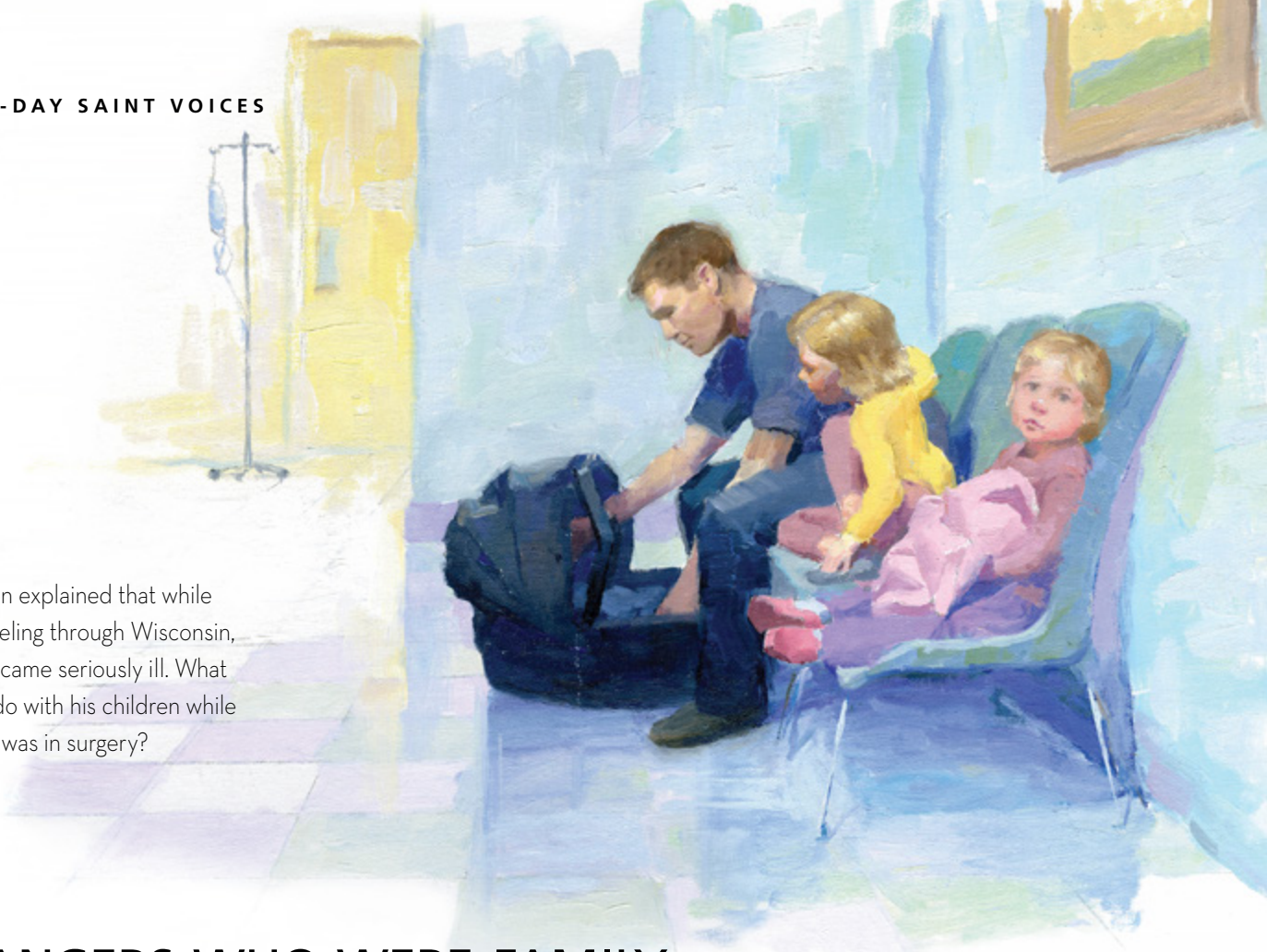


My son explained that while traveling through Wisconsin, his wife became seriously ill. What would he do with his children while their mom was in surgery?



STRANGERS WHO WERE FAMILY

Late one evening, my son Garrett called from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, USA. He and his wife, Shelly, and their children, were traveling from Alabama, where Garrett had just completed military training, to Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. He explained that while they were traveling through Wisconsin, Shelly became seriously ill. They had found a hospital, and Shelly was scheduled for an emergency appendectomy the next morning.

I arranged to fly and meet them, but I couldn't get there until the following day. My son expressed concern about what to do with his children—a five-year-old, a one-year-old, and a three-week-old baby—while their mom was in surgery.

Not knowing anyone in the area, he decided to call the bishop in Minot, even though they had not met. The bishop in Minot said he would contact the bishop in Eau Claire.

The following morning, the bishop in Eau Claire, along with the Relief Society president, met Garrett at his hotel. They said they would be happy to care for the children while Shelly was in surgery. Shelly later commented that she was completely at peace letting two strangers—who were family in the gospel—watch her children. By the time I arrived in Eau Claire, Shelly was recovering and my grandkids were back with her and Garrett. We were grateful for the help we received in our time of need.

A few weeks later, I was watching

the October 2016 general conference when President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Where will you go to find a detailed and inspired Church organizational structure through which you are taught and supported by men and women who are deeply committed to serving the Lord by serving you and your family?” (“To Whom Shall We Go?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 91).

I couldn't help but think about what had happened in Eau Claire. It is a blessing to be not only a member of the Church but also a member of a gospel family, where we can serve and bless each other no matter where we are. ■

Jeff Messerly, Utah, USA