

For Immediate Release

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Latter-day Saints Celebrate 30 Years in Lafayette

LAFAYETTE, Indiana – Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints celebrated the 30th anniversary of the formation of the Stake in Lafayette. A group of local congregations is referred to as a “stake” by members of the Church of Jesus Christ. One of the Church’s official websites, Mormon.org, states that a “‘stake’ is... taken from Old Testament tent imagery in which the ‘tent,’ or church, is held up by supporting stakes.”

The stake was organized May 15, 1983 with Koy Miskin as the first stake president. At the time there were 1700 members of the church. Currently the church has over 3,000 members and 11 congregations including a Spanish and Purdue student congregation. The celebration focused on increasing faith in Christ, community service and strengthening families. There were various activities and service throughout the month to commemorate the date. Youth of the church served the Arc of Tippecanoe on April 20th. April 27th was an official celebration held at Ross Park for members of all of the congregations. On May 3rd family genealogy histories were given to the mayors of Lafayette and West Lafayette to thank them for all they do for our communities. Ending the celebration with a conference held on May 4 with talks and music focused on Jesus Christ as Savior of the world.

April 20th, Latter-day Saint teenagers in the Lafayette celebrated the 30th anniversary by completing a special service project. These teenagers put on a carnival for The Arc of

Tippecanoe, an organization that empowers people with developmental disabilities through advocacy, education, and socialization opportunities. These teens ran games, painted faces, tied balloon animals for those in attendance. Furthermore, each participant partnered with a youth from the Church of Jesus Christ, giving them interaction and confidence as they played games and ate lunch. Service projects like these are typical of Latter-day Saint youth.

On April 27th the stake held a family activity emphasizing the eternal nature of families and key to happiness. David O. McKay, past president of the church, said: “no other success can compensate for failure in the home.” At least 400 people were in attendance at the Church’s 30-year anniversary celebration, held at Ross Camp. The event demonstrated a culture within the Church of being connected to past generations. The 30-year celebration was brought about completely by volunteers from the Church’s unpaid lay ministry. Members of congregations brought helium balloons, expertly decorated cakes, and the handful of animals that made up the event’s small petting zoo. Events like these fortify members’ relationships with people in the area who are of their faith but who attend weekly worship services at Latter-day Saint congregations closer to their homes.

Koy Miskin, who served as the president of the Lafayette Stake when it was first organized in 1983, attributed the growth in the area to the proselyting efforts of the Church’s missionaries, as well as the influx of Latter-day Saints attending Purdue University. Ron Ellis, who serves as current president of the Lafayette Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, stated that “eternal families are a central part of the Church,” and that events like the celebration at Ross Camp gives families a place to gather. Additionally, he said, “It’s good in our lives and in organizations to commemorate blessings. It helps us to be grateful.”

May 3, as part of this celebration, representatives from the Church presented a gift to Mayor Tony Roswarski of Lafayette and Mayor John Dennis of West Lafayette. These gifts comprised a generational pedigree chart that went back 11 generations for Mayor Roswarski and 9 generations for Mayor Dennis. Mayor Roswarski was deeply touched by the gift, saying that he had been talking just the day before about wanting to find out more about his Polish roots. "My family means the world to me," he said. Mayor Dennis was very grateful and said that he "always wanted to know more about my family and where I'm from."

May 4, a conference was held with uplifting music and messages of hope and faith focused on Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. As stated in *The Living Christ: a Testimony of the Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, "We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world." Talks and music focused on being disciples of Jesus Christ.

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Please contact David Morgan at davemorgan209@gmail.com for photos of the celebration, and Nancy Cramer at nanjocramer@gmail.com for photos of the gift presentation and youth activity.