



News Release

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THE DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY LAUNCHES ITS 2008 HISTORIC HOUSES OF WORSHIP TOUR SERIES MARCH 3

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DETROIT – The Detroit Historical Society kicks off the 2008 Historic Houses of Worship tour series Monday, March 3rd. The tour will feature the following churches: Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Little Rock Missionary Baptist, St. Matthew-St. Joseph Episcopal, St. John CME, and St. Florian Roman Catholic.

Blessed Sacrament Cathedral was rededicated in 2003 after a \$15 million renovation that took some 19 months to complete. The architect for the renovation project was world-renowned Gunnar Birkerts. Original construction of the church began in 1913 and was completed in 1915. The last major renovation of the cathedral was in 1950-1951, when the two towers facing Woodward Avenue were completed. Edward Cardinal Mooney designated Blessed Sacrament as the Cathedral of the Archdiocese in 1938.

George D. Mason and Company, one of Detroit's leading late nineteenth and early twentieth century architects, designed the Gothic Revival, L-shaped structure known today as Little Rock Baptist Church. The English Gothic church was built as the fourth home of the Disciples of Christ in Detroit, a Protestant group organized by the Reverend William K. Nay in 1846. It is a well-preserved, locally significant example of the Neo-Gothic movement. The African-American Pulpit window in the south faced depicts portraits of Black ministers. Two of the original stained glass windows depict George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Little Rock Baptist Church is one of Detroit's prominent African-American churches, continuing an important connection to the neighborhood surrounding it.

St. John C.M.E. was organized on July 8, 1917 as St. John's Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. The Neo-Gothic style church was the first church of its denomination

in Detroit. The chapel (1902 and 1907), sanctuary (1911), and church house (1929) are constructed of red “impervious” brick with limestone trim and a gray slate roof. The interior features stained glass windows designed by Gorham Company of New York and a baptistery lined in Pewabic mosaic tile.

St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, established in 1846 by organizers of the Detroit Underground Railroad, was the first African American Episcopal congregation in Michigan. In 1971, it merged with St. Joseph’s Episcopal church at Woodward and Holbrook. Architect James B. Nettleton designed the English Gothic style building which dates to 1926-27.

St. Florian Roman Catholic Church, established in 1907 to serve Detroit’s Polish community, was designed by architect Dr. Ralph Adams Cram of Boston. The English Gothic style structure is dominated by an ornate stained glass rose window. The front of the church features a Gothic Arch with twin spires on either side. The main altar and side altars are decorated with real gold leaf.

Each tour leaves the Detroit Historical Museum parking lot (Kirby at Woodward) at 10 a.m. and returns at 4 p.m. The price, which includes the guided tour, bus transportation, and lunch at one of the churches, is \$30 for Detroit Historical Society members and \$35 for guests. Telephone reservations can be accepted with Visa, MasterCard or Discover Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. No tickets will be sold on the date of the tour. For reservations or more information on the 2008 tour series, call (313) 833-1801 or visit www.detroithistorical.org/thingstodo.