

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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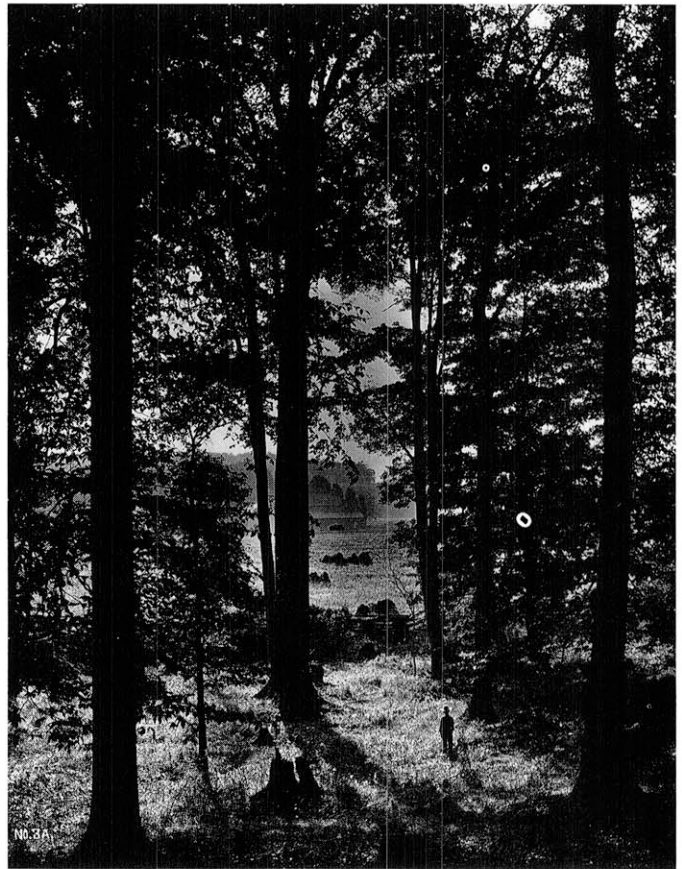
CRAWFORD GATES
GEORGIA GATES

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



In such a grove of towering beeches, maples, and other trees, about one-fourth mile west of the Smith family home near Palmyra, New York, fourteen-year-old Joseph Smith saw God the Father and Jesus Christ in the spring of 1820. Photographer: George E. Anderson, 1926.

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

Sacred Grove each year. In 1989 the number of visitors exceeded 36,000.

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SACRIFICE

God requires sacrifice of his people both to make or renew COVENANTS with him and to test their ultimate loyalties (D&C 98:12–15). When the Lord drove Adam and Eve from the GARDEN OF EDEN, he gave them the law of sacrifice, whereby they were to offer the firstlings of their flocks to him (Moses 5:5). From the beginning, offerings to the Lord that involved the shedding of blood were in similitude of the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who would come to atone for the sins of mankind (Moses 5:6–8). The Book of Mormon includes accounts of Lehi's people making burnt offerings in compliance with the LAW OF MOSES (1 Ne. 5:9; Mosiah 2:3).

With the sacrifice of Jesus, "the performances and ORDINANCES of the Law of Moses" were fulfilled (4 Ne. 1:12), and his death ended the practice of sacrifices on an altar. To his disciples in the western continents, Jesus said that he would no longer accept burnt offerings, but that anyone who believes in him should offer a broken heart and a contrite spirit (3 Ne. 9:19–20; cf. D&C 59:8).

For members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sacrifice is required of those who wish to become the Lord's people (D&C 64:23). All are invited to come to Christ—rather than to a sacrificial altar—with humble, teachable spirits and repentant hearts, willing to sacrifice all things for the Lord and for one another (cf. Mosiah 18:8–9). The Prophet Joseph SMITH taught that only a religion that requires total sacrifice has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary for salvation (*Lectures on Faith* 6:5–7). To appreciate the need to sacrifice, one need only recall Jesus' words to the rich young ruler: "Sell all that thou

hast, and distribute unto the poor . . . and come, follow me" (Luke 18:22).

Covenants made by Church members embrace the commitment to sacrifice all for the KINGDOM OF GOD. Examples of willingness to sacrifice are legion among early Latter-day Saints who sacrificed homes, comforts, and even their lives for their beliefs. Prior to his martyrdom, Joseph Smith knew that he was going as "a lamb to the slaughter" (D&C 135:4). Sacrifices made by Mormon pioneers to establish the Church in the western United States have become legendary. And sacrifices are still required of Latter-day Saints. For instance, faithful members pay one-tenth of their income as TITHING to the Church, contribute financially to mission funds, and give FAST OFFERINGS for the poor. Missionaries spend one or two years preaching the gospel at their own or their families' expense while delaying education, employment, marriage, or retirement. Members serve their congregations—without pay—in assigned lay positions that make possible the operation of Church programs. It is service to others through formal callings and through personal concern for their welfare that leads Church members to know that "sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven" (Hymns, p. 27).

[See also Consecration, Law of; Sacrifice in Biblical Times.]

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SACRIFICE IN BIBLICAL TIMES

The first commandments received by Adam and Eve after being driven from the Garden of Eden were to worship God and to offer the firstlings of their flocks and herds (Moses 5:5–6). Adam and Eve obeyed. Later, an angel explained to them the purpose for the law of sacrifice: it was made in si-