keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen [Moroni 4:3].

O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee, in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen [Moroni 5:2].

The prayers, in turn, formalize language used by the resurrected Savior when he visited the Americas (3 Ne. 18:5–11; cf. D&C 20:75–79). Subsequent to a revelation in August 1830 (D&C 27) water has been used instead of wine.

No such exact wording of the prayers is included in the New Testament. However, one scholar has detected parallels between Latter-day Saint sacrament prayers and ancient eucharistic formulas (Barker, pp. 53–56). The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST) confirms that key elements of the sacrament prayers were part of the original Last Supper: Jesus included covenantal obligations similar to those in the prayers (JST Matt. 26:25) and made clear that his action introduced a formal “ordinance” that they were to repeat often (JST Mark 14:24). Further, in the JST, Jesus does not say, “This is my body,” and “This is my blood”—metaphors whose interpretation has historically divided Christians on the matter of “transubstantiation.” He said instead, “This is in remembrance of my body,” and “This is in remembrance of my blood” (JST Matt. 26:22, 24; cf. JST Mark 14:21, 23).

The sacrament prayers invite personal introspection, repentance, and rededication, yet they are also communal, binding individuals into congregations who jointly and publicly attest to their willingness to remember Christ. This shared commitment to become like Christ, repeated weekly, defines the supreme aspiration of Latter-day Saint life.

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SACRAMENT MEETING

Sacrament meeting is the principal LDS worship service held on the Sabbath and is based on the commandment “Thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day” (D&C 59:9). The entire ward membership, from infants to the elderly, attend the weekly sacrament meeting as families, and partake of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper together.

A sacrament meeting was held on the day the Church was organized, April 6, 1830. It is recorded, “The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us to a very great degree—some prophesied, whilst we all praised the Lord, and rejoiced exceedingly” (HC 1:78). In Church annals this primal worship service is called a “time of rejoicing,” a time of “great solemnity,” and “truly a refreshing season to spirit and body” (HC 2:430, 433, 480). At the time of entering the new land of Zion (in Missouri), a revelation was given concerning the Sabbath with the adoration that all should come to this meeting in the spirit of thanksgiving and should offer up “a sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (D&C 59:8). Hence, it is often referred to as a time for the renewing of covenants.

The sacrament meeting is led by the bishop of the ward or one of his counselors. To enhance the spirit of worship and fellowship, there are other participants: the organist, music director, and members of the ward preassigned to give talks and the invocation and benediction. From the earliest days of the Church, music has been essential in the worship of Latter-day Saints. In the sacrament meeting, music is manifest in the singing of hymns such as “He Died! The Great Redeemer Died,” “While of These Emblems We Partake,” “In Memory of the Crucified,” and “Reverently and Meekly Now.” Each ward is encouraged to maintain a choir to periodically perform hymns and anthems. The orientation of all music is toward the classical tradition.

The two sacrament prayers—one on the bread, one on the water—are offered by priests, usually young men between the ages of sixteen and nineteen. They kneel in the presence of the congregation and ask that all present, by their partaking of the broken bread and the water, witness unto the Father their willingness “to take upon them the name of thy Son,” Jesus Christ, to always remember him, to keep his commandments, and to seek his Spirit. These patterns are derived in
part from the dramatic introduction of the sacrament in the Book of Mormon, where the Master teaches a multitude of men, women, and children, “And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock” (3 Ne. 18:12). And he promises, “And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you” (3 Ne. 18:7, 11).

During the passing of the bread and water to the congregation, silence prevails. The communion aspired to is embodied in statements of modern leaders: Hyrum Smith spoke of the sacramental process as bestowing spiritual sustenance enough to “last a whole week.” The ordinance was given, as President Brigham Young taught, “in order that the people may be sanctified” (JD 19:91–92). “I am a witness,” said Elder Melvin J. Ballard, “that there is a spirit attending the administration of the sacrament that warms the soul from head to foot; you feel the wounds of the spirit being healed” (Hinckley, p. 133).

The typical sacrament meeting is sixty to seventy minutes long and has the following components, with mild variations from week to week:

- Organ prelude
- Greeting by a member of the bishopric
- Opening hymn sung by the congregation
- Announcements and ward business
- Invocation by a ward member
- Sacramental hymn sung by the congregation
- Administration and partaking of the sacrament
- Musical selection
- Speakers
- Closing hymn sung by the congregation
- Benediction by ward member
- Organ postlude

The spoken messages in sacrament meetings are given by different members of the congregation each Sunday, or by visiting officers from the stake organization. All speak with the same purpose: to witness of Jesus Christ, to review gospel principles, to inspire, to uplift, to encourage, and to motivate the congregation to renewed efforts to live a Christlike life. Speakers frequently quote from the scriptures, and members, young and old, are encouraged to bring their own book of scriptures and to follow the cited references. The time is usually shared by several speakers. Sometimes entire families are assigned to develop a gospel topic, and each member contributes to the chosen

Sacrament meetings begin and end with the singing of a congregational hymn. This sacrament meeting is in Berlin (1990). Courtesy Peggy Jellinghausen.
theme. Youth speakers are likewise regularly invited to give sacrament meeting talks. Sometimes the bishop assigns topics, and sometimes he leaves the choice to the individual or family.

Sacrament meeting is periodically combined with the observance of special events such as Christmas, Easter, Mother’s Day, and Father’s Day. On such occasions, the meeting follows the usual pattern through the sacrament and then proceeds around the commemoration program.

On one Sunday a month, usually the first, sacrament meeting is a FAST AND TESTIMONY MEETING. After the sacrament, the final portion of the meeting is devoted to extemporaneous testimony bearing by members of the congregation.

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CRAWFORD GATES

GEORGIA GATES

SACRED GROVE

A grove of trees on the Joseph Smith, Sr., farm near Palmyra, New York, is revered by Latter-day Saints as the vicinity where Joseph Smith experienced his FIRST VISION, the divine manifestation of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ that began the RESTORATION of the gospel in this DISPENSATION. For that reason, Latter-day Saints honor the place as sacred. The grove is part of the forest that once covered the Smiths’ 100-acre farm in Manchester Township as well as much of western New York.

The forest was some 400 years old when the family of Joseph Smith, Sr., moved to the site in 1818 or 1819. The large trees of the forest—maple, beech, elm, oak, and hickory—reached heights of up to 125 feet and diameters of 6 feet or more. Beneath this natural canopy grew hop hornbeam, wild cherry, and ash. The woodland floor was carpeted with leaves, ferns, grasses, wildflowers, and clumps of chokecherry and dogwood.

The Smiths cleared the trees from sixty acres of their property. The Sacred Grove was part of a fifteen-acre wooded tract at the farm’s west end, reserved as a sugarbush, where trees were tapped for making maple syrup and sugar.

Subsequent owners of the farm maintained the grove, associating it with Joseph Smith’s vision, although the exact location of the vision is unknown. In 1907 the Church purchased the farm and grove from William A. Chapman, and these sites formed the nucleus of the Church HISTORICAL SITES program, which at present includes properties from Vermont to Utah.

Through an ongoing professional maintenance program, the Church has retained much of the primeval beauty of the Sacred Grove. Trees that were mature at the time of Joseph Smith’s boyhood still grace this forest. People from many lands visit the