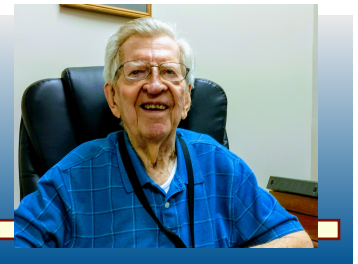


# THE FORUM

**Missing Him**  
Foundation  
mourns passing  
of Ken Stobaugh.  
Page 2



Community of Christ  
Historic Sites Foundation



*Preserving & Sharing  
Church Heritage*

## To Make a Donation

Preserving and sharing church heritage and telling the sacred story is both a privilege and a responsibility.

To give to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, call (217) 453-2246.

An alternative is to send donations to P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354. You also can give at [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org/donate](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org/donate).

## On the Web

To stay up to date with foundation events, view striking photos, and learn contact information, visit [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org).

## Electronic Forum

If you want *The Forum* electronically, visit [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org).

## Visit Us on Facebook and Instagram

The social network is a big hit with many historic-site fans. Visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com) to learn more.



*Steve Smith is again opening doors for ministry at Liberty Hall. (Gary Rees photo)*

## HE'S BACK!

By Greg Clark

This just wasn't the way Steve Smith envisioned it.

But then, he's not alone. In mid-winter, not many foresaw the life-changing events caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Smith, the virus put the brakes on a fairy-tale beginning to his second stint as site director at Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa.

Well, sort of.

It seems that not much slows this guy.

Though Liberty Hall, like the other properties supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, closed in mid-March, Smith has remained busy. He's showing the same energy that made him so popular in his first stint in 2011—2012. That term ended because of the lure of children and grandchildren in the Seattle, Washington area.

But now he's back, and his vision for the former home of church President Joseph

*See Steve Smith on page 8*

## *COVID-19's Summer of Discontent Turns Busy*

By Greg Clark

Mid-March arrived. Trees began to leaf out. Grass began to grow. And flowers began to bloom.

So did the COVID-19 pandemic.

Precautions forced closure of all proper-

ties supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. At first, people hoped the shutdown would be brief. But weeks stretched into months, swallowing the

*See Busy Times on page 6*



# Tributes Abound after Passing of Ken Stobaugh

By Greg Clark

First and foremost, Ken Stobaugh will be remembered as a devoted disciple of Jesus.

That discipleship was multifaceted. Before his death June 29 at age 96, he expressed his love of God in ways that touched people, provided enlightenment, and focused on service.

Some will remember him as a dedicated volunteer, serving regularly with the Daily Prayer for Peace at the Temple in Independence, Missouri. Others will remember his presence in congregational life and more than 33 years spent in full-time ministry.

Still others will recall the impact he had on the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation and his role in preserving and promoting church history. Barbara Walden, the foundation's executive director, observed:

"Ken was a legend in the church history community. In his role as the director of the Community of Christ historic sites, a position he served in for 25 years, Ken courageously transformed the public interpretation of church history.... He was literally the voice of historic sites as he narrated the orientation movies/slideshows at the Joseph Smith Historic Site and Kirtland Temple visitor centers for well over a decade.

"Ken valued historical accuracy and an honest interpretation of the people

and events of the past. Ken did not shy away from the shadows and blemishes of church history; rather he faced them head-on and asked, 'What can we learn from the mistakes of the past?'"

His contributions went beyond mere words. During his tenure, a visitor center was built at the Joseph Smith

but his legacy and passion for preserving the past lives on in the generations of visitors, staff, and young-adult interns who had the privilege to know him and/or serve at his side."

Tributes to Ken poured in after his death, many appearing on Facebook. Among them:

**Dick and Barbara Howard:** "Blessings of love and peace to all who love and miss this faithful servant."

**Lisa Joy Tomey:** "An excellent and faithful servant, father, and friend."

**GINNY MILLER:** "We will miss his kindness and comforting presence."

**Jane M. Gardner:** "(I) feel privileged to have ministered alongside of Ken. He was a wonderful example of a disciple of Jesus Christ."

**Scott Murphy:** "(I'm) profoundly grateful to have experienced the love and ministry Ken shared with all who entered the Temple. His presence is missed."

**Jan Kraybill:** "True definition of a gentleman."

**Norma Elgan:** "He... was a perfect example of living a Christ-like life."

The family requests that donations be

made to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation (PO Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354), the Community of Christ Bridges of Hope Fund (1001 W. Walnut St., Independence, MO 64050), the Community of Christ Temple (1001 W. Walnut St., Independence, MO 64050), or your favorite charity.



*Ken Stobaugh enjoyed supporting historic sites. (Elaine Garrison photo)*

Historic Site in Nauvoo, Ill. Also at Nauvoo, he supported reconstruction of the Red Brick Store. In Lamoni, Iowa, he helped open Joseph Smith III's home, Liberty Hall, for tours.

"Ken has left a lasting legacy on the Community of Christ historic sites and the church history community," Walden said. "Our heart breaks with his passing,



# Liberty Hall Welcomes Crib



*Liberty Hall's Steve Smith shows off a new acquisition. (Gary Rees photo)*

By Greg Clark

An artifact acquisition at Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa, didn't get quite the coming-out party that leaders envisioned, but they're still thrilled to have it.

The subject of this historic hubbub is a crib that recently made its return to Liberty Hall, the longtime home of President Joseph Smith III, who often is credited with setting the church on its course toward peace.

Liberty Hall, among the properties supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, was built in 1881 and served as the church's headquarters into the 20th century.

The crib's significance, however, far exceeds its age. It is possible that it was used by two of Bertha's sons, Fred M. and Israel A., who later served as presidents of the RLDS Church (now Community of Christ).

"We are really excited to receive Bertha's crib," Site Director Steve Smith said. "We don't know the exact year it was made, but I like to think all of her kids may have slept in the bed."

Originally, a grand opening was scheduled April 5. The crib was to be a centerpiece of the event. Then the COVID-19 pandemic got in the way. Liberty Hall, along with the church's other historic sites, was closed down.

Nonetheless, the crib, which will be displayed in Bertha's bedroom, remains a cherished heirloom from the Smith family.

The crib was built by Mads Madison, Bertha's father. When Liberty Hall received the gift, it was showing its age.

"Lloyd White, a woodworker here, gave it some tender, loving care," Smith explained. "It needed some repair work; there were places where joints had dried out."

## Your Contributions Help Preserve, Share Heritage

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

Some give to honor and preserve church heritage.

Some give because of spiritual experiences while visiting one of the sites.

Some give to provide opportunities for young people to learn and deepen their appreciation for church history.

Some give in honor or memory of loved ones, past and present.

No matter your reason for giving, we deeply appreciate your support. You can mail donations to P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354. You also can donate your gifts online at [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org).



*Before the COVID-19 pandemic forced closure of church properties and historic sites, students in the Community of Christ Seminary visited with President Steve Veazey at the Temple in Independence, Missouri.*

*The students later took part in a project to document how the church acted and functioned during the pandemic.*

## Seminary Students Try to Avoid Repeating History

By Barbara Walden, *Historic Sites Foundation*

History doesn't always announce itself. As the spring season began, many of us enthusiastically were planning summer reunions, youth camps, and travel. However, life changed rapidly as the COVID-19 crisis began to unfold.

The Community of Christ story took an unexpected turn as congregations, campgrounds, and historic sites were shuttered in efforts to protect the most vulnerable among us. We began witnessing an unprecedented history that would change our faith community.

Historians often look to history for answers when faced with difficult decisions. Unfortunately, little was written in the *Saints' Herald* about the 1918 flu epidemic, and few materials in the church archives tell us how the church coped.

Students in Graceland University's Community of Christ

Seminary were committed to not letting history repeat itself in 2020. At the suggestion of Christin Mackay, site director at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, students in the "Community of Christ History and Scripture" course collected materials related to the COVID-19 crisis.

My job as executive director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation helped in my role as the course leader. The students documented congregations and mission centers that were rapidly changing their ministerial approach to adapt to the needs of a global faith community in isolation. As part of the course, they used historic sites in seminary classroom experiences. They took a field trip to Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa, and explored a virtual tour of the Kirtland Temple in Ohio.

Outreach soon adapted to online forums for community



members spread over great distances and in need of pastoral care. Video accounts, newsletters, online devotions, printed materials, and written accounts were gathered to picture more fully how our faith community was adapting during this unprecedented time. Seventy-nine materials were collected and donated to the Community of Christ Library-Archives this spring.

Those materials show the resilience and tenacity of our faith community. From online worship services in the British Isles, Europe, French Polynesia, and across North America, we witnessed creative ways of connecting and building community. One student from Tahiti described an online Communion service as a unifying experience for church members in French Polynesia. Amanda Vanaa shared, "We were all united before this sacrament, and I think that at the end of this pandemic, their love, trust, and dedication to the church will be doubled."

Another student, Gillian Vincent, wrote that even amid rapid change, some things remained the same, "We still feel God's Spirit in worship. We share in Communion. We support each other and our wider communities...It doesn't matter where, when, or how you live, the call is always the same; to find ways to respond to God's love and share that love with others."

Students preserved accounts of church members focused on staying connected and helping the most vulnerable in their community. "My congregation is trying to meet the needs of isolated members with the Pastoral Care Committee and members volunteering to pick up and deliver groceries, medicine, and other supplies so that others do not have to risk their health by leaving their homes," wrote Dave Davis of the Walnut Gardens Congregation in Independence, Missouri.

He added that his congregation found ways to experience joy and celebration in a time of social distancing and isolation. "Members have stood outside the homes and apartments of other members to sing "Happy Birthday" and offer support while maintaining at least a six-foot distance."

New opportunities have arisen to share in deeper connections and understanding through pastoral phone calls. Vern Erickson from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, shared, "There is a hunger to connect with each other. We've found that some of these conversations have gone very deep, too. It seems there is not enough time after worship services to discuss the kinds of issues that have surfaced in these intentional "check in" calls."

Mission centers also are seeing interest in online activities. Many accounts described online gatherings as having larger attendance than experienced with face-to-face events within the mission center and/or congregations.

The pandemic also has reminded us that community stretches beyond local groups. Gillian Vincent of the British

Isles wrote, "The online meetings and worships are reminding us more strongly than usual that we are part of a much bigger community than our own congregations. My mum is excited about watching an Easter-morning service from World Church. And I'm enjoying being part of a British-wide community that joins with friends in the States every Sunday evening for worship. We've also managed to reach out to those who no longer live close to our congregation, and they are joining with us for online meetings, whereas normally we wouldn't have that connection."

When asked what they would like to tell future generations about this COVID-19 experience, Vanaa cited resilience. "We continued despite the virus to spread love and words of peace."

All materials collected by the Seminary students were



Students also visited Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa.

donated to the Community of Christ Library-Archives to show future generations how our faith community adapted.

Archivist Rachel Killebrew said, "The Graceland University's Community of Christ Seminary students have done a stellar job recording our sacred story at this pivotal time in history. They have demonstrated the great value in documenting everything from the mountaintop moments to the everyday mundane, and even the moments of great difficulty. As we move into a new normal, these records will serve as a guide for future generations as to how we adapted and thrived in challenging circumstances."

Although we do not know how this chapter in church history will end, we can be certain the tale will be worth telling. Future historians will find stories of courage, sacrifice, and perseverance along with the social distancing and isolation. Preserving this history is a gift to future generations seeking guidance as they confront other challenges in their own day and time.



Online offerings during the pandemic included “Storytellers” events, “Tuesday Tales,” “Throwback Thursdays,” and much more.

One offering from the lecture series focused on the church’s history of reunions, such as the 1898 Western Iowa Reunion in Woodbine.

## Busy Times

*Continued from page 1*

remainder of the year.

No visitors climbed the stairs at Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa. No tourists marveled at the beauty of the Kirtland Temple’s Lower Court in Ohio. And no guests gazed at the Mississippi River from the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Long-planned personal pilgrimages, youth caravans, and special outings never happened. But in some ways the historic sites became more visible than ever. Thanks to herculean efforts spearheaded by foundation Executive Director Barbara Walden, church history remained at the forefront of social media.

Offerings included the “We Are All Storytellers” project, “Tuesday Tales,” “Throwback Thursdays,” “Sunday-night Devotions,” the “Summer Lecture Series,” and special events such as the online “Emma Hymn Festival” in late July.

To Walden and the many others who worked hard to make them happen, these efforts transcended the sharing and preserving of church history, as important as those tasks are.

“We knew church history could play a role in providing a sense of comfort and security during a time of significant change,” Walden explained. “Stories about the goodness in humanity, people helping others, etc. help to engage and inspire people during a time of significant change in their personal and congregational lives. Fortunately for us, church history is filled with stories of compassion, hope, and perseverance.”

“Each generation in Community of Christ experiences change and adjustment. This generation is no different. However, we can learn a lot about how to react to the change by studying what others have done in the past. In addition, we recognized that people were spending more time online, and

we needed to meet them where they were most comfortable. By creating highly engaging and inviting programs, we can help alleviate the challenges and struggles people are facing during this difficult period.”

The pandemic, though painful, has forced officials to embrace new levels of creativity. Some of their efforts may endure long after people again are walking among sites such as Heritage Plaza in Independence, Missouri.

“I have been reminded that throughout Community of Christ history, when faced with a crisis, the people of our faith community give birth to some of our most treasured traditions,” Walden said. “I have no doubt that this global health crisis has provided the Historic Sites Foundation with a new platform for sharing the gifts of church heritage.”

“Although we were saddened that we would not be able to share guest ministry at reunions and retreats this summer due to the COVID-19 crisis, those events soon were replaced with several new opportunities to share guest ministry online with mission centers and congregations all over the world. In some ways, our shelter-in-place orders have expanded our reach thanks to modern technology and the Internet.”

Many of the resources are available on the church’s Facebook page. In addition, you can visit [www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org](http://www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org) for the We Are All Storytellers entries.

However, the shutdown has brought another big downside. Without guests, funding has dropped sharply during the pandemic, but maintenance and preservation continue. To help, you can donate through the foundation’s website.

“This generation has a responsibility to preserve and protect the historic sites for future generations,” Walden said. “This is a responsibility that we take very seriously at the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, and we will do all we can to continue to provide the funds needed to maintain and preserve the church’s historic sites.”



# Pandemic Blues? Then Visit Nauvoo Through New Video Series

By Greg Clark

When the pandemic forced Community of Christ historic properties to shut down to the public, Lachlan Mackay knew a lot of people would be disappointed.

They had to quash 2020 plans to visit places like the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois. So Lach, the church's historic sites director, did the next-best thing: He developed a set of videos to take guests on virtual tours.

Through his efforts and the Internet, guests can get everything from a broad sweep of the Nauvoo site to a close-up look at Emma Smith's furniture. Other videos cover things such as the upstairs meeting room in the Red Brick Store, the history of the Homestead, a hiding place in the Mansion House, and a stop at the Smith Family Cemetery.

Through it all, Lachlan offers a casually pleasing but highly informed commentary about the significance and history of each place or item. The smooth camerawork by Christin Mackay, the site director, emphasizes Lach's narration while highlighting the beauty of the site.

"The tour video clips relate directly to the pandemic..." Lachlan said. "We knew that spring-break travelers were in Nauvoo or on the way. We wanted to share the sites with them, even if we couldn't welcome them into the buildings. As things unfolded...it also became clear that the posts were a helpful distraction as the painful news of the spread of the virus filled the news cycle."

The videos are posted on the Facebook page of the Joseph Smith Historic Site. Clearly, it would be best to visit the sites in person. But when that's not possible, the videos provide an entertaining alternative that in Lach's words are "much better than nothing at all."

"Even with travel limited and most people staying close to home, we feel a call to continue to share our story," Lachlan said. "The Internet and social media have dramatically broadened our reach. The response has been wonderfully positive with some tour segments generating thousands of views."

The online forays don't end there.

"It is also critically important that we figure out how to continue to generate income to offset the cost of maintaining the sites," Lachlan said. "For these reasons, we are putting significant effort into creating a more interactive online experience that will allow visitors to explore the Kirtland Temple and the Joseph Smith Historic Site with a guide who they can ask questions of during the tour."

"We are also building and launching web stores for both sites."

For more information, visit:

- [www.kirtlandtemple.org](http://www.kirtlandtemple.org)
- [www.explorenauvoo.com](http://www.explorenauvoo.com)
- [www.redbrickstore.com](http://www.redbrickstore.com)
- [www.kirtlandtemple.org/store](http://www.kirtlandtemple.org/store)



*Lachlan Mackay's many tour videos offered insights on the Nauvoo House (above), Emma Smith's kitchen, and much more.*



## Make a Donation, Aid Preservation

*Preserving and sharing church heritage and telling the sacred story of our journey is a privilege and a responsibility.*

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

*Another alternative is to send donations to P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354.*

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

## 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 email him at [lmackay@CofChrist.org](mailto:lmackay@CofChrist.org).*

## Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation

P.O. Box 338  
Nauvoo, IL 62354

## Steve Smith

*Continued from page 1*

Smith III, is as expansive as ever. His vision sees a Liberty Hall of renewed importance, greater understanding in building peace, and service as a community hub.

The door for reentry opened after Cindi Wilson informed leaders of retirement plans. Talks began in December, and by February he was returning to Lamoni with his first load of furniture.

Then the pandemic hit. Nonetheless, Smith's supporters are thrilled with his presence.

Barbara Walden, the foundation's executive director, summed up her emotions in two words: "Overwhelming joy!"

Then she elaborated: "Steve Smith brings many unique gifts to Liberty Hall in the form of interpreting the past and managing the historic site. Steve has an enthusiasm for church history and especially the story of Joseph Smith III. I look forward to collaborating with him on various projects in the future."

Lachlan Mackay, the church's director of historic sites, added: "Steve's passion for Joseph III and the importance of his story today is infectious. He is able to inspire others to want to engage in the effort as well. Steve also understands the importance of involving the larger Lamoni community, including Graceland University's faculty, staff, and students, in

the life of the site."

But how does someone direct a site that's closed because of a pandemic? The answer: with difficulty.

"Those next couple of months (after the closure) were very hard for me," said Smith, a 78-year-old former educator and attorney. "I may have been grieving what wasn't happening and what couldn't happen. Now, as we are able to bring in small groups (family bubbles), we are replacing a number of drawdown shades, washing windows, doing woodwork. We have a lot of projects ahead of us."

A word he uses often is *revitalize*. He uses the term when talking about the historic site, the role of church history, the volunteer staff, the church, and the Lamoni area.

"We have an amazing group of people who have worked here over the years," Smith said. "I'm hoping to draw on that strength and reestablish some programs before like full-moon walks and bird walks. A major attraction we have is that Lamoni has a recreational trail that's a great outdoor walk. It ends in our parking lot, so we have a lot of people here, even when closed. During a 35-day period they did a video count at this end of the trail. They counted 871 people, an average of nearly 25 a day.

"We are trying to establish a very cooperative relationship with the community."

Walden is confident that will happen. "Steve is not only a great storyteller, he is also a good neighbor. I have no doubt the Lamoni community will receive just as much benefit as we will receive at Liberty Hall."