

A CALL TO A SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

By now many of you are aware that the Lord has called his covenant people to gather in a solemn assembly in September. If you were not aware, here is a portion of the communication shared in June by the CRE Chairman and Coordinating Council conveying this call:

It is our testimony that the call for a Solemn Assembly has been so directed by the Lord, and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

- We believe this call to assemble together is for all people, of all ages, in harmony with the passages in *Joel, 2:16-17*.
- We believe this call to assemble is for all who are part of this gospel founded in 1830, and fully reorganized again in 1860.
- We believe this call to assemble is for all who are willing to repent and come unto Jesus Christ.
- We believe this call to assemble is for all who will share with a broken heart and a contrite spirit (D&C 17:7b).
- We believe this call to assemble is for all who will seek for God's purpose in their life, and have a desire to 'spread the gospel of the kingdom unto all nations' before the end shall come.

At the 2020 Conference of Restoration Elders, the elders unanimously approved a resolution supporting the call for a solemn assembly, and a resolution that the dates for the solemn assembly would be September 25-28. At this time, the core date for the solemn assembly will be Sunday, September 27, with Saturday, September 26, being a day of preparation. Specifics concerning those dates, as well as anything that might take place September 25 or 28, are under prayerful consideration at this time and will be shared as they are forth coming.

The elders, as part of the resolution supporting the call for a solemn assembly, directed the Conference to provide on-demand meetings and instruction to regions and branches concerning the solemn assembly. In keeping with this direction, this booklet of 60 days of preparation has been prepared and any region or branch wanting to meet concerning the assembly should email the CRE at crecoordcouncil@gmail.com, or call (816) 836-3421.

The leadership for the planning and conducting of the solemn assembly will be provided by a presiding leadership team consisting of the following three priesthood members:

- Seventy Richard Neill
- High Priest Steve Bohall
- High Priest Marlin Guin

An advisory team of supportive priesthood will be identified to assist the presiding leadership team with planning and carrying out assignments as identified. In addition to the advisory team, the CRE coordinating council will also be available to support the planning and the implementation of needed action steps.

As the presiding team and the advisory groups move forward with their planning and work, details concerning the preparation for the solemn assembly will be shared as they become available. For instance, we will be enlisting the Aaronic priesthood to have men of this order support the Presiding team to ensure things are done in order and that the people assembled are comfortable.

For information about the “Solemn Assembly,” what it is, and its purpose, we would direct you to the review the materials contained on the Conference of Restoration Elders website, www.eldersconference.org. We would also refer you to the last issue of the Tidings of Zion, Issue #131. In that issue you will find the full testimony of the call for a solemn assembly and an excellent article on the topic of what a solemn assembly is. The following is an excerpt of that article:

Solemn Assemblies of God’s People

by Elder Michael Brown

Our Heavenly Father has always wanted the Saints to enter His presence, and He has desired to dwell among them. Unfortunately, God’s covenant people have historically strayed from Him and gone after other gods in Egypt or Babylon (the things of the world). In light of this condition among the Saints today, there is currently consideration of the need for the Lord’s people to meet in solemn assembly, and I have been invited by leaders of the Conference and pastors within the Restoration to write on the subject of solemn assemblies. Most of us would agree that there is a great need in the church for us to do this. However, there are many differing ideas and statements made about what a solemn assembly is and what the purpose of a gathering like that would be. In reviewing scripture, there are a few points and thoughts to consider in helping us to have a better understanding of solemn assemblies.

What is a solemn assembly?

In simple terms, a solemn assembly is the gathering of the Lord’s people in humility and contrition to confess and repent of their sins, to soften their hearts, and to renew their faith and obedience toward God. A solemn assembly of the Lord’s people is not a focus on what we are doing—but on laying everything down before the Lord. Solemn assemblies historically have been called to draw the people’s attention back to their God and to repent from severe moral and spiritual decline. Because the Lord’s people have, over a period of time, strayed from Him and will not call upon His holy name, God moves upon prophets and individuals by the Holy Ghost to address the people that they must needs repent or be destroyed.

This warning is usually in the midst of God’s judgments that were already coming upon them—when they would be more likely to listen. Solemn assemblies are an acknowledgement of sins to be collectively confessed and forsaken with the intent to repent from all matters that have contributed to the righteous judgment of God. Every Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper should be a “solemn assembly” for the branch as well as the church as a whole. This is one reason why it was agreed that the whole church would set aside the first Sunday of each month for this Sacrament to humbly repent and remember the Lord Jesus Christ together.

Purpose for a solemn assembly

The Lord’s admonition given to the Church in June of 1833 in Section 92:1d-f rings very loud and clear to our ears today. They had been disobedient and found themselves in difficulties in the land of Zion. The Lord specifically gives the reason for His desire that they call a solemn assembly when He says: *“But, behold, verily I say unto you, There are many who have been ordained among you, whom I have called, but few of them are chosen: they who are not chosen have sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noonday; **and for this cause**, I gave unto you a commandment, that you should call your solemn assembly; that your fastings and mournings might come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, which is, by interpretation, the Creator of the first day, the beginning and the end.”* The words “fastings and mournings” can be interpreted to us as humility and prayers of repentance. Notice the strong warning that they had “sinned a very grievous sin”—hence the need for a “solemn” or serious and focused assembly to collectively repent as a people before the Lord. We, too, can honestly say that we are “walking in darkness at noonday” because in the midst of the fullness of the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we know not what to do because of disobedience and carelessness. This is a grievous sin.