

Discovering Our Evolving Faith Story

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.

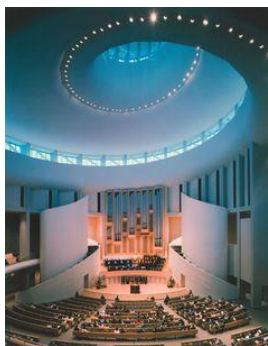
-Doctrine and Covenants 162:2a



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.

-Doctrine and Covenants 164:9a

Invitation to Reflect:



You are invited to take time to reflect on our evolving faith story as a movement. Let the Spirit guide you in your responses. If you feel led to linger on some questions longer than the others, allow yourself to explore what you are being drawn to discover. The goal of this exercise is to consider those things that have made up and are still making up the substance of our shared story. It is from the essence of

this living and evolving faith story that we are called to share with others.

As you reflect on our story consider the following:

It might be tempting to engage in a hyper critical critique of a young founder and a people who came to be known from the Restoration Era as Latter Day Saints. Their story is filled with human frailty and even actions that seem inconceivable to our modern worldview.

In the drama that unfolds we could easily miss something profound and transformational that weaves through this raw and authentic story. It is a story of a people in community struggling to discover what it means to be God's people during a very challenging period in American history. Through this meandering tale we mine insights that continue to bless the church today and redefine the *"essential meaning of the Restoration as healing and redeeming agent inspired by the life and witness of the Redeemer of the world."*¹

¹ Doctrine and Covenants 156:5

Grace and Generosity, Sacredness of Creation, Continuing Revelation, Worth of All Persons, All are Called, Responsible Choices, Pursuit of Peace (Shalom), Unity in Diversity, and Blessings of Community are truly the enduring principles that continue to shape our shared journey of becoming God's people of peace in the world today.

In the words John Cameron Stuart, "For a prophetic people the "ought" is more real than the "is". It is the conviction of a prophetic people that the principles by which they live will ultimately shape the common life of human kind. And because they live in Christ, they are convinced of the ultimate victory of truth and justice and goodness."

Today, Community of Christ is because of those who were willing to risk something new in community with one another. They believed they were ultimately shaping the future in partnership with God. The legacy of their story is perhaps best expressed in the following words found in Sharing in Community of Christ – 3rd Edition:

We also are continuing to become "Community of Christ!" Our future is full of possibility, necessary challenges, and hope as we continue to respond to the guidance of God, who has led the church from its beginning.

"Community of Christ," your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.

Doctrine and Covenants 163:1

And so the story continues . . .

Questions for Reflection

The following questions are not intended to lead to definitive statements of belief. This exercise is an expression of an evolving story that impacts every facet of our shared experience as Community of Christ. Who we have been, who we are now, and who you are becoming in Jesus Christ?

Exploration 1 – Using *Sharing in Community of Christ* – 3rd Edition, what are some words, phrases, or images that begin to tell our shared story?

Exploration 2 - What foundational moments have shaped your understanding of what it means to be Community of Christ today? What was it about these moments that made them significant?

Exploration 3 - What defining questions have you asked that shape your faith today? What role did Community of Christ (i.e. specific relationships in congregations, mission centers, and world church events) have in shaping your faith story?

When do you feel most alive? What most excites and compels you to continue to engage in this movement? (Why are you here? Why is it worth it to you?)



Expressing Your Evolving Faith Story

Take a few moments to look back prayerfully over your responses to these questions. Given the opportunity to express why you choose to live out your discipleship through Community of Christ, what would be most important to share? In the space below, write a few sentences articulating the essence of what it means to you to belong to Community of Christ.