

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: **Bob Sadler**
Director of Public Relations
(313) 833-7937 or
(313) 819-5761 (cell)
bobsadler@detroithistorical.org

TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE FOR THE DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S NEXT HISTORIC HOUSES OF WORSHIP TOUR ON JUNE 6

Since 1972, the Detroit Historical Society has acquainted metropolitan Detroit with the most fascinating and interesting religious institutions the area has to offer with its annual Historic Houses of Worship tours. The 2011 series continues **Monday, June 6**, with tours of the following: **St. Cecilia Roman Catholic, St. Mary's of Redford, Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church, Clinton St. Greater Bethlehem Temple of the Apostolic Faith and St. Luke Parish.**

In 1921, Detroit Archbishop Bishop Michael James Gallagher decided that a church was needed to serve the large Catholic population in the Grand River-Livernois area. Masses were held in a number of temporary buildings – including an old roadhouse – until Christmas Eve of 1930 when **St. Cecilia Roman Catholic Church** was dedicated. The church is built in the Romanesque style, with particular attention to light and shadow. Throughout the church, there are many stained glass windows depicting the life of Jesus Christ and his parables. In 1968, a 24-foot portrait of the Black Christ wearing a purple robe was unveiled.

St. Mary's of Redford started as a small Catholic outpost in a rural community. It first came into existence on Nov. 3, 1843 when John Blindbury, a Protestant, sold a one and a half-acre tract of land to Detroit Bishop Peter Paul Lefevre for the sum of \$25. Lefevre had a vision of building a Catholic church with his newly acquired land. Over its history, St. Mary's has been through several church buildings. The current church, built between 1925 and 1926, was dedicated on October 12, 1927. Designed by noted architect Ralph Adams Cram, it is built in the French-Romanesque style with gray granite.

Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1871 when 13 Christians wanted to establish an African church that would serve as a refuge for freedom-seeking worshippers. In the 1930s, the church became the center of the black

community. During World War II, the church gymnasium, where Joe Louis once trained, housed hundreds of soldiers. The congregation also played a significant role in the area's automotive history by financially supporting Henry Ford when he was trying to get the automobile patented. The church prizes its letters of gratitude from Henry Ford himself. After a fire in 1964, the church moved to its current location on Chicago Boulevard.

The **Clinton Street Bethlehem Temple Church** began early in the spring of 1919, when Brother W.M. Gray pitched an evangelistic tent and started a series of open-air tent services in Detroit. In the months that followed, services were held at various rented rooms, storefronts and tents. In 1962, Bishop Samuel Nathan Hancock and the congregation purchased the Jewish synagogue, Shaarey Zedek, which is the present edifice of the Clinton St. Greater Bethlehem Temple of the Apostolic Faith. The church is built in the Romanesque-style and features decorative detailing, including glass windows, marble pillars and impressive wooden trusses with an elaborately decorated ark wall.

St. Luke's Parish was founded in 1927 by Bishop Gallagher on land that was once an apple orchard and airport bordering Dearborn. Moving from a private home on Wisconsin Avenue, the new parish was temporarily located at a double store on Tireman Avenue. Later, a storefront church was established on Ohio Street, with the church occupying the lower floor and a school on the second floor. In May 1958, plans were drawn and ground was broken for a new and larger permanent church which was dedicated by Archbishop John Dearden on Dec. 7, 1959. The cost of the structure was \$475,000, and it seats 875 people.

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

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, bus transportation and lunch at one of the churches, is \$30 for Detroit Historical Society members and \$40 for guests. Telephone reservations can be accepted with Visa, MasterCard, American Express 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.

#