

late 1840s was sparsely inhabited. His strong commitment to preservation of the environment and wise use of all natural resources influenced early Church colonizing efforts. Such prudence and wisdom in the use of land, water, air, and living things are still encouraged throughout the Church. In modern days of widespread concern for preserving the fragile relationships between the earth and its biosphere, Brigham Young's counsel remains vital:

There is a great work for the Saints to do. Progress, and improve upon, and make beautiful everything around you. Cultivate the earth and cultivate your minds. Build cities, adorn your habitations, make gardens, orchards, and vineyards, and render the earth so pleasant that when you look upon your labours you may do so with pleasure, and that angels may delight to come and visit your beautiful locations [JD 8:83].

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EASTER

Easter is the Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. After Christ died on the cross, his body was placed in a sepulcher, where it

remained, separated from his SPIRIT, until his resurrection, when his spirit and his body were reunited. Latter-day Saints affirm and testify that Jesus Christ was resurrected and lives today with a glorified and perfected body of flesh and bone. Following his resurrection, Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene and then to other disciples. Some were not convinced of his resurrection, believing that his appearances were those of an unembodied spirit. Jesus assured them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). He then ate fish and honey in their presence, further dispelling their doubt.

Easter is a celebration not only of the resurrection of Christ but also of the universal resurrection. Because of the ATONEMENT of Jesus Christ, all people will be resurrected. Their bodies and spirits will be reunited, never to be separated again. Latter-day Saints know the truth of Paul's statement, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . . For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:20; cf. Alma 11:42–45).

Latter-day Saints conduct Easter Sunday services but do not follow the religious observances of Ash Wednesday, Lent, or Holy Week. LDS Easter services traditionally review New Testament and Book of Mormon accounts of Christ's crucifixion, his resurrection, and surrounding events. For these services, chapels are often decorated with white lilies and other symbols of life. Ward choirs frequently present Easter cantatas, and congregations sing Easter hymns. As at services on other Sundays, the emblems of the sacrament (*see* COMMUNION) are passed to the congregation.

Some LDS families include Easter bunnies and eggs in their family festivities for the delight of children. Such traditions are not officially discouraged, though they have no religious significance to Latter-day Saints. The focus of the holiday is religious. For Latter-day Saints, Easter is a celebration of the promise of eternal life through Christ. They share the conviction of Job, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25–26).

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