



By President  
Russell M. Nelson

---

# LOOK FORWARD TO THE

*You can face the future with optimism and joy  
if you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

---

**IN JANUARY 2018**, we laid to rest a giant of a man, a prophet of God—President Thomas S. Monson. No words can do justice to the magnitude and magnificence of his life. I will forever cherish our friendship with gratitude for what he taught me. Now, we must look forward to the future with complete faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ, whose Church this is.

## THE DIVINE PLAN OF SUCCESSION

On January 14, all of the living Apostles met in the upper room of the Salt Lake Temple. There, they made a unanimous decision, first, to reorganize the First Presidency now; and second, that I serve as President of the Church. Words are inadequate to tell you what it felt like to have my Brethren—Brethren who hold all the priesthood keys restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith in this dispensation—place their hands upon my head to ordain and set me apart as President of the Church. It was a sacred and humbling experience.

It then became my responsibility to discern whom the Lord had prepared to be my counselors. How could I choose only two of the twelve other Apostles, each of whom I love so dearly? I'm deeply grateful to the Lord for answering my fervent prayers. I am very thankful that President Dallin Harris Oaks and President Henry Bennion Eyring are willing to serve with me as First and Second Counselors, respectively.



PHOTOS BY SCOTT G. WINTERTON, DESERET NEWS

---

# RWARD

# FUTURE WITH FAITH





---

“THOUGH OUR WORLD IS FILLED WITH SERIOUS CHALLENGES, I AM OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE AND FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT THE FUNDAMENTAL GOODNESS OF HUMAN KIND.”

---

As we go forward together, I invite you to think about the majestic manner by which the Lord governs His Church. When a President of the Church passes away, there is no mystery about who is next called to serve in that capacity. There is no electioneering, no campaigning, but only the quiet workings of a divine plan of succession, put in place by the Lord Himself.

#### THE LORD IS AT THE HELM

Each day of an Apostle's service is a day of learning and preparing for more responsibility in the future. It takes decades of service for an Apostle to move from the junior chair to the senior chair in the circle. During that time, he gains firsthand experience in each facet of the work of the Church. He also becomes well acquainted with the peoples of the earth, including their histories, cultures, and languages as assignments take him repeatedly across the globe. This process of succession in the leadership of the Church is unique. I know of nothing else like it. That should not surprise us, because this is the Lord's Church. He does not work after the manner of men.

I've served in the Quorum of the Twelve under five previous Presidents of the Church. I have watched each President receive revelation and respond to that revelation. The Lord always has and always will instruct and inspire His prophets. The Lord is at the helm. We who have been ordained

to bear witness of His holy name throughout the world will continue to seek to know His will and follow it.

### KEEP ON THE COVENANT PATH

Now, to each member of the Church I say, keep on the covenant path. Your commitment to follow the Savior by making covenants with Him and then keeping those covenants will open the door to every spiritual blessing and privilege available to men, women, and children everywhere. As a new Presidency, we want to begin with the end in mind. The end for which each of us strives is to be endowed with power in a house of the Lord, sealed as families, faithful to covenants made in a temple that qualify us for the greatest gift of God—that of eternal life. The ordinances of the temple and the covenants you make there are key to strengthening your life, your future marriage and family, and your ability to resist the attacks of the adversary. Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to stay on the covenant path.

Now, if you have stepped off the path, may I invite you with all the hope in my heart to please come back. Whatever your concerns, whatever your challenges, there is a place for you in this, the Lord's Church. You and generations yet unborn will be blessed by your actions now to return to the

# “THE RESTORED GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST . . . HAS THE ANSWERS TO THE MOST COMPELLING AND COMPLICATED CHALLENGES FACING US TODAY.”

covenant path. Our Father in Heaven cherishes His children, and He wants each of us to return home to Him. This is a grand goal of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to help each of us to come back home.

### A FUTURE OF OPTIMISM AND JOY

We live in a most vibrant era in the history of the world. I wake up every morning eager for the adventures of the day. And I hope you feel that same exuberance for the gift of life. Though our world is filled with serious challenges, I am optimistic about the future and feel confident about the fundamental goodness of humankind.

As the Church moves forward, we wish for people everywhere to have the opportunity to hear the positive message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ because we declare that it has the answers to the most compelling and complicated challenges facing us today. I give

you my assurance that regardless of the world's condition and your personal circumstances, you can face the future with optimism and joy if you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel.

To each member of the Church, I express my deep love for you—love that has grown over decades of meeting with you, worshiping with you, and serving you.

I encourage each of us to go forward with faith in Jesus Christ, knowing that He is in charge. This is His work and it's His Church. We are His servants. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will continue to go forward to bless every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. I declare my devotion to God our Eternal Father and to His Son, Jesus Christ. I know Them, love Them, and pledge to serve Them—and you—with every remaining breath of my life. **NE**

*Adapted from a live broadcast from the annex of the Salt Lake Temple and a press conference at the Church Office Building, both held on January 16, 2018.*