

340 | Cuppa Joe | Historic Sites Foundation Autumn Lecture Series | Barb Walden Project Zion Podcast

Josh Mangelson

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

Brittany Mangelson In partnership with Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, Project Zion Podcast brings you a new series of interviews with presenters featured in the 2020 Autumn Lecture Series: "Church History Without Boundaries." The following interview introduces you to the event, how you can access the **now** archived lectures, and what you can look forward to exploring further right here at Project Zion Podcast.

Karin Peter

Welcome to Project Zion Podcast. I'm your host, Karin Peter. And this is Cuppa Joe, where we talk about church history. And today we want to share a little bit about an upcoming series of lectures presented by the historic site foundation. And we're here to talk about them with the Executive Director of the Community of Christ historic history, that's a mouthful, Barb! Let me try it again, is here to talk with us about them is Executive Director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, Barb Walden. Hi Barb!

Barbara Walden

Hi, Karin. It's a joy to be with you today. And I had 10 years of practice and saying that Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation.

Karin Peter

That is a mouthful, but what an impressive job title so way to go with that one. So we're gonna talk a little bit today about the Historic Sites Foundation Lecture Series that have been taking place. And so right off the bat, I just want to to ask, why did we have a Summer Lecture Series which we completed just recently, and FYI, Project Zion listeners, you can, on Project Zion, listen to each of those summer lecture presenters have individual episodes upcoming on Project Zion, so stay tuned for those. So why a lecture series Barb?

Barbara Walden

Great question. For years, YEARS, we've been talking about expanding our online educational resources. And now with the Community of Christ Historic Sites temporarily closed due to COVID-19. We were left to explore new ways of sharing church history, whereas before it was always up historic sites or through summer reunions. Well, now we don't have that platform anymore. So this global pandemic showed us how important an online platform really is, when your organizations purposes preserving and sharing church heritage. So we have a chance to host our first online Emma Smith Hymn Festival this summer. And we have offered online classes and guests ministry at reunion. So it was kind of natural to find ourselves doing an online lecture series and it was a way to truly showcase the gifted historic storytellers we have within the church history community. So we have the opportunity to share the stories behind the story excites as well as introduce people to the gifted historians like David Howlett to Andrew Bolton and of course, Lachlan Mackay. When you think about it, three of the guest lectures in the summer lecture series work at Historic Sites. So it was a way that we could bring the Historic Sites to the online community, thanks to the wonders of the internet, their stories are not limited to the Historic Sites alone anymore.

Karin Peter

Well, that is a marvelous way to take advantage of an opportunity to be together in ways we have not been before, especially for people who might not live anywhere near a church historic site to share together through these lectures. So how did you go about selecting what the lectures would be for the summer series, the initial series?

Barbara Walden

Well, initially, we wanted to choose a theme and then go to work finding people who researched church history topics related to the theme. As I mentioned, with the historic sites being closed, we had these talented interpreters and site directors that were available to us to share with us what they know. And I have to say, as a church history lover, Community of Christ is incredibly fortunate to have an awesome church history community. When you look at the people involved in the Historic Sites Foundation, the site directors at Community of Christ, our church historians, and those serving on the Church History and Sacred Story Team, you are looking at a number of people who have truly immersed themselves in church history for decades. They know their stuff. Some are former presidents of the John Whitmer Historical Association and the Mormon History Association. A number of them have served on editorial boards for a number of journals, and have authored books themselves so we have this treasure trove of historians and researchers. The online lectures are just the tip of the iceberg in many ways. Displaying this awesome talent and knowledge of restoration history. And even to boot. We're all friends. So when it comes to creating a lecture series, you choose a theme. And then you look around to see who knows what. And you call up your pal John Hamer, and say, "Hey, you want to talk about global history" or Lachlan Mackay or Andrew Bolton, I mean, such knowledgeable people. And they love history just as much as our audience does. So they're always happy to spend some time sharing stories. And when you think about it, we are a faith community of storytellers. That's for sure.

Karin Peter

That is one of the blessings of community. Our Enduring Principal indeed, is the narrative of the church, and how we share it together in sacred community. So we want to talk a little bit about the upcoming autumn lecture series. But first, let's spend a few minutes telling folks about the past summer series, since we do have several upcoming episodes on Project Zion about the Summer Lectures. So what was offered in this past Summer Series.

Barbara Walden

Our Summer Series was an eight part series, they covered a wide variety of topics. Andrew Bolton kicked off the series with a great lecture on F Henry Edwards. He was a member of the First Presidency and a conscientious objector during World War One. His lecture Andrews lecture shares of Henry Edwards story in the context of what it was like to be a conscientious objector during the war was not easy for Edwards. And he has a pretty powerful story. And you're also compares Edwards view with that of his father in law's view of Henry's father in law, church president Frederick Madison Smith, Smith was far from a conscientious objector, and he was just as passionate as his son in law F. Henry Edwards. So Andrew talks about that, and then also talks about what it means to be a conscientious objector today. So it's a great, great lecture. I'm Lachlan Mackay and the lecture series shared a collection of stories in his lecture the life and legacy of Joseph Smith a third, it's a great lecture that touches on a variety of experiences and views held by Joseph Smith the third that related to things like racism, peace and justice, violence and building community. So as you listen to Lach share these stories in this lecture, you can't help but see these subtle differences of Joseph Smith the third's life and legacy that still exists in Community of Christ today. I think there's a highlight of the lecture series, so many of them are relevant to today, Wendy Eaton shared about the preservation of the Joseph Smith historic site in Nauvoo, Illinois, Dave Brock shared tales about the life and legacy of Ed guy, one of the first to receive the Community of Christ Humanitarian Award, who was from your part of the USA. If there's a lecture you need to see or need to hear, it's definitely Dave Brock's telling of Ed Guy's story. A guy traveled throughout Central America, he planted churches supported communities struggling in the

midst of war and poverty. He was this courageous, and a little eccentric, but aren't we all a little eccentric? So, Dave Brock tells that story, and it's really compelling. We also had a collection of folks sharing one night about the history behind our annual reunion tradition. And in that we hear the unique stories behind the Samish Island campgrounds in Washington, onset in Cape Cod, Massachusetts and a campground called Bluff Springs down in southern Alabama. I get a chance to tell Marietta Walker's story for a full hour, which wasn't nearly long enough. David Howlett shares the history of Community of Christ in the Philippines, Seth Bryant explores non violence and lessons from Community of Christ past, which is a really intriguing lecture. And then Andrew Bolton returns again with a bonus lecture, where he reflects on the 75th anniversary of the dropping of the atom bomb, the historic connections to that in Independence, Missouri, and really what lessons we can learn from that part of our tragic history. So it was a great summer lecture series. We had a good time with these church history enthusiasts.

Karin Peter

So are those lectures still available? Are they archived somewhere for viewing?

Barbara Walden

Why Yes, they are. All of the summer lectures were recorded. And you can view them anytime by going to the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation's website, which is historicsitesfoundation.org and you can see it right there on the homepage.

Karin Peter

Well, Barb, obviously the Summer Series was a success, because you and are launching or have just launched the Autumn Series of lectures from historic sites foundation. So tell us what's coming up?

Barbara Walden

Sure we're on a roll now that we started telling stories we just can't stop. The Autumn Lecture Series is all about sharing church heritage all around the world. That summer series gave a platform for historians that we just hadn't experienced before. And so as we look to the Autumn Lecture Series, we chose the theme of church history without boundaries with hope of really raising awareness of church history that took place outside of the United States. I think for far too long, we have limited our church history, to just the Joseph Smith a third, or Joseph Smith, Jr. Era. And that's a real shame. Although the first 14 years of church history is unquestionably fascinating and intriguing, and a little bit scandalous. There's so much more to the Community of Christ story in the 175 plus years that follow that Joseph Smith Jr. Era. So the autumn lecture series will shine a light on the historically diverse voices and experiences from all over the world. I'm really excited about it. So what's the schedule this fall? Yes, indeed. Well, John Charles Duffy is going to kick off the lecture series with a great lecture on the challenges of creating a global history. So imagine trying to share the story of the church in over 50 countries all over the world. I mean, how do you determine whose stories will be told what lessons can be learned planting churches in the aftermath of war and experiencing poverty? How do you convey the historical context from when these congregations began and the courage behind the spread of the church during these difficult times? And even during Julius times, John Charles lays all of that out in his lecture, all the while reflecting on Doctrine and Covenants, section 161 that calls us to be a global family. He takes a look at how can we create that global family narrative and discovers it's a lot harder than just talking about it?

Karin Peter

It sounds like a great lecture.

Barbara Walden

It really is. Yeah. So following John Charles Duffy, you're going to hear from David Howlett, and he'll share the story of Community of Christ in India. He spent an entire summer in India sitting with some of

the founding members of the church there and hearing their stories. So while he recorded their oral histories, he also published a booklet on the story of the church in India, and he's gonna talk all about that and about his experience. It's really learning the history in a very personal and fascinating way. We're going to hear from Dima Hurlbut and this is one of the lectures I'm especially excited about. Dima has spent years researching the history of the church in southeastern Nigeria. In fact, he received awards for this just this year from the Mormon History Association, and the John Whitmer Historical Association. So Dima will spend an evening with us exploring the expansion of the Community of Christ in southeastern Nigeria, during the 1960s and 70s. he'll discuss why Nigerians wanted to become members of the church. And the impact really, that the global expansion of the church had on its theology and mission policy. We're going to share two videos that Bunda Chibwe has shared with us that include church members in Nigeria, from the from the Abak congregation, and their choir, and from the 2016, Nigeria mission center conference, and Ikot Oku Mfang congregation, and I'm sure I just shredded that and I'm so sorry, Bunda. But these videos show these church members singing the Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning in their native language of Efik. And it's really, really cool. So that's something I'm really looking forward to.

Karin Peter

I'm looking forward to that now as well.

Barbara Walden

Yeah, I'll have a chance to give a lecture myself. I'll talk about the history of the church in the Holy Land and really highlight the women who served in the Palestine mission from 1910 to the 1930s. Andrew Bolton is going to come and talk to us about the Latter-day Seekers history in the British Isles from the beginning of the 1830s all the way to the 1860s. Something we're really looking forward to he and Peter Judd hosted a Historic Sites Foundation bus tour in England a few years ago. And Andrew is going to condense all that history we learned over a 10 day period into a one hour lecture. It's going to be quite the feat, but if anybody can do it, it's going to be Andrew and it's a lecture you just don't want to miss. Steve Shields will share with us for an evening focused on the history of the church in Korea, and Steve lived in South Korea for a number of years, he literally lived church history in Asia. The first baptism in Korea took place in November of 1954. And Steve will talk about that, and the role of the US military personnel stationed in Korea after the Korean War, what role they played in modeling a typical us congregation in Korea. So Steve will explore the challenge of the Korean church and what they've experienced with missional relevance and how they have enjoyed periods of numerical growth and maintain a small but stable membership population over the years that they've been led by local and world church appointee leaders. So that's going to be a great, great lecture from a man who just loves the history of the church in South Korea and certainly loves the church today, in South Korea. Seth Bryant is going to repeat return as a guest lecture. He's a fan favorite among church history enthusiasts. And he's going to speak about the 1830s Latter-day Seekers missiology. So if you don't know what missiology is definitely attending this lecture. That was a new term for me as well. Seth is going to take a look at the ordination prayers of the first apostles and 70s in Kirtland in the 1830s. And he's going to show how those prayers reveal the orientation of our early missiology. The apostles in 70s, were repeatedly called to go to the edges of the world or the edges of the globe. And in their conception of the world, the 1830s Islands served as a rarefied space beyond the domestic, and they were the ultimate realm of the Apostolic calling. So Seth is going to talk about all of that, and he's going to explore Latter Day Saint missiology, and how it shaped the identity of the church. So you're definitely not going to want to miss that. Our last lecture, John Hamer, the great John Hamer will deliver that last lecture in the Church History Without Boundaries Lecture Series, John's going to explore the life and legacy of R.C. Evans, who is an absolutely fascinating guy, who was born and raised in Canada, he converted to the RLDS church and took his new faith community truly by storm. R.C. Evans were a ton of different hats. He was a convert to the church, she was a 70, and an apostle. He served as a counselor in the First Presidency for two church presidents, and he served as a bishop over Canada.

John's going to talk about R.C. Evans 40 years in church leadership, but he's also going to talk about the reasons R.C. Evans left the church. Suddenly, he left almost with the same passion in which he entered the church. R.C. Evans later found his own opposition church. And you'll hear about all these details and more. With John Hamer and his lecture, I think his lecture is called Bishop RC Evans of Canada, from the RLDS first president to see to schismatic church leader, it's going to be a great lecture, you don't want to miss it. So that's a quick rundown of what to expect over the next eight weeks, we are very excited about sharing this global history of Community of Christ.

Karin Peter

What a lineup Barbara, I'm looking forward to viewing these lectures. Before we go any further, let's share with people how they can watch these.

Barbara Walden

Sure, well, you have to register for the lecture. And that's real easy to do, just go to the Foundation's website, which is www.historicsitesfoundation.org. And there on the homepage, you'll see a brief blurb about the Autumn Lecture Series with a button to click on that button will take you that link will take you right over to a menu of lectures for you to choose from all of which I just described, how you choose the lecture you're most interested in, click on the button that says click here to register. That will take you to a forum where you leave your email address and a link will be sent to you to attend that lecture that Thursday night. All the lectures are on Thursday evenings at 7pm Central. And they last generally about an hour long, but the q&a period, the most exciting part of the night, has been known to go 30 and 40 minutes in late. It's pretty dangerous period, but also a great time that you get to personally ask questions to these historians who've spent so many years researching these topics.

Karin Peter

So all of these lectures sound wonderful in sharing the Global Diversity of the church outside of the United States context and sharing the the stories of the church. So do you have any favorite non USA based church history stories?

Barbara Walden

Oh, that's always a dangerous question to ask church history lovers. It's like once you Dive into the story of a church outside of the United States, you run into a number of incredible stories about people all over the world. One of the great gifts that mark shear has given the church is his third volume of church history, where he explores the history of the church outside of the United States in the 20th century, and it's just full of good stories. So it's hard to say which one is really my favorite, but I will say there are a few that that give me pause that really stopped me in my tracks, and I have to think about the meaning of that story. Standing along the River Ribble, the River Ribblel with Peter Judd on our 2017 bus tour, and hearing the story of the first baptisms that took place in the British Isles, right there at the river. Andrew Bolton who will share the story about a large group that gathered there in Preston world where we were standing in 2017. They gathered there in the 1830s. And they witnessed a literal race among prospective congregants to who could get to the water first to be that first church member baptized in England. I mean, a race to be baptized. I really thought about that, you know, the, the meaning behind baptism and the enthusiasm of hurling yourself toward a river in the wintertime. I'm hoping that even David Howlett when he talks about India that he'll share the remarkable story of a woman in India who made a sacrifice to help Charles Neff in need in the 1960s. If I had a favorite international story, this might be it. I discovered it from Matthew Bolton's biography on Chuck Neff. And he says that apostle Neff arrived in this woman's village in 1966 after he walked 14 miles through foothills, dense undergrowth, small streams along a narrow rocky path in order to get to Atharva, which was a village that that there were a number of people there that he wanted to see. Unfortunately, Chuck Neff made the mistake of wearing a brand new pair of leather shoes when he began this hike to Atharva, and by the time he arrived in her village, his feet were so badly swollen, and blistered, he was

in an incredible amount of pain, and he sat down and began to painfully peel the shoe leather off of his feet, and a group of people gathered around him in awe as they stared at his bruised and battered feet. And this woman, a stranger to him, recognizes his pain and she walks away and returns with a bowl of water. She then broke several cultural taboos that she knelt before naff again a stranger to her. And she carefully watched his aching feet. He is so impacted by this story, thinking about it, he's a stranger from a foreign land. And her act of helping this stranger in need was a bold move in her native country. When you think about it during this time in India, it was totally inappropriate for a woman to touch or be touched by another man outside of her family. So her act of kindness in 1966 was not a small gesture. I mean, it was radical kindness. She was taking a risk that could have resulted in her being ostracized from her village ostracized from her family, and Neff knew the risks she was taking and said it was one of the most finest examples of Christian witness he had ever experienced, and had a huge impact on his life. And he later said that that woman that he believed that was the Lord Jesus coming to him in his time of need. There's just so many stories like that, from outside of the United States, I Georg sofka, and his mother Anna, fleeing Germany, as refugees during world war two stories from Kenya about building community and the worth of all persons, just too many stories to tell. But Mark Schere really tries to capture those stories in his third volume, definitely check it out.

Karin Peter

And for our project, Zion listeners, you can find the full three volume set of Journey of a People on the Herald House website, you can go to cofchrist.org and click on affiliates, and it's under that drop down menu. So there are multiple stories yet to be told. So an infinite number of stories yet to be told. So do you see additional series going forward?

Barbara Walden

Oh, my goodness. Yes. Yes. I mean, once you like that fire, you just can't put it out. We have been talking about a Spring Lecture Series already. And we just started the fall lecture series. But looking at a series that focuses on the stories behind people in Community of Christ history. I've been in contact with people in Australia in the Netherlands and French Polynesia, places with rich Community of Christ history that just needs to be shared. I'd love love to see a lecture series on women in Community of Christ history. I mean, that would be so estrogen inspiring. But taking a look at their stories and their impact their voices, and making Community of Christ what it is today, I would love to see a series on African Americans in church history. There's just so much history to talk about, we have over 180 years worth of material, and just not enough time in these online programs.

Karin Peter

But we will look forward to seeing what comes in the spring series even as we are enjoying this autumn series. So before we conclude our conversation, Barb, I wanted to just ask for the benefit of our listeners, what exactly is the purpose of the Historic Sites Foundation outside of telling stories on wonderful aspects of our history?

Barbara Walden

Well, I guess To put it simply, the purpose of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation is to preserve and share church history. We focus pretty heavily on raising awareness and fundraising for the Community of Christ Historic Sites, there's five historic sites scattered across the Midwest that we work hard to preserve and maintain. In addition to doing our best of preserving the rich stories behind our 200 year old history, we advocate for Community of Christ storytellers at the historic sites and within our mission centers, and congregations, we raise money for a young adult intern program called the Alma Blair internship program where young adults serve at the historic sites, as interpreters and researchers. In many ways we like to say your story is church history. And it is so true that Historic Sites Foundation does its best to preserve those stories in not only the online lectures, but in a number of different ways. A great way to do that is certainly through volunteering at the sites.

Karin Peter

So if our listeners are interested, how can they contribute to the Historic Sites Foundation's work?

Barbara Walden

Well as a fundraiser, I am so glad you asked.

Karin Peter

I bet you are.

Barbara Walden

There's a number of ways you can help support the historic sites Foundation, we accept online donations, that's probably the fastest way to show your support, you simply go to www.historicsitesfoundation.org/donate to make that online donation. We also receive donations in the mail to our home office and Nauvoo. And the address for that is P.O. box 338. Nauvoo Illinois 62354. And as I mentioned before, you can also support the historic sites foundation by volunteering at the historic sites of volunteering at the Kirtland temple in Kirtland, Ohio, the Joseph Smith historic site and Nauvoo will enjoy the Liberty Hall and gorgeous Lamoni, Iowa, the Plano stone church and heritage Plaza. Our volunteers are they're not only telling the story of the church, but they're also they're working as gardeners and doing maintenance. They work as hospitality experts in greeting people from all over the world. So if volunteering is something you're interested in, please contact me. And I'd love to tell you all about volunteer opportunities at historic sites.

Karin Peter

Well, thank you so much, Barb, for being with us today and giving us this little insight into what's coming up with the historic sites autumn lectures, I want to let our project sign listeners know that just as we interviewed the lectures from the summer series, we'll be doing some follow up interviews with those from this autumn series as well and hopefully on into the future as we share together in our common goal here at cup of joe to share the stories of church history. And so every time you come and visit us, we are so happy to have you and to hear what's next and what's happening as we share our story, our sacred story together. So thank you so much, Barb Walden. Let's see if I can get the title correct this time who is the Executive Director of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation. I love saying that. Okay. Thanks again for being with us, Barb. This is cup of joe where we talk about church history and I've been your host Karen. Peter, thanks so much for listening.

Josh Mangelson

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