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Tell me how you feel

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Sun, Jan 24, 2021 at 5:20 AM

Hello Penny Creek Ward friend,

Thanks for being here with me and reading these emails. I really appreciate your love and support. I know you may be struggling with some kind of challenge, mixed in with your joy, so it buoys me up to know you are serving and concerned about others. I know love and service can always make us feel better and forget our own trials for a bit. Go ahead and reply to this email and share anything you'd like. It's just you and me.

Empathy is such an important skill and trait to practice. We can all be more empathetic and understanding.

Especially in our homes.

Our homes need to be a safe place. A place where the occupants feel safe to say anything that is on their mind or that they are concerned about. No one needs to be criticized or shamed because of their feelings. If they feel a certain way, then that is real for them. We shouldn't judge or discount how they are feeling. Accept them for who they are and how they are feeling.

Being empathetic doesn't mean we agree with them, it means we acknowledge their experience and try to feel it with them. That involves listening intently, with love and compassion, truly seeking to understand what they are communicating to you. This will build trust and respect, which leads to greater peace and understanding in your home.

But we all need practice.

It seems like as soon as we decide to make a change in our habits or behavior, the adversary throws us a curve ball to test us. And we fail. That's okay. Our Father in Heaven is infinitely compassionate and forgiving. He loves you eternally. He knows you are trying your best. That's why it's okay to make mistakes. We're practicing. Keep trying.

You know who else loves you infinitely? Jesus Christ, our Savior. He went through eternal depths of pain and sorrow to show His unconditional love for you.

He is our exemplar. He set the pattern for love and emotional safety. He suffered something He didn't deserve so He could have the most empathy for all of us. And as we learn from the scriptures, from people who lived with Him, or had experiences with Him, everyone felt comfortable and at peace around Him. They felt safe.

Can we make an effort to be more like Him? I know we won't come close, but if we make an effort, we'll be closer than we were before. And that's good.

You're good.

Keep practicing. And find the joy. Remember, "men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25)

Stay safe,

Bishop Williams

P.S.

BIG NEWSFLASH: next week we will be using a different link for our virtual sacrament meeting. We'll be going back to a Zoom webinar. The church has purchased Zoom accounts for every ward, so we'll be using that capability. Watch for a link in next week's email.

Also, check out [Maggie](#) and [James](#) Larson's stories on our [Penny Creek Ward web site](#). They are wonderful reminders of what we can do when are struggling. I'll bet you children have a lot of special stories like theirs you could share. Let's hear them. You can tell them to your parents and they can send it as an email to Sister Susie Larson at sularson@gmail.com . We'd love to see more stories from the youth.

For Sacrament Meeting today, it's Group A's turn to attend in person (and anyone else who feels a special need. There's plenty of room.) It's at 9:00am. And it's perfectly fine if you feel more comfortable watching our broadcast online at this link for the last time:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQM_SmjDFmwHAA6lfjtseg/live (Next week we'll have a different link.)

You received this email because you made your email address available to your local Church leaders. It was sent by Rex Williams, whose calling is Bishop.