



# *News Release*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**THERE'S STILL TIME TO GET ON THE BUS FOR THE DETROIT HISTORICAL**

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Since 1972, the Detroit Historical Society has acquainted metropolitan Detroiters with the most fascinating and interesting religious institutions the area has to offer with its annual Historic Houses of Worship tours. The 2006 series continues on Monday, April 3, 2006, with a Detroit tour featuring the following: Zion Evangelical Lutheran, St. John Baptist Ukrainian Catholic, Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox, Holy Redeemer and St. Hedwig.

The Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church was founded in June 1882, when a group of German members from Immanuel Lutheran Church decided to organize a new parish in Springwells Township. The original church building, constructed in 1883, was a wooden structure and seated 700 people. Some 50 years later, a new building was begun. The present church, designed by the Detroit firm of Mahl and Lentz, is in the Neo-Gothic style with a façade of limestone. Interesting architectural elements include exterior buttresses, used to handle the weight of the building, and the tower, which looms 65 feet above street level.

In 1907, metropolitan Detroit's first Ukrainian Catholic Church, St. John Baptist, was built on property donated by Mychailo Stefansky, a Ukrainian immigrant who received the land from his employer. By 1915, the parish had grown so much that the building was now considered too small. In November of 1918, a new church was completed on the corner of Clippert and Edward. In 1920, the new church was consecrated, and the old church on Cicotte was auctioned off in 1933.

The Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Cathedral originated in 1907 when a group of Eastern European immigrant families from southwest Detroit came together to start an Orthodox Church in the area. After receiving permission, the first Orthodox Church in Michigan was created in November 1907. The church is located on the corner of Gilbert and Clayton streets. In 1947, a new parish edifice was constructed, and a well-known

Russian Orthodox iconographer, Nicholas Zadorojny spent six years "writing" the icons on the walls of the church. Today, most services are conducted in English, although about five to ten percent of the Divine Liturgy is sung in the Old Church Slavonic.

On St. Patrick's Day in 1880, Holy Redeemer was founded by the Redemptorist Fathers to serve the scattered Irish and German Catholics living in Springwells Township. Four acres of land was purchased in September 1880, and construction on the first church building began. As the area's population swelled, the number of parishioners rose. As a result, the parish would twice need to build larger churches to house all its members. Construction of the present church started in 1921. Designed by the Detroit firm of Donaldson and Meier, it features an Italian Romanesque style, based on the Church of St. Paul in Rome. Some of the exquisite architectural features include the stone bell tower built between 1924 and 1927, the Pewabic tile floor and the hand-painted frieze on canvas around the perimeter of the church.

In 1903, St. Hedwig was established because the large numbers of southern Polish immigrants settling in southwest Detroit could not all be accommodated at St. Francis of Assisi Church. The original church was consistent with a new parish's first building: the first floor contained classrooms and quarters for the teaching Sisters; the second floor housed the church; and the "parish hall" was in the basement. However, as immigrants continued to flock to Michigan and the congregation continued to expand, it became necessary to build a larger church. In 1911, local architect Harry J. Rill designed a new church known as the "Lower Church," which was used until sufficient funds were available to complete the edifice in November 1916. The current church building is made of red brick and has two tall, square frontal towers, a pedimented façade between them, and a three-arched entrance in white stone.

The Spring 2006 series of Historic Houses of Worship tours continues with the following:

Monday, May 1st in Wyandotte

St. John UCC

First Congregational

St. Stephen's

St. Patrick's

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

and Monday, June 5th

Mariner's Independent Anglican

Christ Church Detroit

First Congregational

Immaculate Conception Ukrainian

St. Florian

The Historic Houses of Worship tours highlight the importance of maintaining and preserving these buildings as tangible history. Tours are co-sponsored by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Michigan and the Detroit Historical Museums & Society.

Each tour leaves from 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 non-members. 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 day of the tour. For more information, call (313) 833-7935.