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TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE FOR THE DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY’S HISTORIC HOUSES OF WORSHIP TOUR ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

DETROIT - Additional tickets are now on sale for the Detroit Historical Society’s Historic Houses of Worship tour on Monday, November 7. The tour will feature the following houses of worship: Nativity of Our Lord Church, St. Sabbas Orthodox Monastery, Assumption Grotto Church, Christ Church Grosse Pointe, and Grosse Pointe Memorial Church.

The Nativity of Our Lord Church was founded by Father Francis Heidenrich. In 1911, he was asked by Bishop John Foley to create a new parish in Leesville, now the Gratiot-Harper area. The cornerstone of the school was laid in 1912. Until 1926, the school’s basement served as the Church of the Nativity. By 1924, the parish raised enough funds to break ground on a new church building. The Renaissance revival style church, made of red brick, was designed by architect Edward Schilling with a façade similar to the basilica church of St. Francis of Assisi in Italy. The aisles are laid with tiles created by Pewabic Pottery. The Moeller organ, which contains 1,400 pipes, and the glass mosaic Stations of the Cross, were installed in the 1930s.

St. Sabbas Orthodox Monastery, a men’s monastery following the patristic Julian calendar, was founded in 1999. The traditional Orthodox style monastery includes a Monastery Katholicon and a library containing more than 6,000 books. Also included is a chapel, French stained glass windows and living quarters for the monks. The relics of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, sister of the last Queen Tsarita of Russia and relative of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Charles of England, are among the monastery’s most prized possessions.

Assumption Grotto is the second oldest Catholic parish in Detroit. Its origins can be traced to 1830 when German immigrants first arrived in Detroit. Father Amandus Vanderdriessche, the first pastor, supervised construction of a permanent church. The church was replaced by three structures, the last of which was dedicated in 1930. The present structure was designed by Detroit architects Aloys Frank Herman Inc., and was constructed in 1928 and 1929. Behind this Neo-Gothic limestone structure is an impressive grotto built between 1881-1883. The cemetery contains monuments from the early 19th century.
Christ Church Grosse Pointe was the fifth mission started by Christ Episcopal Church Detroit. The groundwork was laid as early as 1923. The cornerstone of the English style building was laid in 1928. The building was originally designed as the chapel of what was to be a much larger structure. The octagonal baptismal font depicts the four evangelists on the edge of the bowl and the Four Cardinal Virtues on the base. The stained glass windows, designed by Willet and Sons of Philadelphia, are the church’s greatest feature. In 1947, the church was officially admitted to the diocese as a parish and consecrated in 1950.

In 1865, Protestants living in Grosse Pointe’s largely Roman Catholic Community felt the need to create their own church. That same year, the Grosse Pointe Protestant Evangelical Association organized the founding of their church. The first building stood at the corner of Kerby and Lake Shore. In 1920, the membership voted to become Presbyterian and the church was renamed Grosse Pointe Presbyterian Church. A new church was dedicated and renamed The Grosse Pointe Memorial Church. The present Neo-Gothic style building was built on the site of the Little Ivy Covered Church in 1927. The church features three-story, cross-gable roof wings on both sides whose junctions at the main edifice are marked by a massive and soaring square bell tower.

This 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, lunch at one of the churches, and a comfortable motorcoach, is $40 for Detroit Historical Society members and $50 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 2011 tour series, call (313) 833-1801 or visit www.detroithistorical.org.

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