

# News of the Church

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## Closed Captioning Added Online to Recent General Conference Videos

By **Melissa Merrill**

Church News and Events

Closed captioning in English has been added to the April 2012 and October 2011 general conference videos posted online at LDS.org. The release of the October video marked the first time that videos on LDS.org have offered closed captioning.

In the past, closed captioning has been offered for the live broadcast on television and satellite, but not on the Church's website. Archived general conference content on LDS.org has included conference videos in American Sign Language (available by selecting ASL from the language drop-down menu), but not everyone who is Deaf or hard of hearing knows or uses ASL, said Christopher Phillips, manager of Disabilities Services for the Church.

Closed captioning, on the other hand, is more widely accessible and can be helpful to those without hearing disabilities as well. Captions also can help make video content more searchable online.

"This improvement will be a benefit to many who struggle with hearing loss, including those who might have lost their hearing later in life and haven't had the opportunity to learn sign language," said Karen Staley, a member of the Church who lives in Maryland and is Deaf. "The captioned videos will help make the gospel more accessible to a large group of people."

As a child, Sister Staley learned to speak without any special assistance and started to read



lips without being conscious of it. When she was six years old, one of her schoolteachers suspected hearing loss and recommended to Karen's parents that they have her hearing checked. Eventually Karen began wearing hearing aids.

Although hearing aids enable Sister Staley to hear many more sounds than she otherwise would, they don't fully correct her hearing. For that reason, it's difficult for her to accurately glean information from video, and she rarely watches TV programs or movies that are not captioned.

When Sister Staley joined the Church in 1998, the local public access channel where she lived in Southern California televised general conference—including captions. And she says that in

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every place that she has lived since, “those organizing the local general conference satellite reception have worked hard to provide a way for members to view the captions at the meetinghouse.” She said she has also appreciated the Church’s providing online transcripts of the general conference talks within a week of the original broadcast.

But now with LDS.org offering captioned video, Sister Staley and her family will be able to watch conference at home.

“I am looking forward to having access to conference videos with closed captioning,” she said. “It will help me to share general conference with my children since we will be able to watch the videos at home, and I will have the ability to lead games such as Conference Squares and encourage the children to pay attention to the talks. In addition, I will be able to more readily incorporate general conference talks into lessons I might give at home or at church.

“The availability of captioned talks will enable English-speaking Deaf and hard-of-hearing members to gain a more complete conference experience,” she continued. “I’m very grateful for, and excited about, this change!”

Bret Barton, digital media producer for the Church, agrees that this change will have positive effects for many.

“The goal is to give as many people as we can access to the prophetic word,” he said. “This project allows a lot more people to have that access.”

Other closed-captioned material from the Church currently includes Mormon Messages on the Mormon Channel on YouTube. ■

## Addiction Recovery Program Calls for Stories of Recovery

In preparation for an Addiction Recovery Program (ARP) website debuting this year, the Church is seeking personal stories of addiction recovery.

Those who decide to share their stories should send an e-mail to [arp@ldschurch.org](mailto:arp@ldschurch.org) containing the following information, which will be kept confidential:

- Full name, age, and gender.
- A photo of yourself (preferred but not required).
- Your affiliation with the Church (membership status).
- A brief description of your addiction or the addiction of your loved one.
- An indication of your willingness to share your story through video, audio, text, or all of the above.
- Your story. Include the consequences of your addiction; a brief description of your life when you were at your lowest point and the circumstances and events you experienced when you knew that you needed help; an explanation about the point at which you experienced healing through Christ and the circumstances and events you experienced when your hope was restored; and a description of your life today and the lessons and blessings you have experienced through forgiveness, repentance, and service. ■

***In preparation for a new website, those who direct the Addiction Recovery Program (meeting shown here) are seeking personal stories of addiction recovery.***



PHOTOGRAPH BY RICK WALLACE