

Missionaries Serving in Vernonia

efforts. “They are here to help people who are interested in learning more about the Mormon Church, and also to assist people who might need help in the community, because we do both things,” explains Nebergall about the project. “The sisters are the ones on the ground talking to people. My job is to support them in that role.”

The sister missionaries have generally been serving in Vernonia for 12 week assignments and then rotating to a new community, so every six weeks one of the sisters could change; Sister Bonzo has been called to stay in Vernonia for longer.

“Missionary work is an integral part of the Church of Latter Day Saints,” says Nebergall. He says Mormon missionaries have several responsibilities when they are placed in a community: help the members of the church be better members, introduce the principles and doctrines of the Mormon faith to other people who might be interested, and to help everyone they meet. “We take that last part very literally.”

The sister missionaries do want to help local Vernonians who can use their service. Sister Bonzo and Sister Alvey say they have done some painting, some yard work, helped with farm animals, and helped with moving while in Vernonia, and are always looking for other ways to serve in the community. “Our mission is definitely a learning experience,” says Sister Alvey. “We get to learn from all the different people we meet and from the different places we go to serve. Sometimes the people we meet are what we need to grow, spiritually and as people. I’ve definitely seen that during my mission – growing from different trials, but they’ve helped me.”

“We serve other people spiritually but we also help ourselves as well, to learn and grow as people and as children of God,” says Sister Bonzo. “It’s a great experience and I really enjoy serving on a mission.”

There are some restrictions on what the sister missionaries can and can’t do: they can do basic yard work, gardening and weeding, stacking fire wood, raking and clearing brush, and cleaning or helping organize. They cannot use any type of power tools, including lawn mowers or weed wackers, or work on ladders or roofs. “Their safety is always of primary concern for us,” says Nebergall. He adds that they also cannot watch children.

Anyone looking for assistance from the sister missionaries should contact them directly to schedule service. Nebergall says if someone needs help with a larger project beyond the scope and restrictions of the sisters, the Mormon Church is always willing to try and help. “They can contact me and I can get help from other resources in our branch,” says Nebergall. “We can’t do structural things or things that would need to be inspected. But if there is an older person or a disabled person in the community that needs some help with a project – mowing their lawn, cleaning out their gutters – as a branch we’re here to help. It’s not an inexhaustible supply of yard maintenance, but we can help.”

Nebergall explained how Mormon missionaries are selected and placed in communities. Young men who are 18 or older, and young women who are at least 19, can express interest and apply to be sent on a mission. A leader in the church then reviews each individual application and makes an assignment to a mission area; Vernonia is located in the Oregon Salem Mission. Nebergall says Mormon missionaries can be called to almost anywhere in the world; a young man from Vernonia just returned from a mission in Thailand, Sister Alvey has friends serving in Argentina and Italy, and Sister Bonzo has friends who have served in Russia, South America, and Canada.

Once a missionary has received their assignment they are sent for two weeks of training, to either Provo, Utah if they are being sent somewhere English speaking, or to a training center in the part of the world where they have been assigned. “At the training center they receive basic instruction about how to be a missionary where they are going, and then they are sent to their mission home, which for us is Salem,” explains Nebergall. “From there they are given a specific assignment of where they are going to serve.”

“There’s always a reason why we are placed where we are,” says Sister Bonzo. “That’s been a really great thing to see as we’ve been serving. We might think, ‘Why am I in this area to serve? Who am I suppose to help? What does the Lord want me to do here?’ And then the longer we’re here and as we help people do things, we see what it was we were suppose to do. These people

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needed us, or maybe I needed these experiences.”

Nebergall says specific assignments can last anywhere from six weeks up to 36 weeks, sometimes even longer.

There are also senior missionaries, usually older married couples, who also serve, but for longer periods of time in one location. Their assignments can last from 18 months to two years. Vernonia had a missionary couple serving here several years ago, the Levesques, who stayed in the community for two years.

Nebergall says that if a community member wants to know more about the history of the Mormon Church or about their own family history, (because the Mormon Church as an organization has access to a lot of genealogy records) the local church branch can help with that. “That’s not really what the sisters are here for,” explains Nebergall. “If people have more in depth questions, we’re always happy to talk with them. The sister missionaries are here to answer simple questions about what we believe.”

“We love helping others through service, because that’s what Christ would do – he would help others,” says Sister Bonzo. “We try to help those that need it most, but we will help everyone, because we love everyone.”

You can reach the sister missionaries serving Vernonia at (503) 990-0512. For more information about the Vernonia Branch of the LDS Church and their mission program contact Tim Nebergall at (971) 248-6585.

Vernonia City Council Meetings and Closures

City Council Meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm:
Monday, August 6, 2018
Monday, August 20, 2018

City Closures are scheduled for:
Noon on Friday, August 3, 2018
Vernonia Friendship Jamboree
Monday, September 3, 2018
Labor Day Holiday

Dates and times subject to change

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