

## Historic Religious Architecture Tour of Baltimore (A25-235)

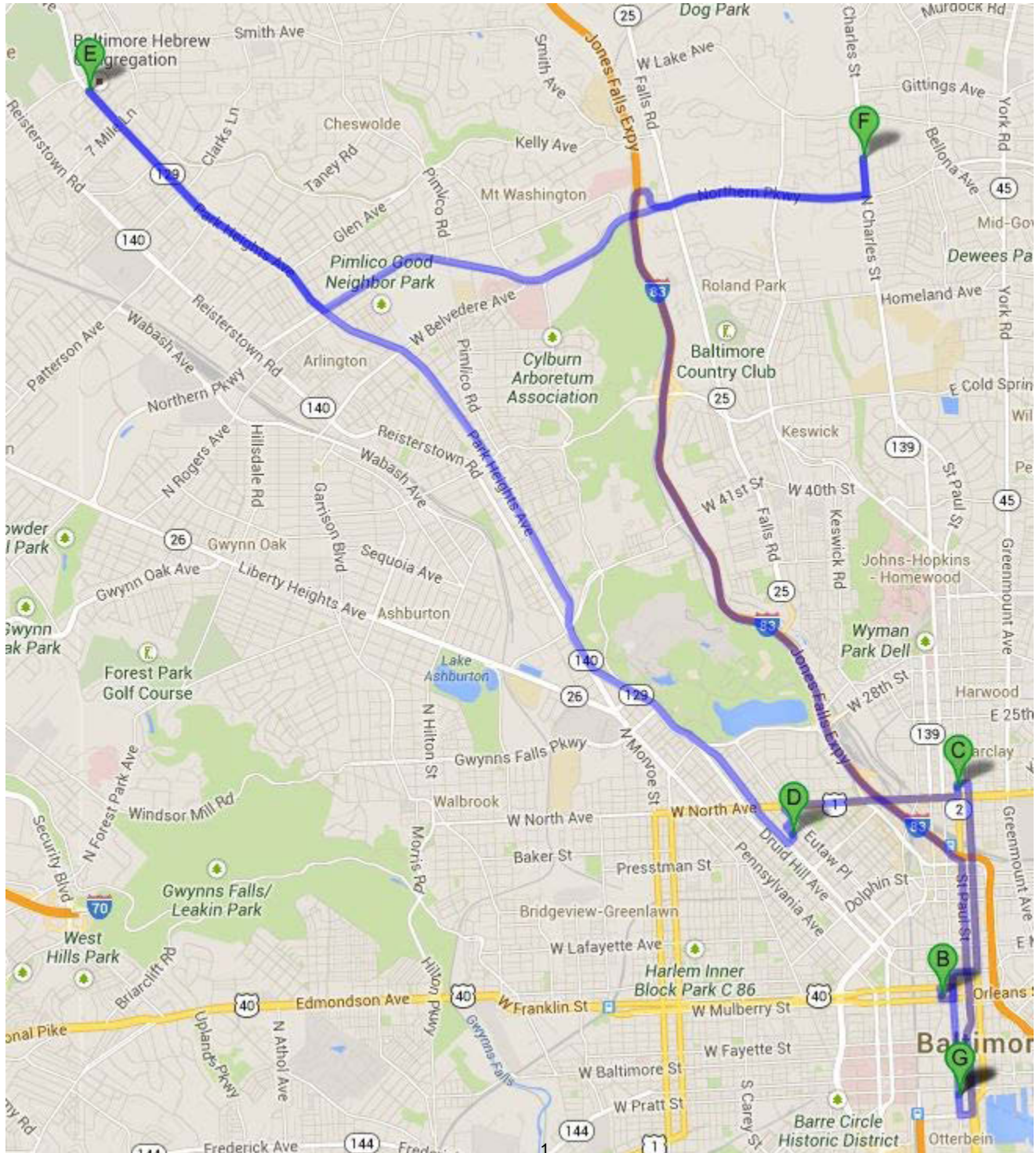
### Space, Place, and Religious Meaning Group

November 25, 2013, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Jeanne Halgren Kilde, University of Minnesota

David R. Bains, Samford University

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As a major port city on the border of North and South, Baltimore developed a distinctive and varied religious landscape from the late eighteenth through the twentieth century. The early histories of two of the nation's largest religious groups, Roman Catholics and Methodists, are also anchored in the city. One of the city's oldest houses of worship, Otterbein United Methodist Church, is immediately adjacent to the Convention Center. Our tour will take us from downtown Baltimore and the early nineteenth century north through the suburbs to late nineteenth and mid-twentieth century buildings. It includes landmark buildings designed by architects of both local and national distinction. Tour participants will experience the development Baltimore's religious architecture from the revival styles of the nineteenth century to the modernist buildings of the twentieth.

### **Approximate schedule**

A. 1:00 Assemble & Leave Baltimore Convention Center

B. 1:15 **Baltimore Basilica**, 409 Cathedral St.

2:00 Leave Basilica for St. Mark's

C. 2:15 **St. Mark's Lutheran Church**, 1900 St. Paul St.

2:45 Leave St. Mark's

D. 2:55 Drive by **Berea Temple Seventh-Day Adventist Church**, 1901 Madison Ave.

E. 3:15 **Baltimore Hebrew Congregation**, 7401 Park Heights Ave.

3:45 Leave Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

F. 4:05 **The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer**, 5603 N Charles St.

4:45 Leave Church of the Redeemer

G. 5:00 Arrive Convention Center

**Baltimore Basilica**  
**409 Cathedral Street**  
**Baltimore, MD 21201**  
<http://www.baltimorebasilica.com>



**History.** Officially called the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Baltimore Basilica was erected from 1806 to 1821 as the United States' first Roman Catholic cathedral. Maryland's Catholic community dates to the colony's founding in 1632 by Caecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, as a refuge for English Catholics. Initial settlement took place in St. Mary's County at the mouth of the Potomac River. The city of Baltimore was founded a century later in 1729 and quickly became a major port. In 1789 Baltimore was named the first Roman Catholic diocese in the United States of America with Maryland-native John Carroll as its bishop. While administrative matters were the bishop's first priority, in due time attention turned to the erection of a cathedral, on the hill overlooking the city, that would express the identity of the Catholic church in the new nation.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764-1820) was chosen as its architect in 1805. Generally considered America's first professionally trained architect, Latrobe, the son of a Moravian pastor in England, was educated in Germany and served as an engineer and architect in England prior to emigrating to the United States in 1796. In 1803 President Thomas Jefferson appointed Latrobe as the surveyor of Public Buildings. His responsibilities included revising William Thornton's plans for the U.S. Capitol then under construction.

Construction of the cathedral began in 1806 and continued until its consecration in 1821. The cathedral was the venue for three plenary councils of American bishops in the nineteenth century, including the first in 1829, which asserted the need for Catholic schools and the third in 1884 which commissioned the Baltimore Catechism. In 1937, Pope Pius XI raised the cathedral to the rank of Minor Basilica. This is a title given to Catholic churches of special prominence. Because it is a basilica a *umbraculum*, a conical red and yellow canopy, is displayed in the church. In 1954 the archdiocese began construction of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen at 5200 North Charles Street (not far from our tour stop at Church of the Redeemer). Since this new cathedral's consecration in 1959, Latrobe's building is known chiefly as the basilica, though it remains a co-cathedral of the diocese. In 1993 it was designated as the National Shrine of the Assumption.

Many famous visitors have worshiped within its walls including Pope John Paul II, Mother Theresa of Calcutta, and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Prior to its bicentennial in 2006, the basilica underwent extensive restoration under the direction of John G. Waite Associates to restore it to Latrobe and Carroll's original vision. Additional restoration work took place in 2012-13 to repair damage caused by the earthquake of August 24, 2011.

**Architecture.** In 1805 Latrobe prepared two plans for the cathedral, one Gothic revival and the other neo-classical. Bishop Carroll chose the neo-classical as more in keeping with the identity of the new nation. As designed by Latrobe, the basilica has a Latin-cross plan, with much of the congregation gathered under a central dome. The double double-shell dome features twenty-four half hidden skylights, which admit light through the oculus of the inner dome.

The towers and portico that were part of Latrobe's plan were not completed in the first building campaign, but were added later. Latrobe's son directed the completion of the towers with their Saracenic domes in 1837. The portico was completed in 1864.



The church was frequently altered between the Civil War and the 1940s. Darker color schemes were employed throughout. The sanctuary was extended toward the east in 1890. The skylights around the base of the dome were painted black in World War II and later removed. Stained glass windows were installed in the 1940s. These successive changes dramatically changed the interior giving it a darker, more medieval aesthetic.

The 2006 restoration restored the original color scheme, removed the stained-glass windows, and reinstalled the skylights to the dome. This has restored the light-filled neo-classical environment of what is commonly considered Latrobe's greatest work. In addition, excavation of the undercroft created space for the chapel of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom.

#### **Sources and Further Reading:**

*Benjamin Henry Latrobe: America's First Architect* PBS Video, 2010.

Hayward, Mary Ellen and Frank R. Shivers, eds. *The Architecture of Baltimore: An Illustrated History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

McKee, Bradford. "America's First Cathedral." *Architect* 96, no. 2 (2007): 62-67.



**St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**1900 St. Paul Street**  
**Baltimore, MN 21218**  
<http://www.stmarksbaltimore.org/>

**History.** Lutheranism in Baltimore dates to the mid-eighteenth century arrival of German immigrants, who formed the first congregation in 1755. **Zion Lutheran Church** was erected seven years later on Fish Street (a.k.a. East Fayette). This building was replaced in 1808 by a Federal style church, and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the complex was razed to erect a new building, designed by Johann Strobel and Henry Saumening. This church still stands at the corner of Lexington and Halliday opposite the War Memorial Plaza.

Zion Lutheran produced a number of “daughter” churches, including **First English Lutheran**, established in 1824. First English Lutheran was wracked by a dispute in 1860, when disagreement arose over who would replace the retiring pastor. When their favored candidate, the Reverend Theophilus Stork, D. D., was not selected, ninety-six members left First to establish **St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church** with Stork as pastor. The scholarly and prolific Stork had held previous posts in Winchester, VA., and in Philadelphia. The history of Synod of Maryland notes that almost all of the Sunday school teachers and administrative leaders left for St. Marks. This fact, along with the decision to erect an Akron Plan Sunday school building suggests that part of the dispute may have been over the role of religious education.

In any case, the departing members and Stork initially worshipped in the Third Presbyterian Church on Eutaw Street, where the two congregations met *jointly* on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, with the respective ministers alternating in officiating at the services. Sunday evening Lutheran-only services were also held. In 1861, the congregation bought the Third Presbyterian Church building in which they had been meeting, and, presumably, the Presbyterians moved out. In 1895 the congregation began planning for a new church building, and bought the lot at St. Paul and 20<sup>th</sup>, where the current building stands. Architect Joseph Evans Sperry was commissioned to design the new church, and construction began in 1898. The building was completed at a cost of \$110,000.

**Architecture and Ornamentation.**

Architect Joseph Evans Sperry, who is most famous for designing Baltimore's Emerson “Bromo Seltzer” Tower, developed a basilica plan space enveloped by a Romanesque exterior vocabulary.



Random ashlar stone, compressed columns, round-arched doors, a rose window, and single tower define the exterior. This neo-medieval exterior fit well into the surrounding landscape of the period, dialoging with its contemporaries, the Gothic Revival Seventh Baptist Church down the block and the Richardsonian Romanesque St. Michael's and All Angels kitty-corner across the street.



St. Mark's interior, however, vastly outshines its rather restrained exterior. The basilica-shaped interior, decorated by Tiffany Glass & Decorating Company director, Rene de Quelen, is an excellent example of a nineteenth-century Tiffany interior. The Byzantine theme of the interior includes little representational iconography, apart from the symbol of the cross between the arches supporting the clerestory and in the clerestory windows. Instead, intricate organic arabesque designs cover most surfaces, alluding to the Islamic sources that the company began to reproduce after Louis Comfort Tiffany's trip to Spain and North Africa.

The altar, pulpit and lectern, composed of Rubio marble inlaid with mother of pearl, were created by the J. & R. Lamb Company.

Due largely to this remarkable interior, the building was designated a Baltimore Landmark in December 2012 by the Baltimore Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation.

**Sources and Further Reading:**

Gunts, Edward. “Tiffany-designed church interior a Baltimore landmark candidate.” *Baltimore Sun*. 26 November 2013. [http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-11-26/news/bs-md-landmark-church-20121126\\_1\\_landmark-status-designation-landmark-protection](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-11-26/news/bs-md-landmark-church-20121126_1_landmark-status-designation-landmark-protection). Accessed 9 November 2013.

Wentz, Abdel Ross. *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland of the United Lutheran church in America, 1820-1920*. Harrisburg: Evangelical Press, 1920. <https://archive.org/details/historyofevang00wentz>. Accessed 29 October 2013.

**Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. Now Berea Temple Seventh Day Adventist Church. (Drive-by on tour)**

**1901 Madison Avenue, Baltimore, MN 21217**

<http://www.bereatemple.org/>

**History.** Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, also known as Nidche Yisrael (The Scattered of Israel) was, in 1830, the first Jewish congregation chartered by the state of Maryland; it is now the largest Reform Jewish congregation in the state. Initially, this congregation met in private homes and commercial spaces. In 1845, however, with the aid of architect Robert Cary Long, Jr., the congregation erected the **Lloyd Street Synagogue**, a Greek Revival landmark in the heart of Baltimore. Although enlarged in 1861, the synagogue eventually proved inadequate and the congregation sold it in 1889, at which time it became St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic (a Lithuanian parish) Church. In 1905, an orthodox Jewish congregation bought the building, establishing in it Shomrei Mishmeres HaKodes. This congregation moved out in 1963. The building was subsequently restored and is now part of the Jewish Museum of Maryland.

**Architecture.** In 1891, the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation moved into the building we will drive by—its new synagogue designed by Charles L. Carson (who also designed St. Mark's Lutheran). This building echoes Byzantine architecture, with its centralized Greek cross plan, central dome supported by an octagonal drum, and recessed porch covered with a round arch. Rising like minarets above the synagogue, two octagonal towers flank the entry and are topped with open balustrades and tiled domed roofs. Exterior ornament is restrained, limited to ornamental dentils, and contrasting stringcourses.



During the late nineteenth century, the use of the Byzantine style and the closely related Moorish style was quite common for synagogues. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise's renowned Plum Street Temple in Cincinnati, Ohio, is perhaps the best-known example, but dozens of others, including this one in Baltimore existed across the country.

The reasons for the popularity of the style are somewhat obscured. Some historians speculate that these Eastern Mediterranean, North African and Andalusian styles, all closely associated with Islamic architectural practices, were popular among Jewish congregations seeking to signal a historical connection with these regions. These architectural references were deemed more appropriate than those associated exclusively with Christian sources, particularly the Gothic revival style, which had predominated in synagogue design until this period.

Christian congregations also adopted the Byzantine and Moorish styles although less widely than did Jewish congregations. St. Mark's Lutheran in Baltimore, is an excellent example of a Byzantine church interior although the exterior is markedly Romanesque. Importantly, architect Charles L. Carson designed both buildings, hiring Tiffany design the interior of the church.

**Sources and Further Reading:**

Historic American Buildings Survey. Library of Congress. Lloyd Street Synagogue. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/md0174.photos.085845p/resource/>. Accessed 9 November 2013.

Jewish Virtual Library. Virtual Jewish World: Baltimore, Maryland. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/Isource/yiw/Baltimore.html>. Accessed 9 November 2013.

National Register of Historic Places: Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Synagogue. Inventory No. B-3702. <http://mh.t.maryland.gov/nr/NRDetail.aspx?HIDID=405&COUNTY=Baltimore%20City&FROM=NRCountyList.aspx?COUNTY=Baltimore%20City>. Accessed 9 November 2013.

Roylance, Frank D. "Jewish ritual bath found in Baltimore may be oldest in U.S." *The Baltimore Sun*. 13 February 2011. [http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2011-02-13/news/bs-md-lloyd-synagogue-mikveh-0207-20110213\\_1\\_mikveh-jewish-ritual-bath-lloyd-street-synagogue](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2011-02-13/news/bs-md-lloyd-synagogue-mikveh-0207-20110213_1_mikveh-jewish-ritual-bath-lloyd-street-synagogue). Accessed 9 November 2013.

*The next two buildings on the tour are representative of the large and complex religious structures built by growing congregations in the American suburbs after WWII. Northwest Baltimore developed rapidly during this period as the population moved out from the center city. Both buildings reflect a conscious decision to build in a contemporary style and accommodate dense weekly programming for all ages.*

## Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

7401 Park Heights Avenue  
Baltimore, MN 21208

<http://www.bhcong.org/>

As mentioned above, the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation met in two previous buildings, the 1845 Greek Revival Lloyd Street Synagogue (now a museum operated by the Jewish Museum of Maryland), and the 1891 Byzantine revival structure by Charles L. Carson (now Berea Temple Seventh Day Adventist Church). By the mid-twentieth century, the congregation had outgrown this latter building, and the Jewish population was moving out of east Baltimore's immigrant neighborhoods to take up residence in the leafy northwestern suburbs. This area lacked the restrictive covenants and unwritten discrimination that prohibited Jews from buying homes elsewhere, and Jews felt comfortable moving as a religious and ethnic community into this newly developing area. At the time there were 1400 families in the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, 300 more families had joined by the early 1960s.

**Architecture and Artworks:** Percival Goodman (1904-1989), the architect of the 1951 synagogue and the 1965 expansion, was the most prolific American synagogue architect of the mid-twentieth century. He designed more than fifty between 1948 and 1983, all in a contemporary style. Goodman called himself "an agnostic converted by Hitler," and strongly believed that a new architecture was necessary for post-Holocaust Jews. Convinced that modern architecture could be a successful vehicle for the Jewish tradition, he advocated creating buildings that looked to the future rather than borrowing historical styles from the past. Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was one of Goodman's earliest synagogue commissions.

Jews, like Christians, were building large, seven-day-a-week plants in newly developing suburban areas, and this building is an excellent window into the culture of postwar suburban Jews. Goodman used the eye-catching massive exterior facade, with relief sculptures in the recesses by George Aarons, to draw attention from passing motorists. Inside, the building served as a complex community center.



The rectangular sanctuary is flooded with light from bands of clear glass windows at floor level and sculptural clerestory windows that include a Star of David. Goodman designed a flexible space, originally providing curtain partitions that could separate the side aisles from the central space for purposes such as Sunday school meetings. The focus of the room is a dual-platformed bema housing a large pulpit on the lower level, and, on the upper, a stunning Ark (holding a collection of elaborate and historic Torah scrolls) covered by a tapestry designed by Amalie Rothschild and needlepointed by the Sisterhood women. A curved screen covering the entire front

wall provides a neutral-colored but richly textured background for the Ark, while also softening the sharp corners of the room. Above the Ark hangs the Eternal Lamp (Ner Temid), and, against the wall, the Ten Commandments. The Eternal Lamp and large Menorah, standing to the left of the Ark, were created by Arnold Bergier.

Like the sanctuary, the adjoining social hall is also divisible into smaller rooms. In this room, the sanctuary and the entrance, Goodman used ample natural light and incorporated the work of contemporary artists. The mural in the lobby facing Park Heights Avenue was created by William M. Halsey.



The chapel, part of Goodman's 1965 addition, is now the most-used prayer space in the building. Surprising and beautiful figural windows by Nissan Engel tell the story of Jewish history. To the left of the entrance note the Holocaust with a figure in striped pajamas bearing a gold star. The 1965 expansion also included a 1000-seat auditorium, enlarged the school wing, and added offices and other meeting rooms. A preschool wing and library were constructed in the 1970s.

Many thanks to Gerri Kobren for help preparing this history.

### Sources and Further Reading:

Thiry, Paul, Richard M. Bennett, and Henry L Kamphoefner. *Churches and Temples*. NY: Reinhold Publishing Co., 1953.

Elman, Kimberly J. and Angela Girard, eds. *Percival Goodman: Architect, Planner, Teacher, Painter*. Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001.

## Ohel Shalom

7310 Park Heights Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21208

<http://www.templeohelshalom.org/>

Across the street note the arches of Temple Ohel Shalom (1960, Walter Gropius; thoroughly renovated in 2002 by Levin-Brown Architects), the third location of another of Baltimore's distinguished Reform congregations, founded by German Jews in 1853.





**The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer**  
**5603 North Charles St.**

**Baltimore, Maryland 21210**

<http://www.redeemeronline.com/>

Pietro Belluschi, with Taliaferro & Lamb, associated architects

Colored glass altar screen designed by György Kepes, fabricated in studio of Gabriel Loire, Chartres

Metal altar cross, Ronald Hayes Pearson

**History:** In the mid-nineteenth century when this parish was founded (1855), the area was primarily the rural retreat of wealthy Baltimoreans who spent the summer months at their country estates. Redeemer's first church, a stone Gothic building consecrated in 1857 and enlarged in the 1870s, was sufficient for the small congregation for nearly one hundred years. In 1918 this area was annexed to the city of Baltimore and by the later 1920s had become a region of suburban development. In 1928 a large parish house was added to support the weekly activities of the parish.

With the rapid suburban development following WWII, the local population grew tremendously. During the rectorship of Rev. Richard Henry Baker (1931-1951), for instance, the congregation grew from 116 to 1004 communicants, and another 900 had joined by 1954. The congregation enlarged as much as possible the existing spaces, but it was clear that, even with multiple services, the sanctuary (seating 280) and the 1920s parish hall would not be able to serve a congregation exceeding 2000, including 900 children in Sunday school. In 1955, when the congregation published its centennial history, it was the fastest growing parish in the diocese of Maryland, filled with young families, its parish hall busy every day of the week. It was also an anchor parish for the diocese, supporting the growth of many new parishes in the region.

The mid-fifties building project doubled the size of the physical plant on what was by then a nine-acre property. The church has always been known for its beautiful grounds, and the 1950s expansion provided for several quiet garden spaces for meditation or fellowship. The parish continued to grow with the population and then faced the inevitable aging and numerical decline experienced by most postwar suburban churches after the peak decades, although it has continued to be a strong congregation. Average Sunday attendance in 2012 was about 400 out of almost 1600 registered communicants, with 150 children enrolled in Sunday school. The parish has an annual budget of \$1.7 million; endowment funds help with operating expenses and parish maintenance.

**Architecture.** The first church, a small English Gothic stone building constructed of stone quarried locally, was the work of young Baltimore architect Richard Snowden

Andrews. Another architect enlarged this building in 1870-71, adding a separate chancel and the spire that continues to be the most prominent architectural feature of the site. After the construction of the new sanctuary in the 1950s, this became the "chapel" and is used for smaller services, weddings, and funerals. The 1864 rectory was torn down to make way for the 1950s addition, its old stone incorporated into the walls of the new sanctuary.

The Parish Hall (1928), by architects Machen and Dixon, was enlarged in 1936 and later again in 1949 by well-known Philadelphia architect Harold Wagoner. Little was done to the building until 1995, when the kitchen was rebuilt and the building made ADA compliant.

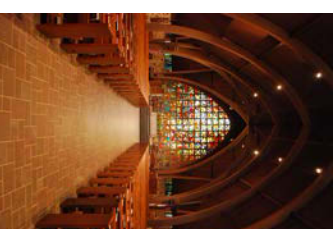


**New Sanctuary (1958).** One of the primary reasons the congregation chose internationally famous architect Pietro Belluschi, then dean of the architecture school at MIT, was because he respected the integrity of the old stone church. Belluschi was by then known for his attention to local building traditions, particularly evident in his contemporary, airy, wooden churches in the Pacific Northwest. In Redeemer he combined his love of natural materials, a craft aesthetic, appreciation for the English Gothic tradition, and his attraction to Japanese design.

The congregation was not expecting to choose contemporary architecture for its new sanctuary. The young rector, Rev. Bennett Jones Sims (1951-64) (later the Bishop of Atlanta), wrote, "I personally was not at all inclined to accept a contemporary design, but I became thoroughly persuaded of its worth during educational and inspirational encounters with Mr. Belluschi and his associates.

Once I had gotten beyond the point of fearing the inevitable controversy in the congregation [which did in fact ensue], I didn't for a minute regret the choice of a contemporary architect, and now that the project is completed and in use, my heart sings for joy" (*Modern Church Architecture*, 182).

The cross-axial church sets the altar at the crossing under open laminated trusses that echo the decorative ribs of the older building. Dramatic light enters the sanctuary from the large altar window of colored glass in lacy concrete, transept windows of amber glass placed in wooden louvers in a subtle cross pattern, and a ribbon window of strongly colored glass



panes resting above the stone curtain walls. Along with many of his contemporaries, Rev. Sims looked for theological meaning in new church design. "The roof," he wrote, "supported as it is by soaring arches, suggests the mystery-

filled vertically so characteristic of Gothic design. The floor plan, gathering a large congregation around a central chancel, works to draw people together on a horizontal plane. The result is a church building that almost instantly speaks the two indispensable dimensions of the Christian faith—the vertical in terms of our relationship to God, the horizontal in terms of our relationship to one another” (*Modern Church Architecture*, 178).

All the structures were joined together in the new plan, which included a substantial new Church school building and wing. Two stories of well-lit Sunday school classrooms, an auditorium, crafts room, choir room, office, and play pen and cribs rooms for the youngest children, a large service room and kitchen supported the seven-day-a-week activities of the congregation. The success of the design shows in how well Belluschi was able to blend the old and the new in one coherent structure.

Recent renovations replaced windows and installed a geothermal ventilation and heating/cooling system.

#### **Sources for Further Reading.**

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Christ-Janer, Albert and Mary Mix Foley. *Modern Church Architecture: A Guide to the Form and Spirit of Twentieth-Century Religious Building*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1962. 171-83.

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