

Kirtland Temple

As I sit in the Kirtland Temple garden the air is warm and gentle. I sit on a bench amongst the beautiful rhododendrons, the bright green ferns and tall maple trees to meditate to the sounds of the red cardinals and orange breasted robins that sing in the background. As the wind gently blows the leaves of the trees, I am at peace. I'm alone, but yet, I'm one of many who have come this summer and sat on these benches to meditate, to pray, to study scripture and to worship. Families have spread their blankets on the lawns to enjoy a family picnic. A setting like this feels Zionic to me.

People come to Kirtland to have the story retold to them of a people who gathered, at great sacrifice, to build a structure. *Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing, and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God;* (D&C 85:36b). And each of these components of the Temple would be Christ centered with the specific intentions of deepening their relationship with the living Christ, becoming a better and learned disciple and experiencing living in sacred community. Because of the powerful experiences in worship and learning in the temple, many people became missionaries and were sent forth into other countries and territories covering thousands of miles to share the gospel message. This was our beginning.

As I sit in the quiet of the chapel of the Spiritual Formation Center listening to the meditation music, hearing the sound of water from the running fountain, I gaze at the icons on the handcrafted altar table. I see the temple through the chapel window and I am reminded of all the people who have come to the Kirtland Temple to seek, to experience the Holy, to understand the Temple's history and the people who helped make it happen. I am also reminded of the people who have come to the Spiritual Formation Center to experience renewal, solitude, rest, sanctuary, prayer and meditation. There have been congregations, leadership teams, field staffs, youth groups, appointees, Presidents of Seventy, apostles and the Presiding Bishopric. I am always impressed with the preparedness of the people, of how they are always willing to participate in the spiritual disciplines, small group activities, ritual and worship. Incorporated with their formation work

are tours of the Temple, walks in Chapin Forest, and worship experiences in the temple.

I invite you to come to the Kirtland Temple and hear the story, worship in the pew boxes where the people who built the Temple worshipped. Come and explore your relationship with God and find renewal, inspiration, peace, affirmation and a deeper sense of who God is and who you are called to become. *For God beholds with his merciful eyes not what you are, nor what you have been, but what you would be.* (*The Cloud of Unknowing*)

Bruce Crockett, Director
The Kirtland Spiritual Formation Center