

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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ing the book, microfilm, or other research tool a patron may need. The automated edition simplifies use of the catalog.

2. The INTERNATIONAL GENEALOGICAL INDEX (IGI), which has been available for many years in a microfiche edition. The automated edition gives information about deceased persons for whom temple ordinances have been performed. It also lists birth, christening, and marriage dates and temple ordinance information.

3. Ancestral File™ is a family-linked file containing genealogies contributed by members of the Church since 1979. Many other genealogies have also been included, and additional contributions of family history information are welcomed.

Other files will be added to FamilySearch as they become available.

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L. REYNOLDS CAHOON

FARMS MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

See: Business: Church Participation in Business

FAR WEST, MISSOURI

Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri, was settled in 1836 as Latter-day Saints sought a home and refuge from persecution in Clay County. It became the county seat, with an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 inhabitants. Far West is important to LDS history because that is where the following happened: (1) a temple site was dedicated and the cornerstones laid; (2) seven revelations now published in the Doctrine and Covenants (113, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 120) were received; (3) Joseph F. SMITH, sixth president of the Church, was born (November 13, 1838); (4) the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles officially left from for a mission to Great Britain; (5) a stake of Zion was organized; (6) Joseph SMITH and his family lived (beginning March 14, 1838); (7) and for a short time the headquarters of the Church was located.

Among the notable revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants received at Far West and vicinity are: the proper NAME OF THE CHURCH was given (115:4); four new members of the Twelve Apostles were named and the Twelve as a quorum were called to serve an overseas mission (118:1–6); and the law of TITHING was explained (119, 120).

Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were arrested in Far West on October 31, 1838, by the state militia and taken to Independence, then to Richmond, and from there to Liberty, Missouri, where they were imprisoned. While the Prophet was in prison during the winter and spring of 1838–1839, the Latter-day Saints were driven from Far West and other Missouri sites under Governor Boggs's EXTERMINATION ORDER and relocated in Illinois.

The Church still has interest in Far West and has erected appropriate monuments at the temple site.

[See also History of the Church: c. 1831–1844; Missions of the Twelve to British Isles; Missouri.]

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LARRY C. PORTER

FASTING

The practice of periodic abstinence from food and drink for devotional purposes has been documented since early times. The Bible and the Book of Mormon attest to fasting in its several forms, public or private, institutionalized or spontaneous. In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord commanded the Latter-day Saints to "continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth" (D&C 88:76).

Church members fast together generally on the first Sunday of each month, in preparation for FAST AND TESTIMONY MEETING. They usually abstain from food and drink for two consecutive meals, attend Church services, and donate a FAST OFFERING for the care of the needy. Additionally, an individual, family, or congregation may fast for a specific cause such as one who is sick or otherwise

afflicted. An individual may desire the intimate communication with deity engendered by a prayerful fast when preparing for a difficult task or significant change in the circumstances of life. A person may fast when seeking spiritual enlightenment or guidance in decision making, strength to overcome weakness or endure trial, comfort in sorrow, or help at other times of special need.

General principles of the fast include prayerful preparation concerning the subject of the fast and frequent contemplation and meditation throughout to achieve oneness in purpose and spirit with the Lord; a quiet, humble, and cheerful conduct befitting one seeking blessing or spiritual enlightenment (Matt. 6:16–18; cf. 3 Ne. 13:16–18); and a prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving when ending the fast.

Rich blessings are promised to those who fast and help the needy (Isa. 58:8–9). Self-control, communion with the Lord, and spiritual strength and power accompany compliance with the law. The spirit of the fast is aptly represented in latter-day scripture: “Verily, this is fasting and prayer, or in other words, rejoicing and prayer” (D&C 59:14).

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DAWN M. HILLS

FAST OFFERINGS

The first Sunday of each month is designated as a Fast Sunday, and Latter-day Saints are asked to fast for twenty-four hours and donate at least the value of the meals not eaten as fast offerings. Fast offerings are cash or in-kind donations given to the BISHOP to help the needy following a short period of fasting.

The concept of fast offerings appears as early as the time of Isaiah, who encouraged people to fast and “deal thy bread to the hungry” and to “bring the poor that are cast out to thy house” when fasting (Isa. 58:7). Fasting was also practiced in the postapostolic Church, in which several early Christian fathers advised that “to help the poor with the food saved, fasting is a good work” (Kittel, Vol. 4, p. 934). By the mid-second century some

churches held twice-weekly voluntary fasts, and leaders collected funds for the poor following weekly worship services (Swenson, pp. 373–78).

The Prophet Joseph SMITH, instituted the practice of collecting fast offerings for the poor in KIRTLAND, OHIO (*JD* 12:115), where Church members had begun gathering in the early 1830s. Later, on May 17, 1845, in Nauvoo, Illinois, the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES sent a general letter to the Church defining “the principles of fasts,” stating:

Let this be an example to all saints, and there will never be any lack for bread: When the poor are starving, let those who have, fast one day and give what they otherwise would have eaten to the bishops for the poor, and everyone will abound for a long time; and this is one great and important principle of fasts approved of the Lord. And so long as the saints will all live to this principle with glad hearts and cheerful countenances they will always have an abundance [*HC* 7:413].

During the exodus from Nauvoo the pioneers seldom observed a common fast day but often were asked to give to the poor. It appears that the giving of regular fast day donations was reinstated in the Salt Lake Valley during the drought of 1855–1856. Of that period George A. Smith wrote:

In all these times of scarcity . . . measures were taken to supply those who were unable to furnish themselves. A fast day was proclaimed for the church on the first Thursday of each month, and the food saved in that way distributed among the poor; and thousands of persons, who had abundance of bread put their families on rations, in order to save the same for those who could not otherwise obtain it [*CHC* 4:109–110].

Since that time, the observation of a monthly fast of two meals on the first Sunday of each month and the donation of fast offerings have become regular practices in the Church. In the pioneer economy most donations—both tithing and fast offerings—were of food or livestock, and members took donations to the local tithing office or BISHOP’S STOREHOUSE. The goods were then distributed to the needy. Today, fast offerings usually consist of cash. Aaronic Priesthood DEACONS often serve as agents of the bishop in collecting fast donations.

WARDS and STAKES are encouraged to be self-reliant in caring for their poor. Bishops are instructed to seek out those in need and to provide them with life’s essentials. Surplus fast offering funds in stakes are forwarded to Church headquar-