

**Actively Engaged in Kingdom Living**

The Pastorate called on all Priesthood to attend a branch priesthood retreat in January, regularly scheduled priesthood worships, and special priesthood classes. Many of the men have begun putting off distractions and avoiding procrastination as they seek the Father's will in the life of our branch. This is inspiring to the body of Christ as we seek to know and put Him first in our lives.

The youth have been taught by faithful leaders in Sunday School classes, Doves, Zioners, Zion's League, Older Youth and the Boy Scout program. An evening Scout Sunday preaching service reinforced scriptural guidelines for leadership values in church, family, workplace, community and our country.

In the past two months, branch themes have focused on obedience and humility. Through the preaching of God's word, we look forward to continued insights, with a desire to tune our hearts and minds to One---our Heavenly Father and His ways.

During the cold winter months, we experienced ice and snow that kept the church doors closed on several occasions. We were saddened to hear of several in our church family that suffered injuries when they fell on the ice or who were kept away due to the cold weather or failing health. Our prayers continue to be with each one of you. Oh! How we long to be together again! When we are reunited, we appreciate all the more the sweet communion of being with our fellow saints at the Church of Jesus Christ, Oak Grove Restoration Branch!

*We invite you to submit branch news reports to the Gathering & Greeting Committee anytime!  
(Eric/Sarah English, Phillip/Alice Blea, Charlie/Susan Booth, Mike/Leslie Mitchell)*

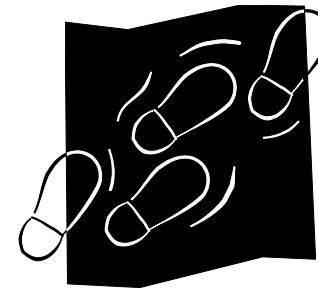
Worship Times:	Communion Sunday	
Sunday Early Worship	9:00AM	9:00AM
Sunday School	9:15AM	9:15AM
Prayer Service (Sacrament Sunday only)	10:00AM	
Sunday AM Worship	10:30AM	11:00AM
Sunday PM Worship	6:30PM	
Wednesday PM— Prayer and Testimony	7:00PM	

**Zion's Path**

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

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**Zion's Path**

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**From the Pastor's Inkwell**

What are some simple steps to Obedience?

*Free your heart from hatred or anger. Psalms 10:18* He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. What spirit do we bring to the table when we are worshipping the Lord? Can we truly obey the Lord when we are angry? When we are carrying the wrong spirit with us we cannot and will not obey. It is just like a child that does not want to listen to their parents when they are trying to protect them from danger. How many times do we not want to worship the Lord and he blesses us anyway?

*Free your mind from troubles. Proverbs 25:26* A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring. When the world gets us down, do we try and struggle by our self or do we lay our troubles at the Lord's feet. When our spirit is troubled it is like a corrupt spring. Lets let the Lord purify our spring so we can be obedient.

*Live simply.* What is the easiest way to tell if we are living a simple life? Tithel! **DC 106:1b** and this shall be the beginning of the **tithing** of my people; and after that, those who have thus been tithed, shall pay one tenth of all their increase annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy priesthood, saith the Lord. Most of us do not want to tithe because it shows us that we are spending too much time and money on dead works. **Timothy 6:10** For the love of money is the root of all evil.

*Give more. II Nephi 12:37-38* And blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; For unto him that receiveth, I will give more: and from them that shall say, We have enough, shall be taken away even that which they have. Do we truly own anything that the Lord has not given us? The more you give, the more you will find out that you cannot out-give the Lord. It is better to give than to receive.

*Expect less.* If you can follow the first four steps, then you will find yourself expecting less. When I find myself wanting, I count my blessings. When I find myself wanting, I am not being obedient to the Lord.

How does it make Christ feel when we disobey?

By Deacon Phillip Freeze, Associate Pastor

**Upcoming Events**

Elder's Conference/Joint Conference —  
April 2-7 at Waldo  
Restoration Sacrament Service —  
April 1 at Waldo

Oak Grove Branch Retreat —  
April 27-29 at Odessa Hills

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## Visit Outlying Saints when you can --- by Debbie Norman

Worshipping with the Saints in outlying areas can be an outstanding experience!

During the Zion's League Kirtland caravan, we visited six Restoration branches. Everywhere we visited, the saints were welcoming, friendly, and very excited to have us. Many of these branches have an average attendance of less than 20 members and many meet in homes. It is a great encouragement to them to have guests from the center place visit and worship with them.

On your next family vacation or business trip, take the time to see if there is a branch nearby that you could visit. Contact names, phone numbers and some e-mail addresses are available at this link, and it includes a directory of Restoration branches:

<http://www.centerplace.org/Branches/>

It is a good idea to call or e-mail the contact person (usually the pastor) a couple of weeks ahead to let them know when you are planning to worship with them. Let them know how many people will be in your family or group. (They may need to get extra folding chairs!) Of course, you will also need to get directions and find out what time services begin.

You should be aware that most branches away from the center place only meet for Sunday morning worship. Their members are often too scattered to meet on Sunday evening or Wednesday night (although it doesn't hurt to ask). A few branches only meet every other Sunday, and some do not meet over the winter months.

## Announcing Adult Sunday School Classes

Beginning Sunday, March 4, 2007, at 9:15 a.m., there will be two adult Sunday School classes offered at Oak Grove. They are as follows:

Discipleship & Stewardship is a new class that will be taught by Elder Steve Mapes in the Fellowship Hall. The class will run for three months. Please bring your Scriptures. Class members will receive a notebook and handouts. See you there!

The Book of Revelation will be the focus as Elder Aaron Smith's New Testament scripture class continues in the sanctuary. Participants will receive handouts. To prepare for the class, you may also enjoy reading from "A Marvelous Work and a Wonder" by Daniel MacGregor (1911), "The Fall of Babylon" by Hayworth (1911 and reprinted by Heritage House 1974), and "Insights into the Book of Revelation - As Illuminated by the Book of Mormon" by George Njeim (1970). This class will go for at least six weeks and will include other "end-time" topics such as the rapture, the visions in the book of Daniel, etc.

Worshipping with a small branch can give you and your children an eye-opening appreciation for how blessed we are here at Oak Grove.

Let the pastor know if you play the piano or any other musical instrument and/or if you could sing for special music. Most branches would welcome the contribution of your talents to the worship service. Remember to be tactful and leave a way for the pastor or priesthood in charge to gracefully decline. If you are a priesthood member, let the pastor know your office and that you are available, if needed.

Pick up a few extra copies of *Zion's Call* before you leave home so you can leave them with the branch members. Many are hungry to read encouraging testimonies.

Be sure you are positive and encouraging in all of your words as you share with your brothers and sisters in Christ. It is important to give a message of hope, and not to spread doubts or rumors.

It may seem intimidating to share with "strangers," but you will find that the shared belief in the restored gospel gives us a common bond. During our Kirtland caravan we found that after only after a few hours together it was hard to leave our new friends. You may wish to exchange e-mail or regular mailing addresses and continue to keep in touch.

Remember to pray for all the brothers and sisters in Christ!

## Oak Grove Member Develops Helpful Tool

**KEEP TRACK OF MONTHLY INCOME & EXPENSES and SEE AUTOMATIC RESULTS "AS YOU GO" ON A TITHING STATEMENT FORM**  
- Shared by Tom and June Struzick

There is a stewardship recordkeeping tool that we want to share with everyone. Tom designed it in 2006 and it has proven to be very helpful to us. If you have a computer and are able to download an Excel spreadsheet, this is for you!

Enter daily receipts for income and expenses, whether they are cash, checks, deposits, etc. throughout the month and the spreadsheet automatically tabulates totals under each heading. Then, at the end of the year, completing your tithing statement is a breeze — it's done automatically!

Just let us know if you are interested and we will see that it is forwarded to you. *In the near future, download the spreadsheet from our new branch website. Stewardship workbooks are also available at the church if you don't have a computer.*

The screenshot shows a detailed 'ANNUAL TITHING STATEMENT' form. It includes sections for:
 

- Income:** (A) SALARY, WAGES (Before payroll deductions) \$0.00; (K) TOTAL INCOME FOR PERIOD \$0.00.
- BASIC LIVING EXPENSES:** (A) HOUSING (A-1 SHELTER, A-2 UTILITIES, A-3 REPLACEMENTS) with a subtotal of \$0.00.
- (B) GOODS AND SERVICES:** (B-1 FOOD, B-2 TRAVEL, B-3 CLOTHING, B-4 MEDICAL & PERSONAL) with a subtotal of \$0.00.
- (C) OTHER EXPENSES:** (C-1 TAXES, C-2 OTHER) with a subtotal of \$0.00.
- (V) TOTAL BASIC EXPENSES:** \$0.00.
- TO FIGURE TITHING DUE:** (Q) Subtract Y from X to find increase for period covered by this statement \$0.00; (R) Divide Q by ten to find tithing due on increase for this period \$0.00; (S) Carry forward amount shown on line Z of your last statement \$0.00; (T) Add line R and S \$0.00; (U) Total tithing paid during the period covered by this statement \$0.00; (Z) BALANCE TITHING DUE at close of period (Subtract U from T) \$0.00.

 The form also includes fields for personal information such as name, address, and phone number.

Program Screen Shot

## Resolutions or Real Solutions --- by Elder Ron Lidberg

You may recall our monthly theme for January was "Come unto Me in Obedience." In preparation for this opportunity to serve, my thoughts were drawn to the chart in the fellowship hall that graphically depicts our collective response as accounting stewards. It was clear that too many of us had chosen to ignore the scriptural admonition to put God first in this area of our lives. My heart was saddened when I considered how many spiritual and financial blessings (both individually and collectively) we may have missed out on due to the lack of obedience to this aspect of the financial law.

Several weeks prior to the preaching assignment, I had read the article, "Resolutions or real solutions?" written by Marybeth Whalen, for the January 2007 issue of "Money Matters" published by Crown Financial Ministries. The message expressed by the author was very timely and impressed me so much that I felt led to share portions of it with the branch.

In my sermon, I suggested that many times we begin a new year by making resolutions that are either too ambiguous or lofty to be lived out, so we often either give up or quit in defeat. Instead, we should identify *real solutions* — characterized by hav-

ing measurable parameters paired with intentional attitudes — that will enable us to meet our goals.

With respect to the goal to become better stewards, several *real solutions* as opposed to resolutions were suggested that we could use to develop workable plans instead of just wishful thinking. In the sermon, three different levels of response were offered as suggestions for *real solutions* depending on where, regardless of age, the individual steward might begin:

If you have never previously completed a financial accounting:

A resolution might be: "I will complete my first accounting before the end of the year."

A real solution might be: "I will request a priesthood visit within the next month for the purpose of getting help in completing my first tithing statement and commit to begin paying the tithing due from my increase this year."

If you have completed a financial accounting before but just not yet this year:

A resolution might be: "I will

complete my annual accounting by April 15, 2007."

A real solution might be: "I will begin working on my annual accounting this week and complete it before I engage in any recreational or leisure activity and commit to paying any tithing due by April 15, 2007."

If you have already completed your financial accounting this year:

A resolution might be: "I will be a better steward this year than last."

A real solution might be: "This week I will create a budget with expense categories to help me see where my money is going and thus create more increase, which can be used for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ."

It is my hope that beginning this year, every member of our branch will commit to become more faithful stewards by writing down some *real solutions* and keeping them somewhere prominent as a reminder. As we then begin to implement these *real solutions*, perhaps we can all claim the promise in D&C Sec. 65:7a, "... the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days."

## The Living Storehouse Needs You --- by Alice Blea

Here we are at the beginning of another new year. Remember the Living Storehouse and the needs of others as you de-clutter, file and organize your things that have accumulated over the past year. Plan to stay organized and share your surplus.

If you identify items you would like to donate to others through the Living Storehouse, there are several options you might consider:

- post items on the bulletin board at church
- contact Alice Blea at [ampblea@aol.com](mailto:ampblea@aol.com) or call 816-847-7235
- ask members of your Spiritual Stewardship group if they know of anyone that is looking for the item(s) you would like to donate
- visit with the Saints after services on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday nights, OR, better yet, call someone to ask if they know anyone that might need the item you would like to donate
- contact Storehouse Ministries of Zion at [storehouse@zion-mo.org](mailto:storehouse@zion-mo.org) or learn more about them at [www.zion-mo.org](http://www.zion-mo.org), or call Elder Timothy Johns at 816-836-3421 or 816-516-6326 to learn about ways to help others!

The Living Storehouse is not just about getting rid of stuff. Think of it as a way to get to know fellow Saints, including their needs and wants. Together, we may begin to be more comfortable sharing our own needs with others.

## Invitation to Draw Close and Help Establish Zion--- by Elder Mike Mitchell



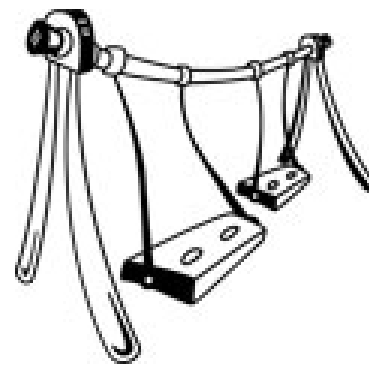
We need to know the needs and desires of each other in order to help establish Zion. In such a large congregation as Oak Grove it sometimes is hard to become acquainted with each other in this way. For the past several years, many have been involved in small group gatherings called Spiritual Stewardship groups. The object has been to get to know one another and become as close as a family. **If you are not already involved in a spiritual stewardship group and would like to be, please call Mike Mitchell, 228-4874, or Todd Smith, 650-4006.** If you are already assigned to a group and haven't had the opportunity to attend a meeting, please try and do so. It is such a blessing when you do!

## Hey Kids! "Door Offering" to go for new Swing Set --- by Susan Booth

Eleven-year old Jarod Rush proposed adding swings to the existing children's playground during an open discussion service held several months ago.

The money collected in the "Children's Door" offering every Sunday morning will be set aside for the purchase of a swing set.

"I am happy to share with you that the amount of \$400 is your beginning balance for this desire to get a swing set! Ask your parents or the Aaronic priesthood how to begin a budget or complete a tithing statement so that you will be able to give what you have to the church! After you ALL have helped to reach this goal, a swing set will be provided!! *'And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'* Your Servant in Christ, James Bullard" (Treasurer)



## Senior Adult Christmas Dinner --- by Leslie Mitchell

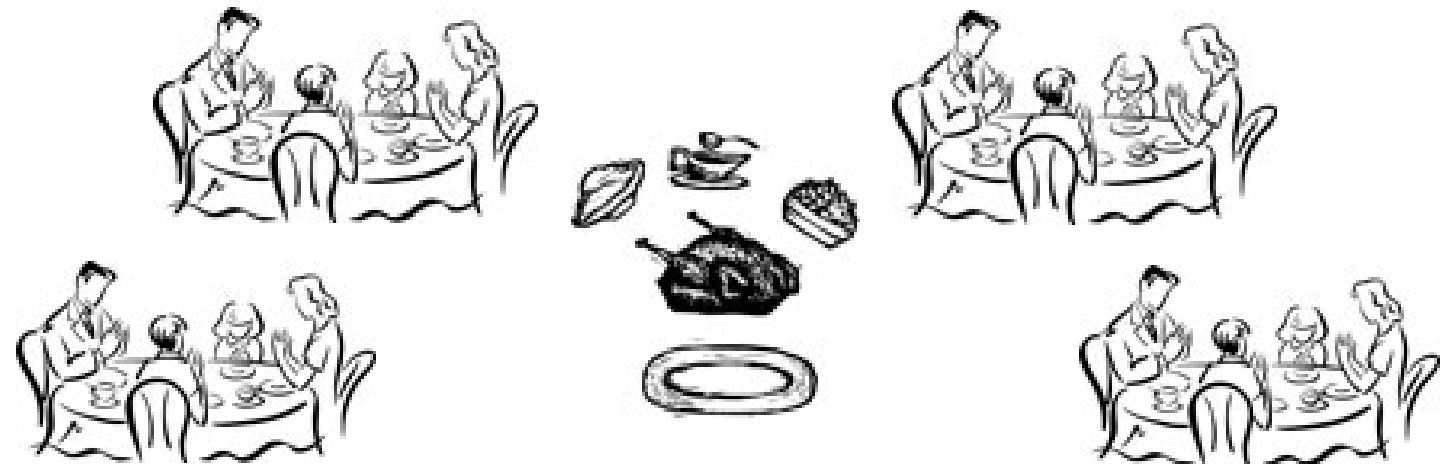
The Women's Department has been sponsoring the Senior Adult Christmas Dinner for at least 10 years.

When I was Women's Department leader, it was placed upon my heart that we needed to thank our senior adults for all the work they had done for us in our branch. We relied upon the priesthood men during the day for administrations. The women pulled together whenever needed to coordinate funeral dinners. We depended on the women's prayer chain that could be started at a moment's notice day or night.

Over the years many different people have helped with the Christmas Dinner for the senior adults. The Doves, Zioners and Zion's League have taken part in serving food and cleaning up afterwards. This year the Gathering & Greeting Committee enjoyed the opportunity to help with this event.

The evening consisted of not only a meal but also entertainment provided by Bill and Rich Jones. They put on a comedy act and also sang. A great time was had by all!

We invite everyone to participate in this celebration next year, senior adults as well as helpers showing appreciation. If you wish to help, please contact the Women's Department leader. And for all of you who will be 55+ next December, come and enjoy the evening. Blessings will be in store for each one taking part!



## Fun in the Snow -- by the Zion's League and Zioners as submitted by Rebecca Horn

On Sunday afternoon, January 20<sup>th</sup>, the Zion's League and Zioners had an exciting snowball fight. Several of the girls arrived early and built a snow fort. Unfortunately, however, several younger boys knocked it down in the midst of the fight. When the fight started, it was male against female. Debbie Norman, Zion's League leader, organized a charge against the males. This is because, sadly, the girls have no aim. The fight slowly became every man (or girl) for himself (or herself). There was a lot of running, falling, and throwing. Some of the youth started rolling giant snowballs. With much effort we piled them on top of each other and made a huge snow sculpture. By this time, it had become a little past 6:00 pm. We were all herded into the church, where we changed into dry clothes and had some popcorn and hot cocoa which had been prepared by Monica Rush, Zioners leader, who stayed inside the whole time. It was a great amount of fun and we all enjoyed ourselves immensely!



Photo by James Bullard

## Question Time — Are we an Incendiary Fellowship?

Using quotes from the book *The Incendiary Fellowship*, by Elton Trueblood, the priesthood met in February for study and discussed the concept of “True Christianity” and how Saints need to better understand the dynamic qualities of the Church. Trueblood, who published the book in 1967, was a lifelong Quaker, well-known public speaker, and prolific author.

Elder Aaron Smith, who led the discussion, noted how he was struck when he recognized the many correlations in the book to the Restoration and the concept of Zion-building, and how our latter-day movement suffers due to complacency and inaction.

Here are some selected quotations from the book:

“ . . . the Christian philosophy of freedom has always involved discipline as its price. In other words, according to Christ, freedom is not a *starting* point, but always a *conclusion*; it is something to be *earned*.”

[True Christianity] “is a faith marked by a burning conviction and the consequent desire to see it spread. It is exactly the opposite of mild religion with easy tolerance.”

“Those who try to follow the narrow way must expect to be part of a minority all of their lives.”

[In regard to mild religion participants] “ . . . they maintain an *un-costly* membership in some church . . . The strange fact is that these people, who constitute the obvious majority, are almost universally opposed to the kind of Christianity represented by the New Testament.”

“We are far more effective if we know that the Gospel will never be entirely acceptable, and that the Christian movement will continue to be a minority movement.”

“We need to be reminded that the Church exists for men and not men for the Church.”

“Every day there are public attacks on the being of God, on the objectivity of the moral order, and on the value of the Church. If these attacks are not met, the battle is lost by default and the majority of Christians become utterly confused. The Christian must learn to *out-think* the opposition . . . But thinking is hard work and we must have men prepared to engage in it.”

“Perhaps renewal [Zion], like happiness, being always a byproduct, can never be achieved by direct seeking. . . To build a new building today is a costly undertaking, but the building of a genuine Christian fellowship is far more costly. It cannot be done either by a new set of gadgets or by the rearrangement of the lives of uncommitted people.”

“ . . . the totality of the Gospel [means] that it must be both *social* and *individual*.”

“We seek a new order [Zion] in the world, but the order will not be established by legislation or by social engineering, important as these may be.”

“The Christian who rejects inner controls, supposing that free self-expression is the essence of the Gospel, will never contribute to the renewal of the Church.”

“If the Christian witness is relegated to a building, with four walls, the

harm comes, not in what occurs within . . . but in the consequent easing of the conscience about what goes on elsewhere.”

“The Christian who understand his calling is humble for two reasons: first, the demand exceeds his powers, and second, the essential calling is that of a servant. This is the fundamental reason why all committed Christians must see themselves as ministers.” [Our highest calling is said to be that of member.]

“The metaphor of the fire would be meaningless without the fellowship, because it has no significance for merely individual religion. . . A fire that does not spread must eventually go out . . . There are meant to be exactly as many missionaries and evangelists as there are members.”

[All Saints must seek to overcome what Trueblood calls, in his hymn *Baptism by Fire*, the following:] . . . “sinful calmness . . . the smallness of our vision . . . placid peace . . . complacency . . . satisfaction, when we privately are free, yet are undisturbed in spirit by our brother’s misery.”

After considering these statements, what is the Lord revealing to you in your own life that He desires for you to change? Is He calling you in a new direction? Do you feel convicted of complacency? What will you do TODAY for the cause of His Kingdom?

Need an idea for service? Seek out a member of the pastorate, the priesthood, or the women’s department for suggestions.

## Getting to Know — Eric and Cory Eliason (*Sandusky, MI*)

*Eric and Cory Eliason were married in April 2005, and they attend church at the Sanilac Restoration Branch in Sandusky, Michigan, where Eric holds the office of priest. Their church has about 12 regular members. Eric farms and raises corn, wheat and soybeans. Cory is an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) and RHIT (Registered Health Information Technician), handling medical reimbursement for a small rural hospital. They live 20 minutes from Lake Huron in “the thumb” of Michigan, about 100 miles north of Detroit, in a late-1800’s farmhouse.*

Eric and Cory (daughter of Don and Edie Cutshall) met through Cory’s dearest friends, Heather Hill and Mindy and Jared Smith, as well as Eric’s friend, Jennifer Baltzer, and his parents, Barb and Barent Eliason. Jennifer, who is originally from Missouri, was also Heather Hill’s good friend.

Over lunch one day, Heather remarked to Jennifer that she wished her friend Cory could find a good companion. Jennifer commented that she knew a wonderful guy in Michigan. Heather then told Mindy Smith (her partner in crime). Mindy’s husband, Jared, knew the Eliason name because they had taken several Book of Mormon tour trips with his parents, Lyle and Sherrie Smith.

Mindy and Heather mentioned all this information to Cory, who was certainly not interested in someone who lived so far away, and did not give the idea another thought.

Cory feels blessed to be fifth generation in the church on both sides of her family and has a strong heritage at Oak Grove.

Cory had been praying and fasting for three years about a companion, and had also incorporated into her life what the Patriarchs had encouraged us to do. The Lord strengthened and sustained her through some very lonely times. Her Patriarchal Blessing also offered promises and direction for her life in regard to a companion.

Mindy and Jared went on the 2004 Mexico trip and met Eric’s parents. Mindy and Barb exchanged Eric’s and Cory’s addresses and pictures. When Jared and Mindy returned from the trip, Cory was shocked at how excited they were that she should make contact with Eric.

In February, Eric wrote Cory the first letter. It took four days for mail to travel, so they quickly began

e-mailing. They e-mailed for about three months and then started talking on the phone.

Cory had administration for peace and direction in regards to Eric, as the adversary was hard at work trying to confuse her. She received counsel from Elder Danny Hight that attending the Missionary Family Reunion in Lamoni, Iowa, might be a good experience. She decided to go and helped with recreation, assisting Rebecca Cornish. Through Rebecca, she also met several people from Michigan who knew Eric. During the closing service of the reunion, Cory was given the words, “the field is white,” and knew Eric was going to be in her life.

They continued to talk and in August 2004 he came to visit for two weeks. After visiting back and forth during the next few months, they became engaged in a romantic setting in Michigan.

They were married the next year in April. They, as well as many of their friends and loved ones, have many personal testimonies of how the Lord brought them together.

The people at Oak Grove love the Lord, and it shines in their faces.

Eric and Cory visit the Oak Grove Branch when they are in Missouri because it has been Cory’s home branch for thirty-two years. Cory says she is blessed to be the fifth generation in the church on both sides of her family. She has a strong heritage at Oak Grove and truly feels at home. Eric and Cory said they both love Oak Grove because the people love the Lord, and it shines in their faces.

