DETROIT - Tickets are still available for the Detroit Historical Society’s Monroe Historic Houses of Worship tour on Monday, May 2. The tour will feature the following: Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, St. Michael the Archangel and First Presbyterian Church.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel is located in the Motherhouse of the religious congregation Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, founded in 1845 by Father Louis Florent Gillet to provide educators for the daughters of the French-Canadian families that had settled in Monroe. The current chapel was constructed in 1939 and 1940 during a massive construction project of a combined new Motherhouse for the IHM Sisters and a rebuilt St. Mary’s Academy, which had been destroyed by fire in 1929. Bricks from the burned academy formed the inside layers of the walls, and the altar from the old Motherhouse chapel was taken apart and reassembled. A Casavant Opus 1642 Organ was installed in 1940.

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception was founded in 1788 by French-Canadian families settling along the River Raisin as St. Antoine’s. The parish received its current name in 1845. The oldest portion of the current church (nave) was constructed in 1839 as a red brick Gothic structure. Between 1903 and 1905, a red brick Romanesque sanctuary was attached. During the most recent renovation in 1987 and 1988, the nave was redesigned to match the 1905 portion, with the addition of new red brick inside and out over the original 1830s brick walls. The roof was also raised and the Tiffany-like ornamental windows were removed, cleaned and changed from Gothic to Romanesque style.

St. Michael the Archangel parish was established in 1845 when 14 German immigrant families, longing for an opportunity to worship in their native tongue, petitioned the Bishop of Detroit for authority to build a church. Five prominent families contributed a total of $2,000 for the land for the development, which they purchased in July of 1852, from the estate of Monroe’s first mayor. The mayor’s residence was remodeled for use as a temporary church and was
consecrated on the Feast of Saint Michael, on September 29, 1852. The cornerstone for the present church was laid on June 12, 1866, and the building was consecrated in October, 1867. The tower and 187-foot steeple was added in 1883, and bells were added to the tower one year later.

**First Presbyterian Church** was organized in 1820 and can lay claim to being the oldest Protestant church in the state. In 1845, Colonel Oliver Johnson provided land for the present church. Constructed of hand bricks between 1846 and 1848, the church was of colonial design with tall clear glass windows, protected by dark green shutters, with a white steeple and a porch and door facing Monroe’s square. The Sabbath School Chapel was added in 1860 and connected to the church 14 years later.

Each Historic Houses of Worship 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 and motorcoach transportation, is $30 for Detroit Historical Society members and $40 for guests. For reservations or more information on the 2010 tour series, call (313) 833-1801 or visit [www.detroithistorical.org](http://www.detroithistorical.org).

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