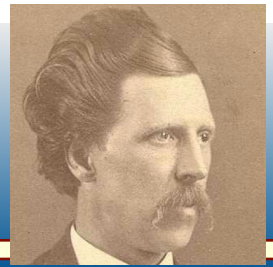


THE FORUM

Spring Lectures
Mark Forscutt will be the subject in a new lecture series.
Page 3.



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Rose Takes Reins at Kirtland Temple

By Greg Clark

It's difficult to take an engine that's been sitting for two years and get it up and running. By May we'll be ready to roll.

—Roger Rose

In some ways, it seems that Roger Rose is a born restorationist and has been preparing much of his life for his new job as site direc-

tor of the Kirtland Temple.

Now that the job is his, he's facing challenges that none of his recent predecessors confronted. A COVID-19 pandemic will do that to you.

Rose, who began work January 3, is tasked with awakening a historic site that from a public perspective has been dormant

See Rose on page 2



Volunteers Steve Davidson and Nancy Cervi have done extraordinary work on the Kirtland Temple grounds.

Kirtland Volunteers Plant Beautiful Blessings

By Greg Clark

For Steve Davidson, the work fulfilled a vision. For Nancy Cervi, it helped provide healing from a deep hurt.

And for Lach Mackay, it was simply "amazing!"

No, not just amazing. "AMAZING!"

The guests and staff in Ohio, who this year will see the Kirtland Temple grounds after a two-year closure caused by COVID-19, are almost certain to agree.

Newly planted rhododendrons, dahlias, and other landscaping—along with removal

See Kirtland on page 7

Rose

Continued from Page 1

since its pandemic-forced closure two years ago.

Yet Lachlan Mackay, director of historic sites for Community of Christ, believes Rose is well prepared for that type of restoration.

“Roger is a great fit for the position for several reasons. In years past, he served as an intern in both Nauvoo and Kirtland, so he has a general understanding of how the sites operate. More recently, he served as the instructor for the summer program in Kirtland. So he has a good grasp on both the context and details of our Kirtland story.

“He is a talented educator with many years of classroom experience, which means he is also a talented historical interpreter with the skills needed to share his passion for history with both volunteers and visitors.

“Finally, as a seventy with strong people skills, he has the gifts needed to effectively engage with those seeking additional information about Community of Christ today.”

Rose, 60, came to Kirtland a few months after retiring as a high school teacher who focused on psychology and related subjects. Now he faces the task of continuing to teach.



“The biggest issues we face are an attempt to continue the process of growing the historical consciousness of the church. We need a new generation of people to volunteer. The Boomers went through all the deconstruction, and it seems like the next generation doesn’t understand the importance of the church’s history.

“I hope we don’t come to the time where our sites and our understanding of the past are really irrelevant.”

A strong faith and positive attitude indicate that won’t happen under his stewardship.

Those attributes have served him well, even in buying a new house when

moving to Kirtland from Mobile, Alabama.

“I’m kind of a hopeful person. My grandfather once told us that we needed to meet our blessings halfway. You can’t sit around and wait. If you have a good attitude, you’ll be amazed at how things just seem to be there, waiting for you. But you have to have an intense desire.”

He knew the kind of house he desired, that he wanted it within a couple of blocks of the Temple, and how much he was willing to pay. Basically, folks said, “Forget it.”

The Kirtland housing market was extremely expensive, and few properties were available.

But on a visit before he took the job, a staff member told him he knew of a person who would be leaving in a few months. “It was exactly like the house my wife had been dreaming of,” Rose said. “I called him, and the next day my real estate agent and I walked through the house.”

Now it’s home, though a few adjustments need to be made. But that isn’t the only restoration that interests Rose.

“I’m restoring a 1972 Super Beetle. That’s been my hobby for the last few years.”

He said he has owned the car since 1989 or ’90.

“I rebuilt the engine and redid the chassis. It originally was canary yellow. Then we tried to paint it green, but it looked really ugly. Now it’s being painted a bright orange. I won’t be done with it for a long time.”

But while he’s dealing with the challenge of restoring a car, his main focus remains on restoring the Kirtland Temple to a vibrant historic attraction for the church. He’s confident.

“The staff that I’ve got will not let me fail. They’ll make me look good.”

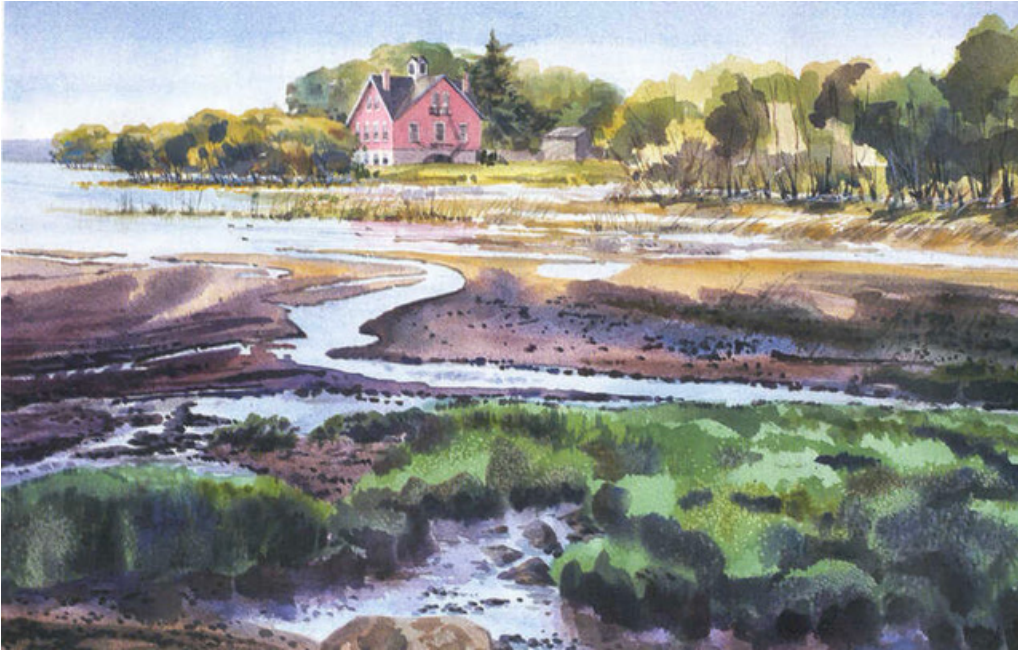
Virtual Tours Coming Soon to Many Historic Sites!

Community of Christ historic sites soon will launch several virtual tours. Join Lachlan Mackay, director of historic sites, and Barbara Walden, executive director of the church’s Historic Sites Foundation, as they share in tours exploring our faith community’s past.

From the comfort of your own home, this summer you will travel virtually to various sites and hear their captivating stories. The experience will access areas not often seen on in-person tours. Also, you’ll be able to ask questions and engage the storytellers.

The virtual tours will include Joseph Smith III’s Liberty Hall, the Plano Stone Church, Kirtland Temple, and structures at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois. Registration details and dates will be available soon at www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org.

Spring Series Offers Strong Lineup



Jack Garnier's watercolor of the Nauvoo House helps promote the lecture series.

By Barbara Walden

Two years ago, we decided that not even a global pandemic was going to stop us from sharing church history with people from all over the world.

In response to the temporary site closures caused by COVID-19, we launched our first series of online programs in the summer of 2020. Another will begin soon.

Our next lecture series will take place April 14–June 2 and will feature several exciting topics. They'll include the diverse art featured in the historic RLDS preaching charts to the stories behind the women who founded the Lamoni Mite Society.

In addition, our guest historians will share the fascinating stories behind three 19th-century seekers: Mark Hill Forscutt, Charles Derry, and John Avondet.

Also, Tony Chvala-Smith will return to the virtual podium to share the history behind the construction of an RLDS theological identity, and Keith Wilson will share the life and legacy of Clifford Cole, a Community of Christ apostle who made a lasting impact on church identity and mission.

Our spring series also will include some traveling. Kees Olijnsma will share about our faith community in The Netherlands up to 1948, and Michael Wright will tell of the first Italian RLDS missionary.

It's a lecture series you don't want to

miss because it will continue a strong tradition of online offerings offered by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation since the pandemic started.

There have been several lecture series, virtual book discussions, hymn festivals, partnerships with congregations, and more.

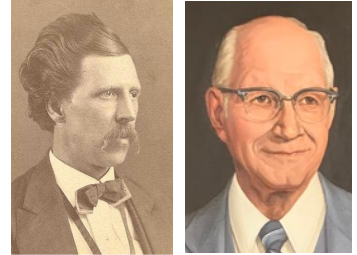
For the foundation, online programs have opened doors for people all over the world to learn from our shared past. We no longer are limited by geographical distance.

In our "Church History Without Boundaries" lecture series, we learned about the historic journey of our faith community in India, Wales, the Philippines, Germany, Japan, Australia, France, Korea, Canada, Southeastern Nigeria, the British Isles, and the Holy Land. The online lectures gave us an opportunity to travel the world from the comfort and safety of our home computer.

As restrictions begin to lift, we are excited that our virtual programs will not cease when the historic sites reopen in May.

For more information and to register for the online lectures, visit www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org/spring-2022-lecture-series. To explore our entire catalog of online lectures from the past two years, go to www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org/church-history-lectures.

Schedule, Lecture Titles, Guest Speakers



Forscutt Cole

(Lecture times, once firmed up, will be posted on the foundation's website at www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org.)

April 14: "Mark Hill Forscutt: Mormon Missionary, Morrisite Apostle, RLDS Minister," with Eric Paul Rogers

April 21: "Charles Derry: First Reorganization Missionary in the British Isles," with Andrew Bolton

April 28: "Doctrinal Self-definition and the Construction of an RLDS Theological Identity," Tony Chvala-Smith

May 5: "John Avondet, the First Italian Missionary of the Reorganization," Michael Wright

May 12: "The Development of Community of Christ in The Netherlands up to 1948," Kees Olijnsma

May 19: "Clifford A. Cole: Architect and Re-founder of the Modern Community of Christ," Keith J. Wilson

May 26: "Pleasing to Look Upon, and Easy to Understand: RLDS Preaching Charts, Their History, and Usage," William D. Moore

June 2: "What Were the Women to Do?" Sherry Mesle-Morain

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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.

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Kirtland

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of overgrown foliage—have turned the grounds into a colorful delight.

“It’s amazing the condition the site is in because of their work,” said Mackay, director of Community of Christ Historic Sites. “They’re two evangelists. If you talk with them, they say that working in the garden has been a spiritual experience, and blessings have flowed from it. It has been a labor of love.”

During the shutdown, that labor often covered 12-hour days. But Cervi and Davidson, along with other volunteers, were planting more than flowers; they were planting blessings.

Those blessings flowed into the neighborhood because the grounds remained open while the Temple was closed. With the Temple’s reopening, the blessings created by the strikingly beautiful grounds will flow into the memories of visitors from around the world.

Steve Davidson

In hindsight, Davidson seemed destined to do this work. He grew up near the Temple.

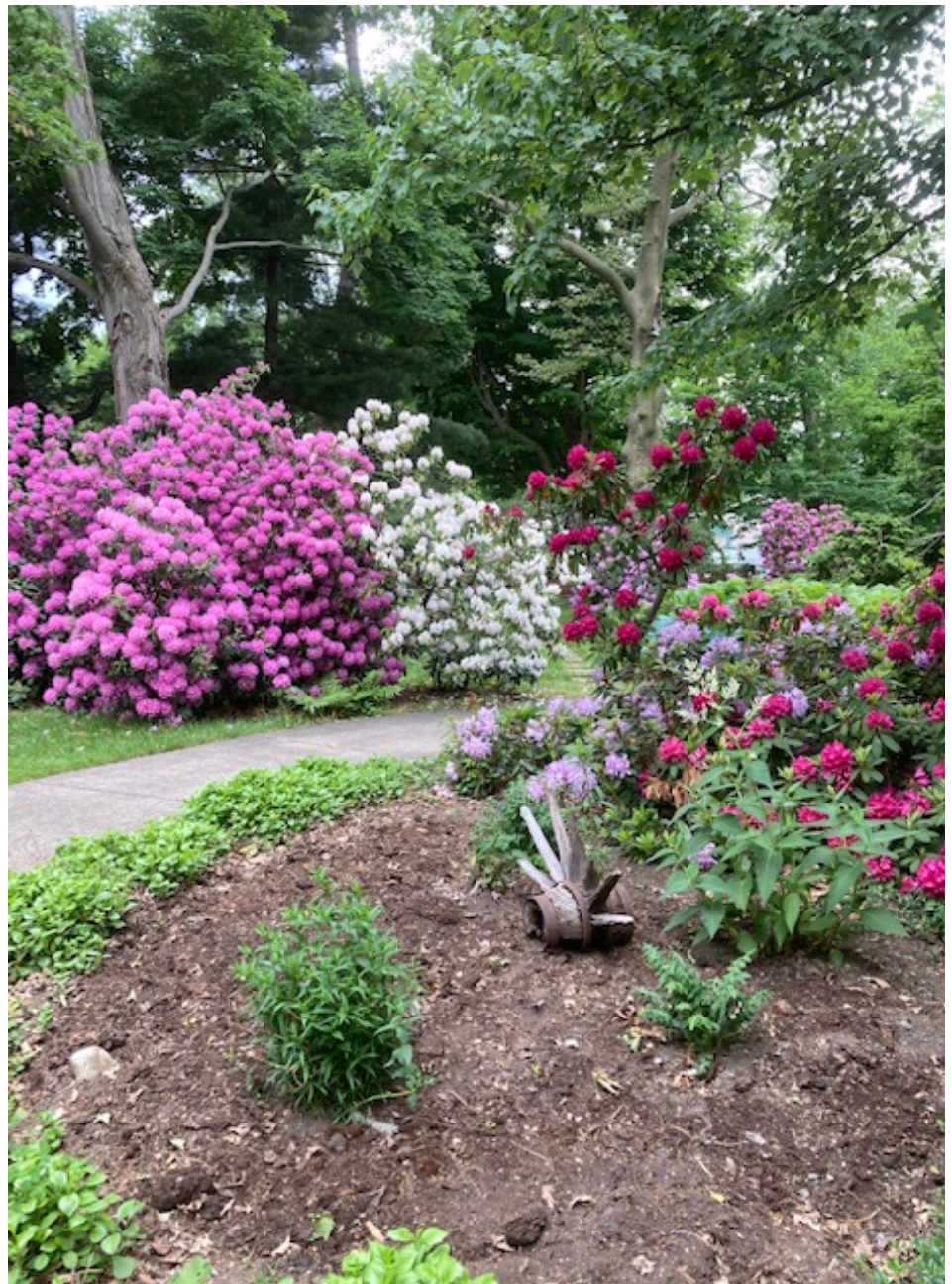
“Steve shared that as a young man his dream was to be a landscape architect,” Mackay said. “Finally he is living out that dream on the grounds. I don’t think they’ve ever looked better.”

The pandemic even helped.

“COVID actually did us a favor,” Davidson said. “We were closed, no visitors. We could make a mess and not worry about it. My wife was locked up in a nursing home, and I was locked out. So I had time on my hands. And Nancy couldn’t do tours, so she asked if she could help.

“I couldn’t sleep at night. I was working in the gardens instead of sleeping. You know how the Lord nudges you and says this is what you’re going to do? I had this vision of the garden.”

Fulfilling that vision meant a huge amount of work, especially on the overgrown north side of the building. They dug things up, cut things down, and



gradually worked around the grounds. For Davidson, the task seemed natural.

The work didn’t go unnoticed.

“The amazing thing that happened is that the neighborhood came out of the woodwork. Dog walkers, families, mothers with kids in strollers. They wanted someplace to go, and this was a peaceful place,” Davidson said.

“Kids would come through on electric scooters. We got to know the names of the kids and their dogs. One child would say, ‘Mama, can we go to the fairy garden?’ A lot of people would come sit on the bench, talk on their phones, have

some quiet time. A lot of them wanted to talk about plants.”

For Davidson, the work continues a family legacy.

“The Temple is in my blood. My grandfather was a deacon. I remember going in as a little kid, and he’d be ringing the bell. We lived just down the street. I’d walk by the Temple on my way to the school. I watched all the things that happened through the years.

“I have a lot of memories there—the old reunions in the Temple yard—

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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.

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.

Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation

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Kirtland

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and my wife (Shirley) grew up right next to the Temple field.”

Nancy Cervi

Jumping in to help with the grounds was natural for Cervi.

“I came in the spring of 2015 from Buffalo, New York. I just knew they needed volunteers, and I have a daughter here. I came with the idea it would be for a year or two, and then I’d go home. But I fell in love with the whole lifestyle.

“My husband had recently passed away, and I was looking for a place to heal. There has been purpose here.”

She loved giving tours but never had considered herself as a gardener. “But with the pandemic it’s a whole different story. The gardens have been much more of a priority.”

She also cited the appreciation of people walking around the site.

“It was a nice way to connect with people in the neighborhood. A lot of families or small groups. ...Working in

the gardens gives me a chance to interact with neighbors and people traveling.”

The work, such as planting several hundred bulbs for the spring, has been rewarding but sometimes grueling—frequently going from 7 a.m. until “it got so dark we couldn’t see.

“I have found sanctuary on my hands and knees,” Cervi said. “We get a lot of satisfaction out of the grounds looking nice.”

Cervi and Davidson, both in their 70s, said they’ve had a nice working relationship. Perhaps that’s because they share similar outlooks on their volunteer efforts.

“It’s a privilege,” Cervi said. “Everybody says, ‘How lucky we are to have you here.’ To me, it’s, ‘How lucky I am to be here.’ There’s always something to do. It gives me purpose and hope for humanity.

“It’s a sacred place. How do you not feel privileged to share in something that’s so meaningful? And I’m part of that. I want to make sure I represent the church. I’m a minister first. I’m here to minister to the people.”

Davidson put it this way:



“You couldn’t pay me to do this. It’s simply a privilege to prepare this place for people to come and have their experiences. I want to make sure it’s a place where they can feel the Spirit.”