



# *News Release*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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

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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, September 11, 2006, with a tour featuring the following: Metropolitan United Methodist, Little Rock Baptist, St. Matthew -- St. Joseph Episcopal, St. John CME, and Cass Community United Methodist.

Metropolitan United Methodist Church has stood at the corner of Chandler and Woodward for nearly eighty years, and the congregation traces its beginnings back more than a century. The present building cost \$1.6 million to erect and is of English Gothic style with granite exterior.

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. Little Rock Baptist Church is one of Detroit's prominent African-American churches, continuing an important connection to the neighborhood surrounding it.

Located at Woodward and Holbrook, St. Matthew-St. Joseph Episcopal Church is the product of a merger in 1971, when St. Matthew – founded by organizers of the Underground Railroad as the first African American Episcopal congregation in Michigan – found its church being eliminated by I-75 construction. They joined with St. Joseph's parish, originally established in 1883. The church they occupy was built in 1926 and 1927 and was designed by architect James B. Nettleton of the firm Nettleton and Weaver in the English Gothic style.

Founded in 1917, St. John CME purchased North Woodward Congregational Church on Woodward Avenue at Blaine Street in 1955, becoming the first African American congregation to have a church on "Piety Hill," the affluent section of Woodward Avenue with many prestigious churches. This church was built in 1908 and has seating for 2,500 persons.

Cass Community United Methodist Church is a monumental structure that typifies Richardsonian Romanesque ecclesiastic architecture. The original 1883 portion was designed by Mason and Rice for the Cass Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1880. The 1891 east addition is the work of Malcomson and Higginbotham. Of special significance are the colorful Tiffany stained glass windows and the Johnson-Tracker church organ, thought to be the largest 19th-century pipe organ in Michigan. The congregation has a reputation for fostering community outreach programs since its founding.

The Fall 2006 series of Historic Houses of Worship tours continues with a sold-out tour on Monday, October 2nd. On November 6th, the next tour in the series features lunch at Armando's in Mexicantown and a tour of the following: Fort Street Presbyterian, St. John Cantius, Trinity-St. Mark UCC, Holy Cross Hungarian and Historic St. Anne's. The final tour of the year is scheduled for Monday, December 4th and features Central United Methodist, St. Joseph Roman Catholic, St. John-St. Luke UCC, Old St. Mary's and Sweetest Heart of Mary Roman Catholic.

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.