

UTS President Hugh Spurgin and UTS VIPs tour new Mormon temple in CT

Michael Mickler
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(from left) Michael Mickler, Hugh Spurgin, Kathy Winings, Alice Bowers and Tom Bower

UTS President, Dr. Hugh Spurgin and Vice-Presidents, Drs. Kathy Winings and Michael Mickler, toured the newly completed Latter Day Saints (Mormon) temple in Farmington, Connecticut outside Hartford on September 29. They were invited to a VIP tour by former UTS librarian, Dr. Tom Bowers, now a Latter Day Saints (LDS) leader, who accompanied them with his wife Alice.

The Hartford Temple (the 155th LDS temple worldwide) was under construction for three years and is the second built in New England, following the Boston, Massachusetts temple. Unlike a local LDS church or meetinghouse, the temple is reserved for instruction and ceremonies for baptizing ancestors, sealing marriages and making covenants with God.



Dr. Mickler at the grave site of his first American ancestor, Thomas Upson

It is rare for non-Mormons to enter a temple as they are closed to the public following their dedication. To enter, even LDS members must carry a card or “Temple Recommend,” good for two years, certifying that they meet standards of faith and practice. Non-LDS construction firms were required to sign contracts specifying that their workers would not smoke, drink, or use bad language on the site.

The Hartford temple has elements common to other LDS temples – a baptistery with a huge font mounted on the backs of twelve oxen, “terrestrial” rooms for instruction, a “celestial” room for meditation, a “brides” room, and sealing rooms. At the same time, it was designed in an 18th century Georgian style with New England touches. Paintings and murals depict several Connecticut landscapes as well as scenes from the life of Jesus and history of the church. The spire is reminiscent of a traditional Congregational Church, topped by a golden statue of the angel Moroni, considered the final Native American writer of the Book of Mormon.

The Hartford Temple is open to the general public for tours, daily except for Sundays, through October 22. Dedication is scheduled on November 20.

Following the tour, Dr. Mickler was able to locate the grave site of his first American ancestor, Thomas Upson, who settled in Hartford in 1638, becoming a proprietor of Farmington in 1640.