



Rex Williams <bishoprexwilliams@gmail.com>

The Great Northwest Youth

Rex Williams <noreply@churchofjesuschrist.org>
Reply-To: bishoprexwilliams@gmail.com
To: bishoprexwilliams@gmail.com

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Hello friend,

Did you miss it?

I did.

I'm talking about my email last week. Sorry I didn't send it out to you. I did work on it and made an effort, but for a variety of reasons I just couldn't finish. Mostly because I spent all day last Saturday as the final day of our Stake Young Men Camp, and spent the next few days recovering.

Have you had a chance to visit any of the beautiful places here in the Great Northwest? We sure have some amazing places of nature here and this has been a wonderful sunny summer to enjoy them.

As part of our annual Stake Young Men Camp, we took the young men ages 14 - 18 to the Dungeness Recreational Area out on the Olympic peninsula and spent three days exploring the beauty of that area. We swam in the wonderfully deep clear blue Lake Crescent, hiked in the rainforest to view the amazing Sol Duc waterfall, kayaked in the rough ocean water of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and hiked out on the Dungeness Spit. We also visited the Olympic Game Farm where large animals, bison, yaks, elk, and deer ate out of our hands from our car window, and big bears waved to us a few feet away. It was quite the epic experience.

Do you know why we have these outdoor activities for the youth? It's so they can have "a place to gather away from worldly influences, build lasting gospel-centered relationships, feel the Spirit of the Lord, grow in unity and love, and strengthen their faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ." ([Aaronic Priesthood Quorum Camp Guide](#) and [Young Women Camp Guide](#))

Gathering together as youth is so important. Doing so helps them accomplish all those things in that list. So, during the camp we also had some great spiritual lessons, shared by the young men, leaders, and our Stake President.

Even though our faith and relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is very personal, because we are social beings, an eternal family of divine siblings, we are connected to other people in a special, unique way, and rely on others for so much that is important.

The youth are precious souls who have big decisions to make in their life. Not that we all don't have important decisions to make all the time, but I've heard it called the 'decade of decisions' because during your teenage and young adult years you decide what friends to have, in what activities to participate in high school, what college to attend, who you marry, where you will live, and what career you will pursue. These are all major decisions that will shape the rest of your life.

That's not to say that any one of these decisions can't be changed, but starting out in life they can have a major impact. Therefore, we need to support them, help them, teach them, prepare them. Whether you have children or not, you are part of our Penny Creek ward and have a special part to play in helping our youth be the best they can be, because they are the future leaders of the church and the world.

And the world needs good leaders. You know there are already going to be enough bad ones. The opposition is gathering his contingent too. So, we have a special interest in the youth. It is so important that we help them have the best opportunity to succeed, to teach them truth, and help them learn how to make good decisions by connecting with the Spirit of God and their eternal nature.

"In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost" (Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96).

A prophet knows the future. He gives us messages to help us prepare for it. Here's another statement from him:

"Why do we need such resilient faith? Because difficult days are ahead. Rarely in the future will it be easy or popular to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. Each of us will be tested" (Russell M. Nelson, "Face the Future with Faith," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 35–36).

Thank you for your faithfulness. We are living in the future of yesterday. You were the youth of the past. And now, these are the difficult times prophesied. But there is more future ahead of us, and it will be glorious as we follow the path of our Creator and Savior, keeping His Commandments.

As we help the youth, we can all be like Helaman's stripling warriors:

"...they were exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted. Yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him." (Alma 53:20–21).

Be exceedingly valiant for courage, my friend. We are in this time and place together.

I care about you. And the youth.

Keep the Faith!

Bishop Williams

P.S.

We have a lot of announcements today. Make sure to read them all carefully.

- We are thrilled to announce that we will be having a stake choir at our Stake Conference the weekend of September 25th and 26th. If you would like to participate, please join us for practices on August 29, September 5 and September 19. We will meet from 4 - 5:30pm at the Stake Center Chapel. We will sing at both sessions of conference. If you have any questions, please contact Aimee Oliver at 425-314-3432 or aimspen6@gmail.com.
- **EVERYONE IS WELCOME!** Everett Stake Self Reliance Devotional

Come join us on August 22nd at 3:00p at the Everett Stake Center and discover how you can become more self-reliant. If you are looking to: Start and Grow A Business, Find a Better Job, gain Education for Better Work, improve your Personal Finances, or find ways to become more Emotional Resilient, this is the place to be.

Questions contact:

Michele Roberts - mdrobert8@comcast.net

David Roberts - davidaroberts8@gmail.com

- Families with seminary age students (grades 9-12) are asked to login and register their students at the following link- MySeminary.ChurchofJesusChrist.org, It would be great if you would have your student login with their own credentials as they will need access throughout the year. Registration should be completed by August 20th. If you need help with this process, please contact Sis. Patty Funnell at 425.238.2198 or patty.funnell@gmail.com
- Do you have a friend in need? Share these church resources that are available for anyone, regardless of their faith or interest in the Church: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/share/church-resources>
- Important Message from our Stake Presidency:

As you may know, the First Presidency recently announced that "to limit exposure to these viruses, we urge the use of face masks in public meetings whenever social distancing is not possible. To provide personal protection from such severe infections, we urge individuals to be vaccinated". Snohomish County health officials have also urged residents to wear masks in public while indoors regardless of vaccination status.

In consideration of this and in an effort to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and its variants while continuing to allow and encourage in-person meetings, we ask that all members over 5 years old please wear masks whenever we gather for public meetings in the meetinghouses.