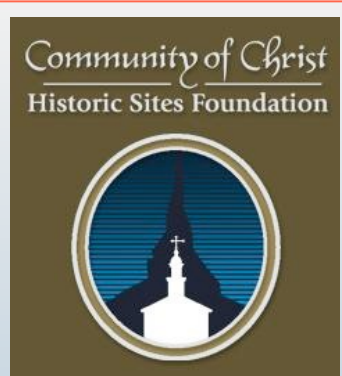
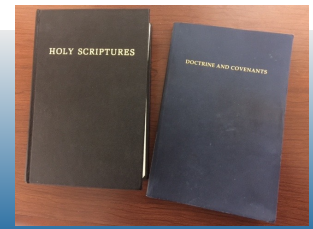


# THE FORUM

Foundation plays key role in new church history team. P. 6



*Preserving & Sharing Church Heritage*

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## Bryant Finds a New Call in an Old Place: Kirtland



By Greg Clark  
You could call him a history lover. You could call him a religious convert.

You could call him a youth advocate, a military veteran, a bridge-builder.

You'd be right in all cases.

Seth Bryant, the new site director at the Kirtland Temple in Ohio, brings traits from all five roles to the position he assumed January 1.

Those qualities are what leaders say will make him a good fit. The opportunity, however, surprised Bryant.

He said the invi-

*Seth Bryant has taken the reins as the site director.*

*See Bryant, page 7*

## Foundation Tour Prepares to Embark on a Historic Sites Trip across the Pond

By Greg Clark

For former Apostle Andrew Bolton, May's trip to England and Wales won't be just a tour; it will be a pilgrimage.

For Barbara Walden, executive director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, it will be a chance to "walk the paths once journeyed by the first missionaries to Great Britain 180 years ago and learn the stories behind the people they encountered."

*See Tour, page 6*

## Tour to England, Wales at a Glance

**What:** Trip to England and Wales will highlight places in missionary history, Dunfield House, Stonehenge, Windsor Castle, Roman Baths, London, and more.

**When:** May 2-11, 2017.

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We would like to feature your object and story in our online exhibit.

And you'll enjoy seeing what other folks contribute by telling their piece of the story.

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# Foundation's Support Aids History Team

By Greg Clark

Community of Christ's new Church History and Sacred Story Team is steeped in members linked in history and the historic sites of the Restoration.

The team, announced in January, includes three volunteer historians: Barbara Walden, David Howlett, and Ron Romig.

Walden is a former site director at the Kirtland Temple in Ohio and currently serves as executive director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. Howlett has spent parts of several years as an intern, fellow, and instructor in Kirtland. He wrote

on the site for his doctoral dissertation. Romig served several years as the archivist at International Headquarters in Independence, Missouri. Then he went to Kirtland for several years as the site director, retiring January 1.

Also on the team, Walden said, are Peter Judd, former member of the Community of Christ First Presidency and president of the John Whitmer Historical Association; John-Charles Duffy, a summer instructor at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois; and Rachel Killebrew, current Community of Christ archivist and a board

member of the John Whitmer Historical Association.

Walden said Judd would focus on oral histories, Duffy on education and worship resources, and Killebrew on archival projects. Apostle Lachlan Mackay, a former director at the Joseph Smith Historic Site, will serve as team lead.

A Community of Christ announcement said the team will write articles for the *Herald* magazine and website, encourage exploration of international history, and produce reports for the First Presidency. The team can be reached at [historian@CofChrist.org](mailto:historian@CofChrist.org).

## Tour

*Continued from Page 1*

For Karen Graham Wade, board president, it's a chance to honor the foundation's goal of preserving and sharing church heritage. "By visiting sites in Great Britain that are interwoven with our rich history, we are fulfilling that mission to understand and share with others the stories of our British forebears."

No matter your viewpoint, the foundation-sponsored trip is certain to broaden your appreciation for church heritage while providing an opportunity to see some of the most renowned history locations in the British Isles.

The tour itself will be historic. Previously, all foundation-sponsored tours focused on sites in the USA. This will be the first to spread its wings overseas.

Participants will be fortunate to have three expert guides. Bolton grew up in the British Isles, as did Peter Judd, a former member of the First Presidency. Peter

Fagg has a superb knowledge of the early Latter Day Saint sites and the stories that go with them.

Bolton points out that in addition to enjoying and learning about the sites, participants will benefit spiritually.

"If a person just travels to see the sites, they go as tourists. A pilgrim is different. A pilgrim goes on two journeys. One is geo-

graphical/historical, seeing places and hearing stories. The other journey is an inner journey, a spiritual journey. We hope people will be coming as pilgrims, happy to hear, see, feel, and be touched in their souls by testimonies of today and yesteryear while being challenged and encouraged in their discipleship."



*The tour in England, which will include this chapel, will offer history buffs a broadened perspective of church heritage.*

# Bryant

*Continued from Page 1*

tation unfolded at a Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation board meeting also attended by Lachlan Mackay, then director of historic sites for the church.

“I found out that Ron Romig was retiring,” Bryant said. “I was seated next to Lach, and said, ‘Who do you have to replace him?’ And Lach said, ‘You.’”

“I was really excited. I’d wanted to do this a long time. But I didn’t expect to be asked because I’d been [working for Community of Christ] in Utah only short of three years. This was really my dream job.”

Bryant, 36, brings a special perspective to the position because he grew up in the Mormon church. He didn’t join Community of Christ until 2008 after an experience he had while doing research on the church as part of a master’s project in school. As part of his project work, he visited a Community of Christ congregation.

“My very first Sunday, there was a woman praying the blessing on Communion, and I had a profound spiritual experience that opened my eyes.”

That led to conversion, eventual ordination as a seventy, and then church employment as a missional consultant and expansion minister in Utah. This all followed 11 years in the military, three as a Navy chaplain. He served with a Marines unit in Afghanistan from 2013-2014.

Seth views his split religious history as a blessing, but he understands it occasionally could result in difficulties.

“There’s the potential it could cause a problem if I’m viewed [by visitors] as apostate. But more often it helps me to understand where guests are coming from and to try to bridge the culture and language of the two traditions. I just want to have a dialogue. It’s healing to be part of bridging old divisions and seeing people come together.”

Foundation Executive Director Barbara Walden calls Bryant a fantastic choice as Kirtland’s director. “His passion for history, his management experience, his curious and enthusiastic nature, and his overall spirit all make him a wonderful fit for the family, staff, and every visitor that walks through the door.

“He could be a wonderful bridge-builder because...he’ll have a greater understanding of where LDS friends are coming from when they walk through the door of the Visitor Center.”

Walden said she met Bryant in 2009, when she was director of the Kirtland Temple and he was leading a class there. “He had a contagious spirit about



*Seth and Jenn Bryant paused to make a photographic memory on their first trip to Kirtland.*

him, and the class loved him. You can feel that he loves his job.”

Bryant remembers the first time he set foot on the Kirtland grounds. He and his wife, Jenn, were traveling to a new Army base in Virginia, and they drove through Kirtland on the way.

“I’ve always been interested in church history, so I was overwhelmed to be on the grounds and see the Temple. It was a powerful experience and a sacred space.”

He still felt that way last fall, when we began training with Romig.

“We overlapped for a few weeks when we first got

*See Bryant, page 8*

## Make a Donation, Aid Preservation

*Sharing the sacred story and telling about our church heritage is an honor and a responsibility.*

*To help the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation fulfill that mission, call (217) 453-2246 to make a donation.*

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*You also can donate at [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org).*

## Volunteers Needed

*To volunteer at a historic site supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, call Lachlan Mackay at (217) 453-2246 or e-mail him at [lmackay@CofChrist.org](mailto:lmackay@CofChrist.org).*

## Community of Christ Historic Sites Founda- tion

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## Bryant

*Continued from Page 7*

here. I did training, just like any intern. Ron and I would go on tours, and he would give me feedback.”

Before starting officially, Bryant, had to do one more thing: resign his position on the foundation board to avoid potential conflicts of interest. That was hard because “I am passionate about preserving and sharing our historical heritage. Our history and historic sites provide roots to both our identity and vision for the church. As such they should be celebrated and cherished.”

He carries that same passion into his new position. Now that he feels the “humbling weight” of being in charge, he appreciates how his background—experience

in both faiths, a love of history, and a military career—prepared him.

“Being a staff officer taught me to have a mission, a vision, and to implement it. It really, in a lot of ways, prepared me for this position, because there are a lot of moving parts with the historic sites.”

One moving part is the ability to connect with young visitors.

“I hope to make the museum more interactive and accessible to children and to make church history come alive for our youth,” he said.

He’s already working with two of his children, 4-year-old Danny and 10-year-old Bekah.

“I call Danny my junior Temple ranger. He’ll go on tours with me. Bekah just turned 10. She goes, too.”

## How to Help Preserve and Share Heritage

People give to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation for many reasons.

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