

# I'm Trying to Be Like Jesus

I'm trying to be like Jesus, I'm following in his ways.  
I'm trying to love as he did, in all that I do and say.  
At times I am tempted to make a wrong choice,  
But I try to listen as the still small voice whispers,

"Love one another as Jesus loves you.  
Try to show kindness in all that you do.  
Be gentle and loving in deed and in thought,  
For these are the things Jesus taught."

I'm trying to love my neighbor;  
I'm learning to serve my friends.  
I watch for the day of gladness when Jesus will come again.  
I try to remember the lessons he taught.  
Then the Holy Spirit enters into my thoughts, saying:

"Love one another as Jesus loves you.  
Try to show kindness in all that you do.  
Be gentle and loving in deed and in thought,  
For these are the things Jesus taught."

*Janice Kapp Perry, b. 1938*

# Program

**Organist:** Liesl Shurtliff

**Chorister:** Lenny Cannon and Ilse Hammond

**Opening Hymn:** I'm Trying To Be Like Jesus

**Opening Prayer:** Abiola Opadele

**Sacrament Hymn:** #193 I Stand All Amazed

## Administration of the Sacrament

**Speaker:** Andy Himebaugh, Bishop

**Speaker:** Jeannie Evans, Stake Relief Society President

**Musical Number:** His Eye Is On the Sparrow

Liesl Shurtliff, Devin Pope

**Speaker:** Kenny Jordan

**Speaker:** Scott Shurtliff, Stake President

**Closing Hymn:** Lift Every Voice and Sing

**Closing Prayer:** Charlanda Woodson

# Lift Every Voice and Sing

1. Lift ev'ry voice and sing  
till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty.

Let our rejoicing rise  
high as the list'ning skies;  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun  
of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

2. Stony the road we trod,  
bitter the chast'ning rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died.  
Yet with a steady beat,  
have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered.  
We have come, treading our path thru' the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

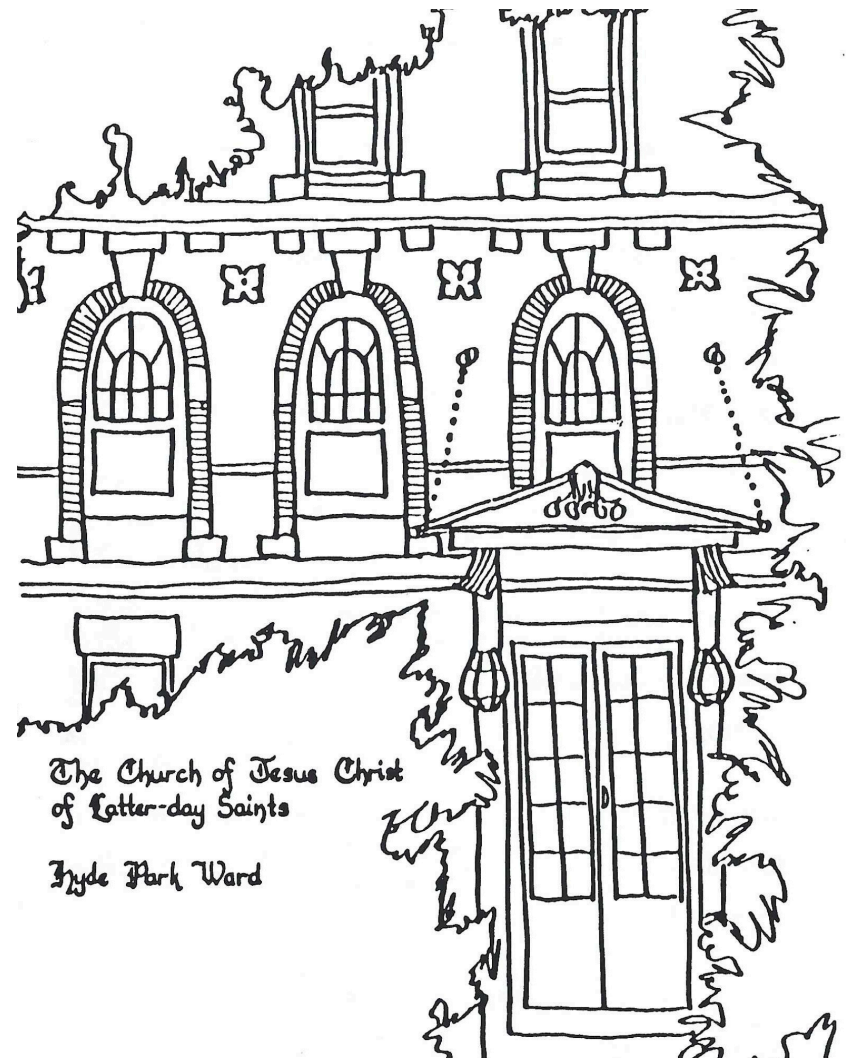
3. God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way,  
Thou who hast by thy might  
led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee,  
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee.  
Shadowed beneath thy hand,  
may we forever stand,  
True to our God, true to our native land.

James Weldon Johnson, 1900

# Hyde Park Ward Conference

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

January 11, 2026



5435 S. University Ave, Ward Meeting House from 1976 to 1992

By Sarah Wilson

**"Come Down and Sit with the People" (1929);** The University Ward originally met in a building on 62nd and Kenwood, built in the late 1920s and modeled after the University of Chicago's Rockefeller Chapel. It featured high vaulted ceilings and a balcony at the front where the choir sat. The architecture was so formal that the bishopric also sat up in the balcony, elevated high above the congregation. When General Authorities came to dedicate the building in 1929, they took one look at the arrangement and instructed the bishopric to "come down from their elevated position and sit closer to the people"—a lesson in leadership that stuck with the ward for decades.

**The Traveling Angel Moroni Painting (1937):** There is a piece of Hyde Park history that now hangs in the Chicago Temple. In 1937, a former student named Brother Tracey donated a painting of the Angel Moroni delivering the gold plates to the ward as a thank-you for the welcome he received. For years, this painting hung in the original ward building on 62nd Street, and later over a poorly lit staircase in the Beverly meetinghouse. When the ward was between buildings, Weston and Beth Mickley stored it for safekeeping in their home. When the Chicago Temple was dedicated in 1985, the painting was shipped to Salt Lake City to be cleaned and restored. It now hangs in a prominent place in the temple—a permanent reminder of the Hyde Park Saints.

**The "Wilderness" Years at the YMCA (1960–1962):** Before the Hyde Park Ward had a permanent home, the members met in a small YMCA at 81st and Racine. It was a time of "makeshift conditions" where the Saints had to be adaptable and maintain a sense of humor. Charlotte Johnston recalled that sacrament meetings were held on folding chairs in the gym, while Primary

classes clustered around the perimeter. The setting was far from reverent; during Fast and Testimony meetings, the silence would often be broken by the loud "cazong" of the candy machines down the hall. The lack of facilities was so acute that they joked about using the swimming pool for baptisms.

**The "Avant-Garde" Building That Never Was (Mid-1960s):** Before moving to the duplex on 54th Street, the ward owned a beautiful wooded site in Beverly and had big dreams of building there. They hired Y.C. Wong, a renowned Chicago architect, to design a building specifically for the location. He created plans for a "striking modern modular building". However, negotiations with Church headquarters stalled. The Church ultimately decided the design was "too avant-garde" for a standard meetinghouse, and the plans were scrapped. It was a disappointment at the time, but it kept the ward on the path that eventually led them back to Hyde Park.

**Soft, Strong, and Flexible (Mid-1960s):** The fundraising efforts for a new building in the 1960s brought out the creativity in the congregation. The ward held rummage sales, bazaars, and bake sales to raise money for the building fund. Charlotte's husband, Peter Johnston, even took to selling mail-order shoes to contribute to the fund. He used to tell potential customers that the shoes were "soft, strong, and flexible". Charlotte liked to joke that this description—soft, strong, and flexible—was exactly the way she wanted to be as she navigated the challenges of life in the ward

**"Urban Pioneers" & Roof Tomatoes (1976):** The early Hyde Park Branch was defined by creativity and a desire to be part of the local community. Under the leadership of Branch President Peter Johnston, the members hosted "open meetings" to field questions and concerns. They organized a spectacular quilt show to introduce themselves to their neighbors and announce, "we were here as part of the community". The spirit of innovation extended to the building itself; members discussed growing tomatoes aquatically on the flat roof of the duplex. Charlotte described the members of this era as "urban pioneers" who chose to stay and build a faithful community in the city rather than move to the suburbs.

**The Legend of the "Blue Box" (Late 1970s):** When the ward moved into a three-story duplex at 54th and University in 1976, they were thrilled to be in Hyde Park, but they still lacked a baptismal font. The nearest stake center was an hour away in Chicago Heights. In true Hyde Park fashion, an "enterprising member" built a wooden box specifically for baptisms to save the long trip. This contraption became known affectionately as "the blue box". The congregation always knew when a baptism was scheduled because they would see a garden hose trailing from the box through the basement rooms to connect to the plumbing.

**A Model of Integration (1978):** Charlotte Johnston spoke candidly about her journey as a girl from Idaho learning to live in a racially integrated community. She noted that Hyde Park prided itself on being a "model of successful integration," and the ward reflected that spirit. Following the 1978 revelation on

the priesthood, many new black members joined the congregation. The ward leadership immediately initiated programs to help new members acclimate to Church culture, while simultaneously helping long-time members appreciate the culture of the new converts. A painting of a black family in front of the Salt Lake Temple, given to the ward by President Kimball, still hangs near the bishop's office as a testament to this era.

**The Triple-Decker Sabbath (1980s–Early 1990s):** Meeting in the residential duplex at 54th and University (1976–1992) required extreme logistical coordination. The ward started with fewer than 75 members meeting in a third-floor living room, but it grew rapidly. By the time they left the building, the ward was "bursting at the seams". To accommodate everyone, they had to hold simultaneous sacrament meetings on three different floors of the house at the same time—a testament to the ward's rapid growth and the members' patience before the current building was acquired.

**The Miracle of the Land Purchase (Early 1990s):** For years, the ward struggled to find a suitable plot of land for a permanent chapel in Hyde Park, where real estate was scarce and expensive. They faced many disappointments until a "miraculous acquisition" occurred involving Chris Kimball, a member of the congregation and grandson of President Spencer W. Kimball. When the local osteopathic school closed, its professional buildings and faculty houses were listed separately. Chris realized that by combining these two separate listings, there would be enough contiguous land for both a 2 building and a parking lot. The stake president, Rodger Lerohl, purchased the property on the spot, paving the way for the dedication of the current building in 1992.

Source: Charlotte Johnston, Midwest Pilgrimage, Nauvoo, May 2013  
Charlotte Johnston, Relief Society Women of Faith, March 2015