14th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Envision—a willingness to risk imagining new ideas—Doctrine and Covenants 161:1-2*

1a. Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. Journey in trust, assured that the great and marvelous work is for this time and for all time.

b. Claim your unique and sacred place within the circle of those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ. Be faithful to the spirit of the Restoration, mindful that it is a spirit of adventure, openness, and searching. Walk proudly and with a quickened step. Be a joyful people. Laugh and play and sing, embodying the hope and freedom of the gospel.

2a. Become a people of the Temple—those who see violence but proclaim peace, who feel conflict yet extend the hand of reconciliation, who encounter broken spirits and find pathways for healing.

b. Fulfill the purposes of the Temple by making its ministries manifest in your hearts. It was built from your sacrifices and searching over many generations. Let it stand as a towering symbol of a people who knew injustice and strife on the frontier and who now seek the peace of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to imagine God's future?
2. What is the chasm you see between our current reality in the congregation and the possibility of God's future?
3. What ***new idea are you willing to risk sharing and imagining?***

Journal: Note new ideas or questions to risk imagining and exploring for Christ's mission.

15th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Envision—a willingness to risk imagining new ideas— Mosiah 2:32 – 38; 42 – 45*

32 “For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind?

33 “Behold, even at this time, you have been calling on his name and begging for a remission of your sins.

34 “And has he suffered that you have begged in vain?

35 “No; he has poured out his Spirit upon you, and has caused that your hearts should be filled with joy, and has caused that your mouths should be stopped that you could not find utterance, so exceedingly great was your joy.

36 “Now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that you have and are, grants to you whatsoever you ask that is right, in faith, believing that you shall receive, oh then, how had you ought to impart of the substance that you have one to another?

37 “And if you judge the man who puts up his petition to you for your substance that he perish not, and condemn him, how much more just will be your condemnation for withholding your substance, which does not belong to you but to God, to whom also your life belongs; 38 and yet you put up no petition, nor repent of the thing which you have done.

42 “And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day that you may walk guiltless before God—43 I would that you should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he has, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants.

44 “And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength.

45 “Again, it is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to imagine God’s future?
2. What is the chasm you see between our current reality in the congregation and the possibility of God’s future?
3. What ***new idea are you willing to risk sharing and imagining?***

Journal: Note new ideas or questions to risk imagining and exploring for Christ’s mission.

16th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth—2 Nephi 11:95-96* (Adapted)

The Lord God does not do anything
save it be for the benefit of the world;
for he loves the world,
even that he lays down his own life,
that he may draw all persons to himself.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. What does this scripture reveal to you about God?
3. What aspect of God would you most like to represent in your life?

Journal: Note new ideas or questions to risk imagining and exploring for Christ's mission.

17th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Experiment— new ministries launched in prayer—Doctrine and Covenants 162:1-2*

1a. Listen, O people of the Restoration—you who would become a prophetic people, embodying in your life together the ministries of the Temple. Listen to the Voice that speaks from beyond the farthest hills, from the infinite heavens above, and the vast seas below.

b. Listen to the Voice that echoes across the eons of time and yet speaks anew in this moment. Listen to the Voice, for it cannot be stilled, and it calls you once again to the great and marvelous work of building the peaceable kingdom, even Zion, on behalf of the One whose name you claim.

2a. Listen carefully to your own journey as a people, for it is a sacred journey and it has taught you many things you must know for the journey yet to come.

b. Listen to its teachings and discover anew its principles. Do not yearn for times that are past, but recognize that you have been given a foundation of faithful service, even as you build a foundation for what is yet to be.

c. As a prophetic people you are called, under the direction of the spiritual authorities and with the common consent of the people, to discern the divine will for your own time and in the places where you serve. You live in a world with new challenges, and that world will require new forms of ministry. The priesthood must especially respond to that challenge, and the church is admonished to prayerfully consider how calling and giftedness in the Community of Christ can best be expressed in a new time.

d. You have already been told to look to the sacraments to enrich the spiritual life of the body. It is not the form of the sacrament that dispenses grace but it is the divine presence that gives life. Be respectful of tradition and sensitive to one another, but do not be unduly bound by interpretations and procedures that no longer fit the needs of a worldwide church. In such matters direction will come from those called to lead.

e. Again you are reminded that this community was divinely called into being. The spirit of the Restoration is not locked in one moment of time, but is instead the call to every generation to witness to essential truths in its own language and form. Let the Spirit breathe.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to wonder about an experiment?
2. What stories or ideas do you hear from the congregation, what does the congregation need to review or discard, and what gifts do you see related to launching new ministries?
3. What ***new idea or ministry do you discern being launched now?***

Journal: Note new ideas or questions for launching a new ministry for Christ's mission.

18th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Experiment— new ministries launched in prayer—Doctrine and Covenants 164:9*

- 9a. Beloved children of the Restoration, your continuing faith adventure with God has been divinely led, eventful, challenging, and sometimes surprising to you. By the grace of God, you are poised to fulfill God’s ultimate vision for the church.
- b. When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ’s new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be. The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your whole-hearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God’s covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.
- c. This covenant entails sacramental living that respects and reveals God’s presence and reconciling activity in creation. It requires whole-life stewardship dedicated to expanding the church’s restoring ministries, especially those devoted to asserting the worth of persons, protecting the sacredness of creation, and relieving physical and spiritual suffering.
- d. If you truly would be Community of Christ, then embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ.
- e. The challenges and opportunities are momentous. Will you remain hesitant in the shadows of your fears, insecurities, and competing loyalties? Or will you move forward in the light of your divinely instilled call and vision?
- f. The mission of Jesus Christ is what matters most for the journey ahead.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to wonder about an experiment?
2. What stories or ideas do you hear from the congregation, what does the congregation need to review or discard, and what gifts do you see related to launching new ministries?
3. What ***new idea or ministry do you discern being launched now?***

Journal: Note new ideas or questions for launching a new ministry for Christ’s mission.

19th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth—Colossians 3:14-17*

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Questions¹:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. How might my relationship with God deepen through my expression of gratitude to God?
3. How might my relationships deepen through my expression of gratitude to those who bless me?
4. How might my relationships change through my expression of gratitude with those who do not bless me? (The stranger, the enemy, someone with whom you are at odds)

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ's mission.

¹ Questions 2-4 are from "*Gratitude—A Missional Practice for an Individual*" posted at www.missionalleaders.org

20th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Experiment— new ministries launched in prayer—Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16 (MSG)*

1-3 In light of all this, here's what I want you to do. While I'm locked up here, a prisoner for the Master, I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline— not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.

4-6 You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness.

11-16 But that doesn't mean you should all look and speak and act the same. Out of the generosity of Christ, each of us is given his own gift. He handed out gifts above and below, filled heaven with his gifts, filled earth with his gifts. He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.

14-16 No prolonged infancies among us, please. We'll not tolerate babes in the woods, small children who are an easy mark for impostors. God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to wonder about an experiment?
2. What stories or ideas do you hear from the congregation, what does the congregation need to review or discard, and what gifts do you see related to launching new ministries?
3. What ***new idea or ministry do you discern being launched now?***

Journal: Note new ideas or questions for launching a new ministry for Christ's mission.

21st of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Experiment— new ministries launched in prayer—Prayer of Disruption by Joyce Rupp*
 Excerpted from *Prayers to Sophia* by Joyce Rupp, ©2004. Used by permission of the publisher, Sorin Books®, an imprint of Ave Maria Press®, Inc., P.O. Box 428, Notre Dame, Indiana, 46556, www.avemariapress.com. and
Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16 (NRSV)

Divine Challenger, when did I stop risking? When did I lose my edge for adventure and surprise? When did I start pretending that what I now know is all there is to know? When did I give in to fear and bow to security? When did I let uncertainty press against my free spirit? When did I start moving toward the sure, easy thing? When did I give away my ability to be disturbed? When did I start refusing to pay the price for fuller depth and joy? When did I let panic of the unknown future wrap its barbed wire fingers around my desire to grow? Inner source of courage, nudge me toward growth. Urge me away from my strongholds. Convince me of my potential to leap beyond the barriers.

Ephesians 4:1-3, 11-16 (NRSV)

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to wonder about an experiment?
2. What stories or ideas do you hear from the congregation, what does the congregation need to review or discard, and what gifts do you see related to launching new ministries?
3. What ***new idea or ministry do you discern being launched now?***

Journal: Note new ideas or questions for launching a new ministry for Christ's mission.

22nd of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth – Ocean Waves, Lu Moutenay*

When the ocean waves at you...wave back
 When the wind blows you kisses ... blush
 When the willow weeps for you...
 provide water to replenish the source of its tears
 As the earth pirouettes on its axis...dance until you are dizzy.

When the sun shines on you, soak up its warmth
 When a tree casts a shadow, recline in its shade
 When clouds rain for you,
 put out your rain barrel to catch every drop
 When the hummingbird visits, hold awe-fully still

When the sun rises, drive east
 When the sun sets, drive west
 to absorb every moment of the creator's offerings
 Whatever the master chef prepares, enjoy with smacking lips
 When we are mindful of what life offers — it's easier to share.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. When you are mindful of everyday blessings from God what blessing do you sense God needing you to share with another? What situation or who would that be?

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ's mission.

23rd of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Experiment— new ministries launched in prayer— Alma 16:149, 151 – 157*

149 “Now as I said concerning faith—that it was not a perfect knowledge...

151 “But, behold, if you will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith...

152 “Now we will compare the word to a seed.

153 “If you give place that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, and if you do not cast it out by your unbelief that you will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell in your breasts.

154. “And when you feel these swelling motions, you will begin to say within yourselves, ‘It must be a good seed, or that the word is good, for it begins to enlarge my soul; it begins to enlighten my understanding; and it begins to be delicious to me.’

155 “Now, behold, would not this increase your faith? I say to you, Yes; nevertheless it has not grown up to a perfect knowledge.

156 “But, behold, as the seed swells and sprouts and begins to grow, then you must say that the seed is good, for behold, it swells and sprouts and begins to grow.

157 “And now, behold, will not this strengthen your faith?

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image causes you to wonder about an experiment?
2. What stories or ideas do you hear from the congregation, what does the congregation need to review or discard, and what gifts do you see related to launching new ministries?
3. What ***new idea or ministry do you discern being launched now?***

24th of 24 Months of Dwelling in the Word*

Theme: *Generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth – Philippians 2:1-8*

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Questions:

1. What word, phrase, feeling, idea, or image would you dwell upon?
2. How can I be more generous with the love received from God? Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) Founder of the Jesuits and from whom Christians received many of their spiritual disciplines asked Jesus daily: “How can I love you more?”

Journal: Note ideas, feelings and questions to remember and explore for Christ’s mission.

*Each month a scripture, prayer, poem or hymn text is offered and related to the following themes:

- *Generosity—promoting divine purposes on Earth*
- *Encounter— a divine stirring of new questions and unsettledness*
- *Envision—a willingness to risk imagining new ideas*
- *Experiment— new ministries launched in prayer*