

Open House plann

1980

On Dec. 21, 1980, a major accomplishment was recorded by local members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). On that special Sunday, services were held in the newly completed first phase of a three-phase building.

Due to community interest concerning the growing Mormon faith in Montgomery County, a special "Open House" will be held from 2 to 6 p.m. Sunday. The new chapel is located on LaGrange Road, which is just north of Sugar Creek on U.S. 136W.

Although from the outside the new chapel may appear plain, inside, visitors will see otherwise. During the "Open House" tour, guests will be treated to special displays depicting important tenets of the Mormon faith, such as food storage, genealogical research and family unity. There will also be a display showing the proposed blueprints for Phase II, which are on the drawing board.

Due to the increased interest and to right any misconceptions that might be had about the Mormon faith, following are a few facts about Mormons in Montgomery County and worldwide:

- The name "Mormon" is a nickname. The official name of the Mormon Church is: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The nickname is derived from their belief in the "Book of Mormon" as a volume of scripture. Together with the Bible, the Book of Mormon serves as an undeniable witness of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon is a history of the ancestors of the American Indians. It tells of Christ's visit to America after his resurrection as mentioned in John 10:16 in the Bible. It details his teaching among the American people as well as the origin of the American Indians. It covers a period of time from 600 B.C. to 420 A.D.

The Mormon Church has more than 4.5 million members in 60 countries around the world. Locally more than 300 Montgomery County residents have been

Mormons in the past 10 years. It is one of the largest and fastest growing churches in the world, doubling its membership in the last 15 years alone.

- Mormons don't have paid ministers. Mormons don't just attend church, they are the church. Each ward or branch (congregation) is lead by a bishop or branch president, who might be a businessman, a teacher, a factory worker or a farmer. Locally, Thomas L. Savoldi, an engineering supervisor at R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., is the branch president. Extensive leadership training is given to church leaders who in turn call other members to serve as Sunday School teachers, youth advisors or music leaders.

- Mormon missionaries do not get paid; do not ask for offerings; and are not trying to raise money. All young men and women in the church are encouraged to save their own money in preparation for a two-year mission. During their mission, they dedicate themselves to teaching families about the importance of the Savior. There are two young men and two young women serving the residents of Montgomery County.

- All church buildings are paid in full before they are used. At any given moment, more than 600 building projects are under construction. These include chapels, temples, educational facilities, etc. There are approximately 6,000 church buildings worldwide.

- Mormons believe families are the most important institution on earth. Mormons have one of the lowest divorce rates in the world. Each Monday night is "Family Home Evening" for Mormons. This is a special night set aside for families to be together for fun and gospel instruction. Due to the success of the "Family Home Evening" program, Mormons have very little drug abuse, immorality or crime among their youth. Mormons believe the family unit will continue after this life so they strive to promote family unity.

- Mormons store a "year's