

LDS

EARTH STEWARDSHIP

## 2019-2020 Mid-Year Report





# Letter From the Chair



Dear Friends,

This past year, LDS Earth Stewardship has seen much progress and change. We have continued our efforts to provide worthwhile service projects, such as restoring trails and pulling invasive species at Zion National Park. We have encouraged the conversation of stewardship by sponsoring a conference of LDSSA emerging leaders at Yale University. At the top of our list, however, was our opportunity to have Sister Sharon Eubank, First Counselor of the General Relief Society, speak at our annual Fall Forum. In her talk, she asked us to think about three questions (see page 3). Among these, she shared the story of Moses who saw in a vision the whole of Creation (Moses 7:41). She then asked, "What would move our hearts to swell 'as wide as eternity'?" We were all

inspired to reflect and find our answer. Her three questions have become the foundation of our work this year.

When the pandemic hit, we had to rethink how to approach stewardship. Most of our activities have gone online, and through this avenue, we are finding ways to gather with earth stewards across the world. Through teleconferencing technology, our book club and our Company of Stewards gatherings are giving access to many more people and allowing us to have stewardship discussions in new ways. Spending more time outdoors, many have begun to appreciate the healing that can be found in nature. Our gratitude for this beautiful world and our Creator has grown during this time. The most simple flower or spotting a bird near our homes has given us joy that it did not before. Whereas Moses saw all the Creation and had his heart swell, many of us have experienced a similar effect as our hearts swell in our appreciation for parts of Creation that provide us with refuge, beauty, and restoration.

We have so much for which to be grateful. Our stewardship is our gratitude in action. We invite you to examine this annual report. As you do, we hope that you feel the spirit of our mission.

Thank you.

Brigham Daniels, Board Chair



# Annual Fall Forum



We were so grateful to spend an evening in the White Memorial Chapel in Salt Lake City with Sharon Eubank, First Counselor in the General Relief Society Presidency. Sister Eubank [spoke from her heart](#) with an emphasis on how the environment affects the poor and vulnerable.

After reading some the verses in Moses 7, she asked us to seriously and thoughtfully consider what preparing the earth to be Zion—of one heart and one mind, dwelling in righteousness with no poor among us—has to do with stewardship of the earth. “Are they not linked so inextricably that we can’t do one without caring for the other?” she asked.

She set out three questions for our us to ponder and then requested we return at the next forum to answer:

1. When we waste what others desperately need, what physically happens to unity and our hearts?
2. Why do we feel God in His creations? What do others feel in our own creations?
3. What would move our hearts to swell “as wide as eternity” (Moses 7:41)?

The evening ended with the congregation singing “Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah and an affirmation that the leaders of the Church were aware of and approved of our message. “There is no question: we are stewards of the earth and we care for the earth,” she affirmed. “It is a godly and holy work.”

In addition to hearing from Sister Eubank, the event was an opportunity to highlight those in the community who we feel honor the spirit of earth stewardship. Our 2019 Steward of the Year award was given to Sarah Bateman (see page 8).





# Stewardship Conference at Yale

LDS Earth Stewardship was a proud sponsor of a successful [LDS Student Association conference](#) in October. Over 140 young adult Latter-day Saints from across the East Coast traveled to New Haven, CT, to gather and learn. The beautiful campus of Yale University set the stage for an enjoyable and enlightening experience.

Everyone in attendance participated in a service project, either cleaning up a local park or a local school, and removed 200 pounds of trash in a matter of hours.

The students learned from the keynote speaker, George Handley, and attended a breakout session with Erik Jacobsen, president of Deseret Ranches, who discussed the sustainable practices used by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

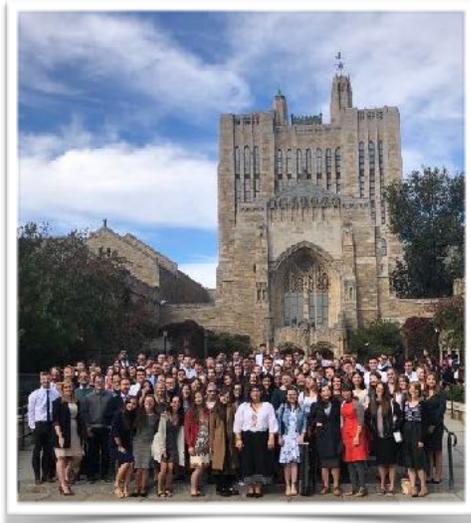
In the evening, Rebecca Bateman—our Executive Director—recounted what Sister Sharon Eubank talked about at our Fall Forum just a couple nights before. The attendees then split into groups to discuss and formulate responses to Sister Eubank's three questions. They summarized their ideas on posters, which were delivered to Sister Eubank after we returned to Salt Lake City.

We were inspired by the hardworking LDSSA leaders that pulled this conference together, and are so grateful that they chose the topic of "Stewardship and Consecration." It was inexpressibly exciting to see so many young, vibrant saints draw the connection between our doctrine and caring for the earth for the first time.

## Stewardship & Consecration



Hosted by the Yale LDSSA  
Friday, October 11-Sunday, October 13





# “Let’s Do Service” Project

As part of a celebration of National Public Lands Day in September, LDS Earth Stewardship joined forces with other stewardship groups for [a service project](#) in beautiful Zion National Park. We helped to remove invasive species, remove roof netting, wash and stack plant tubes, and process native plant seeds. Altogether, the work was the equivalent of one staff employee working four 40-hour weeks!

A highlight of the weekend was a presentation by Nathan Waite, an editor on the Joseph Smith Papers Project and *A Zion Canyon Reader*. Besides being an expert on the topic, Nate is also a native of the area and gave a history of Zion and how it was first “discovered,” named, and re-named.

The weather was perfect for the volunteers to enjoy hard work, good food, and building friendships.





# Every Saint A Steward™

The phrase “Every Saint A Steward” has been a constant in our messaging to encourage members of the Church feel their responsibility in the work of earth stewardship. The hashtag #EverySaintASteward accompanies all of our social media posts as a way to encourage participation from our audience and make our content searchable. We were excited to receive the trademark rights to the term late in 2019.

In coordination with Sister Eubank’s Three Questions, we began sharing the individual stewardship stories of Latter-day saints in [our monthly newsletter](#) and asking each of them to thoughtfully give their answers to Sister Eubank’s Three Questions.

The results have been inspiring. We’ve shared wonderful testimonies of how taking care of the earth is a gospel principle, reached a wider audience, and

## Every Saint A Steward: Jodie Wan's Story



“Every saint a steward” isn’t just a hashtag or a catchphrase; it’s our Saint stewardship stories will be newsletter recipients. Have a story to share? Send an email to [earthsteward@lds.org](mailto:earthsteward@lds.org).

Jodie Wan was born in China but moved to Australia when she was 10 years old. While in Australia, she met the missionaries and was a member of the restored Church. She recently came to the U.S. to seek an MBA at Brigham Young University, building on her undergraduate degrees in renewable energy engineering and finance. She is and passionate about earth stewardship.

### MOTIVATIONS

Wan’s relationship with the natural world is rooted in spirituality. I go to a forest or walk in places with nature. I feel that this God. Without Him, nothing would be here,” she said. “Nature

## Every Saint A Steward: Tēvita's Story



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Tēvita Kōhli and his wife, Elizabeth, both come from multicultural backgrounds. He was born in Tonga, where his parents, joined with his grandparents in West Valley City, UT; she was born in New Zealand. Navigating between Tonga to study anthropology, and he is now a professor of cultural anthropology at BYU-Hawaii.

### MOTIVATIONS

When Tēvita was young, his family had a plantation of taro, so he and his family. Still, when Spencer W. Kimball encouraged every family to have a vegetable garden, they added a vegetable garden to grandpa’s taro plantation, so no matter where he was living,

## Every Saint A Steward: Natalia's Story



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Natalia Jaramilla lives in her hometown of Spring, Texas, a suburb just north of Houston. Her junior year kept her busy as she juggled orchestra, the plays club, and AP classes (English, Environmental Science, Music Theory, and U.S. History). In her free time, she enjoys going CrossFit, playing volleyball, and spending time with her loved ones. Her parents married in El Salvador before immigrating to the United States and Natalia is their beloved only child.

### MOTIVATIONS

Family habits instilled an awareness of environmental impact early in her childhood. “My mom is really big on recycling,” Natalia explained, “so I grew up with the idea that we should reuse and recycle what we had around the house.



# In The Company of Stewards

When the global pandemic hit, we knew we were going to need to change some of our plans for activities. It became more difficult to hold service projects and other gatherings, even outdoors. We decided to put technology to use and established a bi-weekly Zoom gathering in which we could share our thoughts and ideas about what stewardship means to us and how to continue our efforts in caring for Creation even when the world was in turmoil.

We likened our gathering to a company of pioneers who would circle their wagons for the night and join together as a community. We, like the Mormon Pioneers who crossed the wilderness and accomplished great works by doing hard things, aimed to create a space for building relationships and having uplifting conversations. We became a company of stewards.

We've consistently had between 15 and 30 at each gathering, with people joining from across the United States and across the world in places like Germany, Samoa, and Australia. Volunteer discussion leaders have offered their diverse talents and

interests to help us explore a variety of topics, both spiritual and practical.

It has proven to be a success and an enjoyable way to connect with earth stewards across the world.





## Earth Steward of the Year Award

At our Fall Forum, we presented our [Earth Steward of the Year award](#) to Sarah Bateman of Orem, Utah.

Sarah was honored for her leadership and community building within various organizations, including the UVU Sustainability Committee, Utah Valley Clean Air Task Force, Orem Bicycle Alliance, Utah Recycling Alliance, and Feast Utah.

Sarah's attitude of patience, love, and persistence has led her to success in creating positive relationships that honor the true spirit of stewardship.



## Book Club Discussions



Every two months, our book group selects a work that will spark conversation about our relationship with nature.

Over the past year, we read and discussed *Undaunted Courage* by Stephen E. Ambrose; *Drawdown* by Paul Hawken; *This Changes Everything* by Naomi Klein; *Walkable City Rules* by Jeff Speck; *The Emerald Mile* by Kevin Fedarko; and *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt.

We're excited that we've seen an increase in the number of people participating. Holding our discussions on Zoom has allowed us to reach a wider audience. We currently have 67 members on [Goodreads](#).



# Growth

LDSES has a social media presence on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). With a more targeted approach to our social media posts and regular newsletters, we saw an increase in those who are following our efforts (as shown in the lower graph noting our followers in 2017, 2018, and 2019).

We are looking forward to implementing new ideas to grow our numbers exponentially in the future.

As of June 2020:



1513 newsletter subscribers



3225 followers



1045 followers



729 followers



# Our Board and Staff

Our Board of Directors is an energized group of individuals with a wide range of experiences and ideas brought together by a shared value of earth stewardship.

*L-R, top to bottom:* Brigham Daniels, Ben Abbott, Celeste Maloy, Christopher Oscarson, Darren Hawkins, Jared Meek, Merikay Smith, Peter Ashcroft, Shannon Ellsworth. and James Holtkamp



Day-to-day operations are in the hands of our Executive Director, Rebecca Bateman, and her assistant, Carlee Reber.

