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## What's your story?

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### THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Penny Creek Ward

Hi friend,

Here we are in Summertime. We're taking vacations, we're enjoying the sunshine and warm weather, and we even have a holiday, where we take some time off from doing our normal work and remember a significant event in the past. I think that's a good thing to do. (It's kind of what we do every Sunday. We remember a significant event that really happened, that impacts us immensely.)

It's good to remember events of the past. If we don't, then we are kind of wandering aimlessly, 'driven with the wind and tossed.' (James 1:6) We won't know the bigger story. Events tell a story.

We're all part of many stories. Tomorrow, we celebrate a certain story that we are all blessed by, the independence of the Thirteen Original Colonies from Great Britain, with the signing of the Declaration of Independence. That was the end of one story and the beginning of another story, one about our own nation. People in other parts of the world don't share that story. They have other stories.

We're also a part of the story of the Great Northwest. Even if we have moved here from somewhere else, we're here now, and enjoying or experiencing all the effects of living in this beautiful area. We also share the story of the Penny Creek Ward. It was created in 2019. And we have had many wonderful and some difficult experiences as a group of people worshipping and serving each other together.

You know each of your families have a story. You have all the shared experiences of your immediate family, plus you are all shaped by the actions of your ancestors.

And finally, you have your own story, separate and unique from anyone else. You have your own joys and sorrows, epiphanies and struggles that no one else has experienced. You are a special, precious, one-of-a-kind story.

And the most exciting thing about that is that you get to create it. You get to choose your story. Oh sure, there are things that happen to you that you don't have any control over, but you choose how you react to them. That is the core and beauty of God's plan. You have complete agency. And what you do with that agency determines what you become, and what your ultimate story will be.

And yet, your story will never be over. You are eternal. So, whatever you 'become' will only be temporary, until you 'become' something else. That means that whatever you think you've 'become' or done in the past, is not permanent. If you think it isn't good, then you can change it. And if it was good, that doesn't necessarily mean it'll stay that way. You have to continually choose the right, always striving to choose goodness over evil, to create the story you want.

Most everyone agrees that there are two opposing forces in the world. Just not everyone knows where they come from. Maybe we don't either. But we know there's a story that includes our Father in Heaven, who is good, and who is trying to tell us as much of the story as He can, so that we will choose good and join Him in a state of ultimate goodness and joy, and 'become' like Him.

There's also an opposing force trying to pull us away from that.

The more we choose in either direction, the farther we get from the other side, and the harder it is to get to the other side, or the easier it is to stay on the side we mostly choose.

This is the story of the universe, or eternity. It's a place that sorts out intelligences, through a long, involved process. Well, for eternity really.

But we have somewhat of a shortcut. Jesus Christ did something for us that we couldn't do for ourselves. We still need to make an effort, but He made it so the bad choices of our past don't matter as much.

Of course, there's so much more to the story of eternity that I don't know. And that's okay. Most of it doesn't matter right now. What matters is the part of the story we've been given. And in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we've been given a lot. Let's use it to choose good and be happy. We know that works.

So, this weekend, let's remember the past. Let's remember those who chose to do brave and courageous things to establish an independent and free country. Remember what freedoms we enjoy because of events of the past, and learn from them, so that we chose good in the future, and create a place where those who come after us will enjoy the blessings of our good choices.

Happy 4th of July!

Have a great summer!

With love,

Bishop Williams

P.S.

- Wednesday July 20 - Penny Creek Ward BBQ at Pavillion
- August 10-13 - Stake Young Men Encampment at Ensign Ranch
- August 15-20 - Stake Young Women Camp at Camp Zarahemla
- August 25 - Silver Firs and Mill Creek ward Relief Societies kayak and paddle board activity at Silver Lake
- August 25 - Stake American Red Cross Blood Drive.

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