

Interfaith Voices: Temples provide a sacred space

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Alice Rampton Aug 20, 2022

Throughout the world, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has 168 temples in operation and 51 under construction.

Of these, 118 are located outside the United States. The nearest one in our area, the Willamette Valley Temple, will celebrate its groundbreaking near Springfield in October. After the temple is finished, the building will be open to all for tours during a specific period. You're invited to that open house!

Historically, temples were described in scriptures. Moses built a sacred tabernacle and King Solomon constructed a temple in Jerusalem. The New Testament speaks of Jesus Christ visiting the rebuilt Jerusalem temple. Major religions throughout the world have built temples or shrines as a place for worship, festivals and recognition of holy days.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints meet regularly in local chapels for worship services, youth activities, service projects and community events. These buildings are always open to anyone.

Temples have a more specific purpose. They are designated for sacred service and ordinances (ceremonies) and each is known as a House of the Lord. Attendees are active members of the church, willing to renew a deep commitment to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Russell M. Nelson, Church President and Prophet, said, "The temple lies at the center of strengthening faith and spiritual fortitude because everything taught in the temple increases understanding of Jesus Christ."

Some of the reasons that Latter-day Saints choose to attend the temple include 1) to increase in appreciation of God and the loving gift of atonement from Christ to all, 2) to make promises to follow Christian principles of integrity, charity and fidelity, and 3) to gain strength to overcome trials and adversities.

Church members receive an endowment in the temple, which is a gift of knowledge. It is also a place to bind individuals and families together, not only for their earthly sojourn, but for eternity. With a belief in eternal life and a respect for our ancestors, we also offer these opportunities to them, knowing that they have their own free will to accept or reject.

My first trip to the temple was 50 years ago, when my husband and I were married or sealed for eternity. Attending the temple is a private decision, and no one is forced.

Regular attendance may depend on the proximity of the temple, work schedule, family situation or desire. There is no entrance fee to the temple, and within the walls, individuals wear simple white clothing, demonstrating unity, inclusion and the message that we are all children of God.

Recently I asked family members why they attend the temple. Their responses included: "When I feel stressed or anxious, the temple provides peace and a sanctuary. I have clarity seeking answers to life's big or little decisions." "I feel closer to my family in the temple, both those alive and those who have gone before."

"In the temple, we can put into perspective the promises we make to God and how they magnify our life." "Having adopted two children, the temple amplifies the connection I have to them on earth and beyond."

Personally, the temple reminds me of the eternal threads that connect humanity to a loving God. It is a holy place of worship, learning, commitment, service and contemplation. I am reassured of my eternal nature and the sanctity of Christ's teachings. I join with thousands of others in this part of Oregon who are grateful for a temple nearby in the future.

As an example, this video provides an inside look and visual tour of the Washington, D.C., temple: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SVf7ryvBMQ>.