

President Jeffrey R. Holland

December 3, 1940 ~ December 27, 2025

“My total responsibility is to bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ”

With heavy hearts, we announce that President Jeffrey R. Holland, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, died on Saturday, December 27, 2025, at approximately 3:15 a.m. MST from complications associated with kidney disease, while surrounded by his family. He was 85.

President Holland became an Apostle on June 23, 1994. At the time, he was serving as a General Authority Seventy (1989–1994). Prior to full-time Church service, President Holland was president of Brigham Young University (1980–1989), Commissioner of the Church Educational System (1976–1980) and dean of BYU’s College of Religious Education (1974–1976). He received his bachelor of English and master of religious education degrees from BYU. He also obtained master and doctor of philosophy degrees in American studies from Yale.

“I have loved President Holland since those early days [as a young missionary],” said Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who was companion to President Holland during the duo’s mission to England in the early 1960s. Elder Cook said even then he noticed the 20-year-old Elder Holland’s unique way with words. He had a “fabulous” talent for teaching the gospel, along with “enormous spiritual depth,” Elder Cook said. “He was extremely good then, and there [was] nobody better in the Church at teaching.”

President Holland was preceded in death by his wife, Patricia Terry, who passed away on July 20, 2023. He is survived by their three children, 13 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

Reared in a Home Where He Was Always Loved

Meeting President Holland for the first time was like meeting someone you had known all your life. You received a firm handshake, a hearty slap on the back, a warm, engaging smile and an enthusiastic yet sincere “How are you?”

His genuine love for others was just one of the qualities that made this Apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints so effective in proclaiming the gospel of the Son of God. President Holland “has a deep spirituality coupled with an exceptional sensitivity. … [He is] always building people and lifting people and drawing people to him,” President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency of the Church once observed. “He has the marvelous capacity to make people feel that they are his very best friends.”

Born in St. George, Utah, on December 3, 1940, to Frank D. and Alice Bentley Holland, President Holland described his boyhood as a sweet, peaceful time in a small community where everyone knew each other. “I couldn’t have gotten in trouble in that town if I’d wanted to. My mother would have known before I ever got home,” he once

quipped.

President Holland's home was a place where humor and genuine affection for others were paramount. "I was always loved. But I was loved in a way that no child could have ever, ever asked for more," he said.

That love for people and life translated into a passion for sports in young Jeffrey's life. He played on every kind of team that was assembled in St. George, was a member of Dixie High School's state championship football and baseball teams, and lettered in football, basketball, track and baseball.

"The central joy of my life while I was growing up was sports," President Holland said. "I played on every kind of team that could have been assembled."

Building a Family with Patricia Terry

But his mind wasn't so focused on sports that he didn't notice Patricia Terry cheering on the sidelines. The two started dating in high school and were married on June 7, 1963. Theirs was a unique relationship that helped shape and build each of them in their various responsibilities in the Church.

Patricia Holland was an accomplished vocalist, author and speaker. Yet President Holland said her primary focus was always her family — a fact especially important while raising three teenagers on the BYU campus during President Holland's busy time as university president.

"I give Pat all the credit on the home front," said President Holland, who authored more than a dozen books — including two with Pat. "We were pretty busy, pretty early in our lives and always felt we were getting asked to do things quite a few years before we were old enough or smart enough or wise enough to do it. … She really worked at making [life] normal [for our children and] worked very hard at underscoring what families ought to do and what families ought to have and what parents ought to be for their children. … I stand in slack-jawed, wide-eyed admiration that she would just march off the end of any diving board for me, for the Church, for the Lord, for her kids. She's always done that."

The same could be said for President Holland, who carefully planned time with his three children, Matthew, Mary Alice and David. Matt said his "fondest memories from childhood are the dinner table. Every night was a kind of family home evening filled with laughter, compliments, encouragement, interesting conversation, testimony, teaching and expressions of love. You always knew Dad was happiest when he was at home with his family."

President Holland said his approach to good parenting was homegrown and fundamental. "If you've got the love of the Lord in your life, if you know that there's meaning and purpose to life and forgiveness is real and love is the most powerful force in the universe — it's a lot easier to be happy and create an environment where other people can be happy."

A Gentleman, a Scholar, a Diplomat — and Always a Teacher

His fervent, unyielding faith first blossomed when he served a mission for the Church to England at age 19. He called his mission the turning point in his life, where he nourished his belief in God and began an intense study of and appreciation for the Book of Mormon. As a result, President Holland said his mission "either substantiated or dramatically changed — in a good way — every goal, feeling or aspiration that I ever had" — among them, the decision later on to pursue a career in teaching instead of studying medicine when he returned home to Utah.

President Holland subsequently received master's and doctorate degrees in American studies from Yale University. After graduation, President Holland passed up many lucrative opportunities, instead opting to return to the Church Educational System and teach what he loved best — the gospel of Jesus Christ. Teaching was not what he did — it was who he was.

One of President Holland's mission presidents, Elder Marion D. Hanks (1921–2011), said, "Jeffrey Holland is by nature a teacher. He is a gentleman, a scholar, and a diplomat — but in all those things he is a teacher."

Little did President Holland know that his teaching acumen would be the genesis for future assignments in the Church. His brother Dennis said, "All Jeff ever wanted to do was teach the gospel to students in a classroom. I was

always sure that the Lord had the same goal in mind for him, but that the size of the classroom and the number of students were on a much grander scale than he was envisioning."

President Holland's classroom expanded when he became Commissioner of the Church Educational System in 1976 and then was appointed as the ninth president of Brigham Young University in 1980. As president, he led a $100,000,000 fundraising campaign, helped the school celebrate and deal with athletic successes (including the BYU football team's 1984 national championship), and won the respect of many as he assisted in assuaging strong protests against the building of the BYU Jerusalem Center (completed in 1989).

President Holland served as president of the American Association of Presidents of Independent Colleges and Universities, on the board of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and as a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's President's Commission. For his work in improving understanding between Christians and Jews he was given the "Torch of Liberty" award by the Anti■Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith. He also served on the governing boards of several civic and business■related corporations.

Called to Be a Special Witness of Christ

President Holland became a General Authority Seventy in 1989 and was extended a lifelong call as an Apostle of Jesus Christ five years later. Speaking at a press conference on Temple Square the same day he became an Apostle, President Holland described the suddenness of the call to devote the remainder of his days to full-time service in the cause of Christ.

"The last few hours have been nearly unbearable," he said on June 23, 1994. "I received this call at 7:30 this morning. … President [Howard W.] Hunter issued the call, he conducted the business at the temple, he gave me my instructions, and he gave me my blessing. He did it all. How deeply moving his counsel and guidance and blessing to me were. … My chief responsibility now, and my primary responsibility — in a sense, my total responsibility — is to bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. As inadequate as I feel, it is the most pleasant and most rewarding and most thrilling assignment a man can have in this world. I pledge my life to this effort."

Pat, ever his encourager, said at the same press conference that President Holland's faith in Jesus Christ would be his greatest asset as an Apostle.

"Nobody but [me] knows the kind of faith that this man has. It is pure," she told the assembled journalists. "He is a humble servant of the Lord Jesus Christ."

And that is what President Holland was for the remaining decades of his life. As all Apostles do, he traveled the world. This included the unusual assignment to direct the affairs of the Church in Chile for two years (2002–2004). "We absolutely fell in love with Chile and the Chilean people and wept and sobbed as we left," he said. "That's the way it is in the Church. It's the people, it's the faith, it's the spiritual experience and it's the attachment you get from sacrificing for others."

President Holland's many other assignments included being partner to President Russell M. Nelson on the prophet's first major trip as leader of the Church in 2018 — an 11-day journey to eight cities in Europe, Africa and Asia. And in November 2023, he became Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles after the death of President M. Russell Ballard. When President Nelson died, President Holland became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

President Holland graced Christ's charge to minister "before kings and rulers" (Doctrine and Covenants 1:23) with a charming personal touch. For example, he was invited several times by Baroness Emma Nicholson (a member of the U.K. House of Lords and founder and chair of the AMAR Foundation) to come to Windsor Castle in London to discuss how to help modern-day refugees rise above their circumstances. The baroness said she enjoyed discussing theology with President Holland because "he's a teacher" and such dialogue was an "incredibly important" part of their work together.

Latter-day Saints will remember President Holland's many riveting, eloquent — and always hopeful — sermons. He brought light to those struggling in the dark uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic. He empathized with those who wrestle with mental illness, even opening up about an unanticipated "psychic blow" in his own life. He spoke

pointedly to the peace that anyone in the world can find in the Book of Mormon. And, fittingly, some of his final public remarks focused on hope in Christ.

“Press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men,” President Holland said to young adults worldwide in January 2023, quoting a Book of Mormon scripture. “That brightness of hope, born of love for God and all men — that’s what we want for every one of you in the new year. Accompanying that bright hope will be the undeniable whisper that God loves you, that Christ is your Advocate, that the gospel is true. Its brightness will remind you that in the gospel there is always, every day, every hour, a new chance, a new life, a new year. What a miracle! What a gift! And because of Christ’s gift, the best things in life are ours if we steadfastly keep believing and keep trying and keep hoping.”

Whatever his messages of hope shared over a quarter century as an Apostle, each centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“Life will challenge you. Difficulties will come. Heartbreaks will strike,” President Holland taught his social media followers just after the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020. “So, wherever you are going, make your way to Christ first. Make your covenants with Him and keep them as you journey on.”

Perhaps President Holland’s motivation to engage so personally and personably with everyone — whether in person, at the pulpit, or through social media — can be found in what was his favorite scripture, Doctrine and Covenants 81:5: “Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.”

President Holland believed apathy and misperceiving God’s gifts were the greatest challenges of our day. Because of this he taught others to “be prayerful, be humble, be obedient, seek His will and His way and you’ll know enough to take the next steps out to the edge of the light, maybe even a step or two into the darkness, and then you’ll find that the light comes for the next step.”

As he led people step-by-step into the light of the gospel, President Holland became the kind of teacher described by Henry Adams, who wrote, “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”

You can send condolences to sendcondolences@churchofjesuschrist.org.