

Detroit's Churches & Historic Houses of Worship

Some of the best and most beautiful **architecture** in Detroit can be found inside the city's historic houses of worship and **churches**. The interiors of many of these buildings are as impressive as the exteriors, so be sure to take a look inside.

**2 DAYS | 24-48
HOURS**

FEATURES

Art & Culture

DESTINATIONS

Downtown Detroit

1 DAY 1



1. Tour [Ste. Anne de Detroit Catholic Church](#): Founded only two days after Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac landed in Detroit in 1701, Ste. Anne's has the distinction of being the first Catholic church in Detroit and the second-oldest continuously operating Roman Catholic parish in the country. Although the current structure is actually the church's eighth, its location on St. Anne Street near the Ambassador Bridge has been its home since 1887 and contains many relics from the 1818 stone church, which stood on Bates Street. The church has a 26-rank pipe organ and a reverberation time typical of some of the finest European churches. Designed in the Gothic Revival style by architects Léon Coquard and Albert E. French, the exterior offers flying buttresses and four gargoyles, which guard the main entrance.
2. Tour [Historic Trinity Lutheran Church](#): Historic Trinity Lutheran Church, founded in 1850 as the first Missouri Synod Lutheran Church in Detroit, began in a wooden-frame chapel on Larned Street. The present structure was built in 1931 and features

architectural details and fine liturgical art. The church includes stunning murals and fresco work by Viggo Rambusch of New York, stained glass windows by Henry Lee Willet of Philadelphia and tile mosaics by Detroit's own Pewabic Pottery. Its 16th-century pier and clerestory are Gothic style, similar to Europe's great cathedrals. The interior of the church went through major refurbishment in 2005, and today Historic Trinity Lutheran Church is a National, State and Local Historic Designated Site.

3. Tour [Christ Church Detroit](#): Near the Detroit RiverWalk and GM Renaissance Center, Christ Church Detroit was designed by architect Gordon W. Lloyd, who specialized in churches and was particularly interested in what he termed the "American Gothic" style. Lloyd used sandstone and limestone to create Christ Church as it stands today on Jefferson Avenue. The church has the distinction of being the oldest Protestant church still located on its original site. Its founding members were wealthy — consistent with that wealth, two of the church's stained glass windows were designed by Tiffany & Co., while others were designed by prominent glass companies Franz Mayer & Co. and J. Wippell & Co. Its magnificent Great West Window, depicting the life of Christ, is one of the largest in the city.
4. Tour [Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church](#): Across from Belle Isle State Park, the Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church evolved as the First Presbyterian Church's capacity was stretched to its limits. The divide created a new church in 1851, and the new facility was built over four years at a cost of more than \$1,250,000. Architect Wirt C. Rowland of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls designed this building in English Gothic style. Rowland was deeply interested in Gothic architecture, and his design is consistent with that style, relying on deep reveals for the windows and doorways and stepped buttresses along the nave rather than extreme ornamentation. In the sanctuary, Christian symbols are expressed in wood carvings and stained glass windows. The pipe facade of the Skinner organ fills the chancel, yet the focal point remains the pulpit, communion table and the open Bible.
5. Visit the [Islamic Center of America](#): In nearby Dearborn, the Islamic Center of America was established in 1963 and is a place of worship as well as a place of learning and understanding, dedicated to the education of the general public and the spiritual growth of the community.
6. Dinner at [The Whitney](#): Visit Detroit's Cultural Center for an unforgettable dinner at The Whitney. Housed in a historic, 52-room, 21,000-square-foot mansion completed in 1894 for

lumber baron David Whitney Jr., The Whitney offers award-winning cuisine and an eclectic wine list in striking environs.



1. Tour the Sweetest Heart of Mary Church: Many Polish immigrants fleeing oppression came to Detroit during the late 19th century, and in 1886 a group of them organized the school that was the beginning of the Sweetest Heart of Mary parish. Under (at the time) controversial leadership of Reverend Dominic H. Kolasinski, construction began on the current structure under the design of the architectural firm of Spier & Rohns. Completed in 1893, the majestic church was hailed as one of the most beautiful Gothic structures in the state of Michigan and the largest and grandest Polish church in the United States. Its windows, made by Detroit Stained Glass Works, won prizes at the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, and its organ is one of the oldest Austin organs in existence. Its 217-foot spires house three large bells named St. Mary, St. Joseph and St. Barbara.
2. Tour [St. Albertus](#): Founded in 1872 by Fr. Szymon (Simon) Wieczorek, St. Albertus became a haven for Polish immigrants arriving in Detroit between the Civil War and World War I. A neighborhood called Wojciechowo grew around the parish's first church, and in 1885 the present Gothic Revival building, designed by German-born architect Henry Engelbert, replaced the original wooden frame structure. Inspired by the Reverend Dominic Kolasinski's concern for Polish traditions, it incorporates 12 lunette panels over the nave arcades, brick detailing and an octagonal tower common to churches in Poland. Although the community eventually dispersed, St. Albertus Church still stands as a symbol of the first Polish community in Detroit. At the time of its construction, it was the largest Catholic church in the state and was the first church in Detroit to have steam heat and electrical lighting.
3. Lunch at [Polonia Polish Restaurant](#) in Hamtramck: Enjoy old-world ambience and the flavors of Poland in this Hamtramck staple, which has been serving guests for more than 40 years. Reminiscent of a Warsaw cafe, diners will find pierogi, cabbage dishes, beet soup and other Polish and Eastern European specialties, as well as Polish art and artifacts on display.
4. Tour [First Congregational Church of Detroit](#): First Congregational Church of Detroit is architecturally and historically significant. Established on Dec. 25, 1844, the church's design blends Romanesque and Byzantine styles and is built in warm red limestone, topped with an eight-foot copper figure of the Archangel Uriel. As an integral part of

the Underground Railroad, the church hid refugees in the basement as they made their way to boats on the Detroit River. Visitors today can experience a slave's journey to freedom in the Underground Railroad Living Museum Flight to Freedom Tour.

5. Tour the [Cathedral Church of St. Paul](#): Designed by Ralph Adams Cram of the firm Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson of Boston and New York, the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's construction was finished in 1908. Cram, America's leading exponent of the Gothic Revival architectural style, chose to design the cathedral in 14th-century English-style Gothic, which is a simplified form of what is generally associated with the style today. The cathedral is kept intentionally dim to suggest the mystery of the Divine — much of the lighting in the cathedral was added after its construction.
6. Visit St. Josaphat Church: Built in 1901 in the Romanesque style, St. Josaphat features both Gothic and Baroque details and is constructed in red-orange brick and trimmed in buff limestone from Bedford, Indiana. The church's distinctive main steeple is 200 feet tall. Stained glass crafted by Detroit Stained Glass Works, five altars, ceiling murals and white oak woodwork add to the charm of this Detroit fixture.

3

OTHER CHURCHES OF NOTE



- Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament
- Mariners' Church
- Most Holy Redeemer Church
- St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church
- St. Florian Roman Catholic Church