

To: Gateway USA Mission Center Conference

From: Seventy Linda Andrae, Mission Center Invitational Support Minister

Re: Mission in the Gateway Mission Center 2016

Date: October 17, 2016

Christ's mission in the Gateway USA Mission Center is full and rich and Spirit-led. The mission center as a whole and congregations throughout the mission center continue to be actively involved in the process of discernment to reach the needs of the communities in which they have been placed. The mission center and its congregations have embarked in journeys that have taken some into the very midst of their communities while others have offered ministry through programs, events, and fellowship opportunities where the community has responded through their attendance and support. We are counseled in Doctrine and Covenants 162:7d-8b:

“The call to respond is urgent. Look to the needs of your own congregations, but look also beyond your walls to the far-flung places where the church must go. Each disciple needs a spiritual home. You are called to build that home and care for it, but also to share equally in the outreaching ministries of the church. In that way the gospel may be sent to other souls also yearning for a spiritual resting place.

You are a good and faithful people, but sometimes you fail to see the power that is resident in your own story and fellowship. Look carefully, listen attentively, and sense the Spirit among you.

Do not be unduly concerned with numbers. Be fervent in your witness, passionate in your discipleship, and vigorous in your labor on behalf of peace and justice. Where two or three such disciples form community, there will the Spirit be. Many will come to see.”

The mission center congregations are responding to that call. They have supported, organized and/or participated in free yard sales and soup lunches, free movie nights, community worship in the park and picnic, a Prince Charming and Cinderella Boutique, and vacation bible schools. Many have organized, supported and/or participated in food drives, school supply drives, inner-city youth camp program, game nights, food pantry volunteers, neighborhood clean-up volunteers, backpack programs, women's luncheons, a bicycle rodeo, a fund-raising event to support Outreach International, transportation for elderly to doctor appointments, youth lock-ins, and special holiday services. Some congregations have made blankets for nursing home residents and patients at the Siteman Cancer Center. Congregations host/have hosted Temple School classes, priesthood classes, youth worker training classes, Election Day polling sites, and Girl Scout troops. Our folks have participated in the Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis and Pridefest St. Louis. The list is lengthy, but is by no means exhaustive. The list does, however, offer a sampling of was congregations are building sacred community and choosing to live Christ's mission.

One striking point to be made following the request of congregations to send information regarding missionary outreach would be the number of entities with which our congregations are partnering. This list includes, but is not limited to Siteman Cancer Center, Operation Shower, St. Louis Veteran's Administration nursing home and VA hospital, community nursing homes, St. Patrick's Center, local food pantries, first responders, Santa's Helpers, Children's Center of UMSL, Outreach International, Honor Flights, local schools, and St. Louis Bread Company.

Beyond the missionary outreach and the opportunities to partner with others in the community are the testimonies shared by those that shared this information. Two testimonies will be shared at the end of this report. “Understand that the road to transformation travels both inward and outward. The road to transformation is the path of the disciple.” Doctrine and Covenants 161:3c

As a mission center, together, we have supported GMC 2016 Reunion, the Youth Camping Program and SPEC. By the end of the year, Camp woodland Hills will have had two work days on the grounds. Each year our ladies gather in worship, fellowship and study at the Women's Retreat. Many disciples and priesthood members participated in a mission center training day early in the year and others traveled to Independence for World Conference in June and a Priesthood Gathering in September.

At the end of June 2016, Shelby reports show we have celebrated two baby blessings and three confirmations in the mission center. These numbers are anticipated to grow as recorders continue to enter statistical information for the current year. Pastors are encouraged to remind priesthood members performing the sacrament of their responsibility to gather information to be recorded and submit it to the congregational recorder or the mission center recorder to be entered into Shelby.

The Gateway USA Mission Center has claimed *Christ's Mission as Our Mission*. The mission center and its congregations engage in practices of encounter with God through spiritual formation and spiritual practices. They love one another and their communities as they seek opportunities to build relationships. Congregations share their love for their neighbors, those they know and those yet unknown, through acts of hospitality and healing.

As our mission center and its congregations continue the path of the disciple, our constant prayer is that the things we do and the words we say might glorify our God and bring peace to others and our communities.

"Continue your journey, O people of the Restoration. You have been blessed thus far but there is so much yet to see, so much yet to do. Go forth with confidence and live prophetically as a people who have been loved, and who now courageously choose to love others in the name of the One you serve. Amen" Doctrine and Covenants 162:8c

It is important to remember that mission will look different and be different in each sacred community. What may bless one community may not be what another community needs. These samples are shared with you for the testimony shared with me and to exemplify how different mission can be. Please continue to share your testimonies with me and others. Remember, sometimes we “fail to see the power that is resident in our own stories and fellowship.”

Hi Linda,

Please see below the Outreach activities of Kirkwood, headed up by Holly Fricks. We have tried to make outreach a major focus of our congregational worship and also to create more intergenerational activities. Holly has done an amazing job for the past 3 years. She worked with a committee of varied ages determining where we wanted to direct our outreach efforts this last year.

Please let me know if you have any questions and thank you for putting the report together!

Michelle

We have done mission work this year around quarterly themes. Our projects are listed below:

- Quarter One: Serving the Servants
 - We toured the Kirkwood Fire Station to learn more about how our first responders live and work.
 - We assembled buckets of treats and thank you notes for members to take on a Valentine's Day "Cupid Run" to police, firefighters, emergency room workers, and other public servants.
 - We collected baby items to donate to Operation Shower, a locally founded organization that throws baby showers for military families.
 - We collected more than \$120 to donate to the USO.
- Quarter Two: Engaging the Elderly and Supporting the Sick
 - We toured Shriner's Children's Hospital and learned more about the services they provide to children in need.
 - We sang and worshiped with residents of a nearby nursing home on a Sunday morning.
 - We collected items to be donated to the St. Louis Area Veteran's Administration nursing homes and VA hospitals.
 - We collected more than \$130 to donate to Meals on Wheels.
- Quarter Three: Preventing Poverty
 - We went to Food Outreach to help prepare meals and groceries for their impoverished clients living with HIV/AIDS or cancer.
 - We participated in a poverty simulation and discussion during one Sunday morning to become more aware of the ways we can help those that need us.
 - We had a speaker from St. Patrick's Center come talk to us about the ways that organization serves the homeless in the St. Louis area.
 - We collected \$85 to donate to St. Patrick's Center.
- Quarter Four: Caring for Children
 - We are collecting items to donate to Santa's Helpers, a local group that helps provide Christmas gifts and supplies for poor families living in St. Louis.
 - We will deliver the gifts and tour the facility after our congregation's Thanksgiving potluck.
 - We will help host a holiday party for clients of Redevelopment Opportunities for Women and their children on December 8 by providing workers, food, supplies, and craft items.
 - We're collecting money to donate to ROW to provide gift cards to clients at the party above to help buy holiday gifts or meals for their family.

Hi Linda-

For many years now (I can't even remember how long), we have been choosing one Sunday per quarter to engage in Community Service, which replaces our Sunday worship for that day. The results have been nothing short of phenomenal.

Our very first Community in Action (CIA, as we have taken to calling it) was a beautiful Sunday morning, on which we raked leaves and did lawn cleanup for several of our neighbors in Bel-Nor. One elderly couple was so excited and pleased that she even made thank yous for all of the kids that participated. We began our day with a brief devotional at church, went out and worked, then returned to the congregation to eat a lunch together. I prepared the lunch that day, and I can tell you that the looks on everyone's faces as they returned were incredible. The participants were tired, dirty and hungry, but they were smiling. Big smiles.

Since that day, we have done more yardwork, done gardening at the Children's Center at UMSL (our neighbor down the street), made fleece blankets for cancer patients, made and written cards for shut ins, sent cards for veterans who were on Honor Flights (as they have Mail Call on the airplane), prepared backpacks of school supplies for our neighboring elementary school, painted and refreshed our lower auditorium (as people outside the church often use our facility), visited several nursing homes and most of all, held our annual Free Yard Sale and soup lunch.

Our Free Yard Sale is now in its eighth year (I believe) and is by far, the most successful event that we hold. We are well known in the community for this event. We gather and sort clothing, household items, electronics, shoes, bedding, furniture and more.... then invite the community to come and take what they need. People are sometimes actually in tears as they gather clothing for their children, replace mats on the floor with real beds and couches, and so much more. We have solicited bread from the St Louis Bread Company and we give each family attending a loaf of bread to take home with them. We share a soup lunch with them too -- just last Sunday we served about 75 people for lunch! We have even had several families indicate that they would like to come and worship with us sometime because we are such a friendly and generous group!

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to share with you about our community service efforts at Bel-Nor. We may be small, but our love is large.

Chris Grass