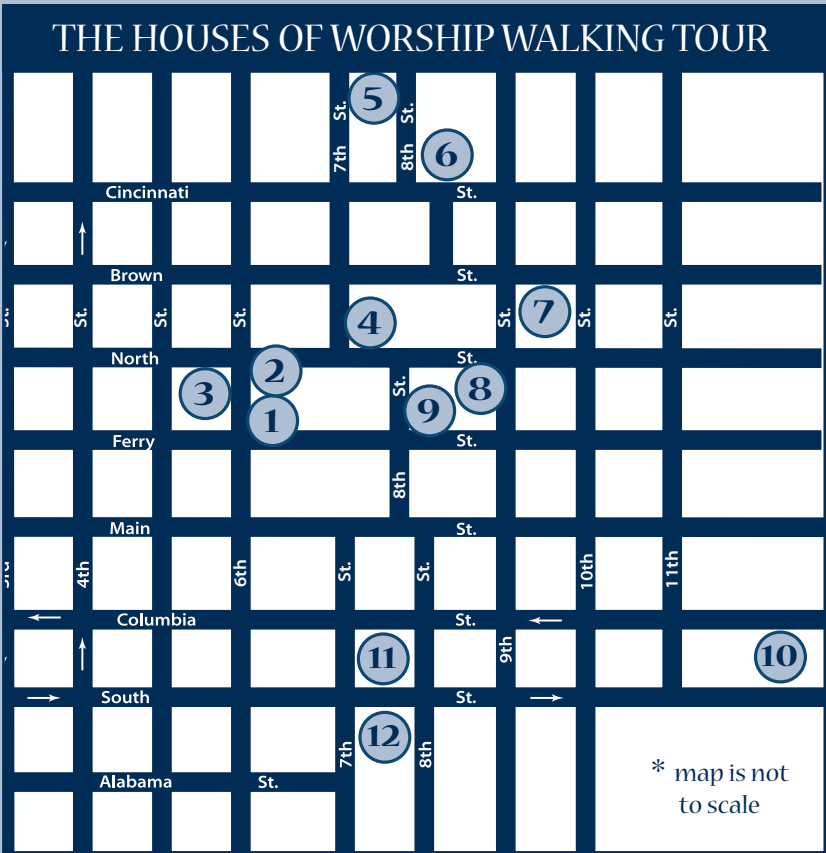


Downtown
LAFAYETTE
Houses of Worship
walking tour





Downtown Lafayette remains the heart of our community with its active businesses, inviting public areas, and community festivities. The beautiful turn-of-the-century architecture as illustrated by our 1885 courthouse, businesses, historic neighborhoods, and churches make this a wonderful place to walk and explore. We hope this walking/driving tour of our downtown historic houses of worship will help you discover this interesting aspect of Lafayette's heritage!



- 1.) St. John's Episcopal Church - 600 Ferry Street
- 2.) First Christian Church - 329 North 6th Street
- 3.) Trinity United Methodist Church - 404 North 6th Street
- 4.) First Baptist Church - 411 North 7th Street
- 5.) Sons of Abraham Synagogue - 661 North 7th Street
- 6.) St. James Lutheran Church - 800 Cincinnati Street
- 7.) Brown Street United Methodist Church - 905 Brown Street
- 8.) St. Boniface Catholic Church - 318 North 9th Street
- 9.) Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church - 820 Ferry Street
- 10.) St. Mary's Cathedral - 1207 Columbia Street
- 11.) Central Presbyterian Church - 31 North 7th Street
- 12.) Unitarian Universalist - 17 South 7th Street

St. John's Episcopal Church

1

600 Ferry Street

The congregation was organized in 1837. The first pastor, Reverend Samuel Johnson, had come to the Northwest Territory with a missionary the year before. After it was decided to establish a parish here, he donated a plot of ground on this corner for the first church. A small frame building was built in 1838. In 1844, the congregation repaid his generosity by building him a home on the southeast side of the lot. The home still stands directly to the east of the church and is thought to be one of the oldest standing residences in Lafayette.

The congregation purchased a pipe organ in 1859 and it is thought to have been the first used in a Lafayette church. Pastor Johnson is also said to have been the first to encourage a local church to include children in the celebration of Christmas. The church's outbuildings are believed to have been used as stops on the Underground Railroad.

The first church building was moved to the back of the lot to be used as a school around 1857. The present building was built in 1858 and designed by William Tinsley. The Gothic Revival brick building is now covered with stucco and is representative of the mid-nineteenth century movement towards "muscular" Gothic. The heavy appearance of the masonry, the stained glass windows with simple Gothic arched hoods, the doors, and the spire are all hallmarks of this style. The tower is visually separated into four levels, with a stone string-course and buttresses stepping inward as they rise up the corners. The Ferry Street facade features three segment Gothic arch stained glass windows.

Originally, the entrance was located under the central window on the Ferry Street side, but was relocated to the tower in the 1870s. Renovations have added a chapel, fellowship and educational areas and restored interior finishes while maintaining the historic character and fabric of the building.



First Christian Church

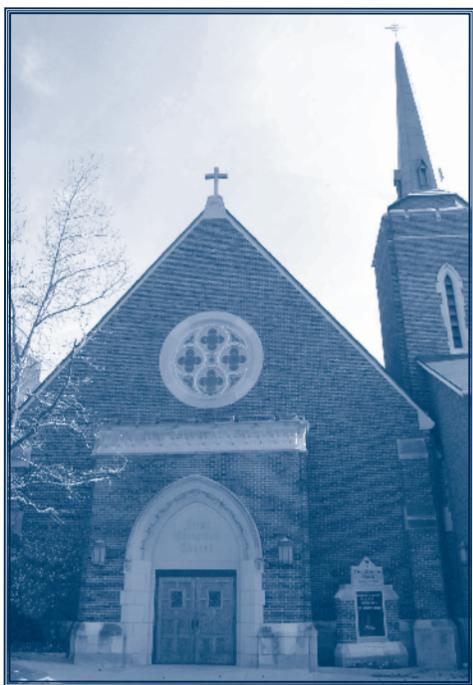
2

329 North Sixth Street

The congregation was organized in 1839 and suffered the difficulties that were common in early pioneer settlements—meeting in various buildings, no ministers, and a developing community. In 1861, Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Disciples of Christ, visited the community. His aide made the following comment about Lafayette, “This is one of the best business places in the state, and like many other markets of commerce, shows but feeble sign of spiritual life.” Regardless of this environment, churches continued to gain in strength and membership.

This present building on Sixth Street was dedicated in 1914. It was built in the Craftsman style and is an interesting contrast to many of the other downtown church buildings. The building exhibits many of the features popular in the early twentieth century, including overhanging eaves and simple ornamentation. The entrance is recessed behind an arched brick columned entry, similar to many porches on bungalows. The cornice line on the “porch” and roof has overhanging open eaves with exposed rafter tails, a hallmark of the style. There are stone

sills, foundation and other details on the building, again repeating common decorative elements. There was originally a classic Craftsman open tower on the west-side of the building. The belfry level was removed in the mid-twentieth century. Andrew Carnegie assisted this congregation with the purchase of a pipe organ. The building was expanded to the east in 1954, with the addition of a new sanctuary and tower in a modern Gothic style, that blended with the Craftsman nature of the original building. Note the distinctive rose windows in the sanctuary, as well as the symbolic stained glass windows throughout the building.



Trinity United Methodist Church

3

404 North Sixth Street

This congregation traces its beginnings to 1824, before the city of Lafayette had been founded. After several moves, this lot was purchased in 1868, and the church was constructed the next year. At the dedication, it was definitely standing room only with an estimated 1,500 people in a sanctuary that was designed to seat 600. Note the entryways, arches over the windows, towers, and many small gables on this Gothic Revival style building. The spires were changed in the 1920s.

Stained glass windows designed by Edna Browning Ruby, a world famous artist and designer, were added later. She was a native of Lafayette, who won many awards both in Europe and the United States. At the age of 28, the petite and “charmingly feminine” Miss Ruby took up the study of stained glass. At the time of her death in 1937, it is thought that she was the only woman in the country that built and installed stained glass windows. Locally, Stidham United Methodist Church and Elston Presbyterian Church also have incorporated her windows, as well as several large churches in Indianapolis.



First Baptist Church

4

411 North Seventh Street

This church was organized in 1835, when the city had about a thousand inhabitants. Baptists, of course, believe in complete immersion baptism. Some members felt that the baptism should be performed in a running stream; therefore, in the early days here in Lafayette, it was performed in the Wabash River. This required a walk by the candidate, pastor, choir, and congregation to a river location—usually at the bottom of Main Street. Starting in 1855, the church began using the Canal—often at the Union or Salem Street location. The last outdoor baptism for this church was in February of 1872. First Baptist did mission work in Chauncey, now West Lafayette, and formed the first church in that city in the late 1860s.



The cornerstone for this building was laid in 1869 and dedicated in October of 1872. The building combines common building forms and ornamentation of the Norman Gothic style with the emphasis on round Norman arches and tall, thin columns. Elias Max, a prominent local architect and builder who also built the Courthouse, designed the original southern portion of the present church. The central gable has a corbelled brick cornice, a rose window with a quatrefoil design in the peak, and a massive central Norman arched window with a three-arched top window under a single stone hood and surround. Corbels are decorative patterns with header bricks that extend beyond the line of the wall. On the ground level, there is a pair of double entrance doors with stained glass half-round transoms, flanking the central double and elaborately decorated doors, all have stone arched hoods and surrounds that continue the Norman Gothic motif. Before too long, an 18-stop tractor-action pipe organ constructed by Hook & Hastings Organ Company was purchased for \$40,000—equivalent to the cost of the original church building. To each side there are large towers that originally were surmounted by tall spires, the northern one reaching a height of 210 feet. These spires were removed in 1921, and the current Gothic parapets and small copper corner spires were added. The organ was rebuilt in the early 1970s and is a beautiful instrument. The interior of the church sanctuary has wonderful stained glass windows and walnut woodwork.

Sons of Abraham Synagogue

5

661 North Seventh Street

A Jewish congregation was first organized in Lafayette in the late 1840s. Within two years a formal constitution, name, and building were in place. An orthodox congregation was formed in 1889 and continued on an informal basis for several years.

Sometime around 1890-91, a hall was rented by the group and the name Sons of Abraham was taken when it was formally organized in 1892.

The congregation constructed this building in 1904. It is a one-and-a-half story gable front brick building that was considered very modern, yet traditional at the time it was constructed. The triangular motif is emphasized in the windows, entrance pediment and the roofline. The entry door is a wooden double



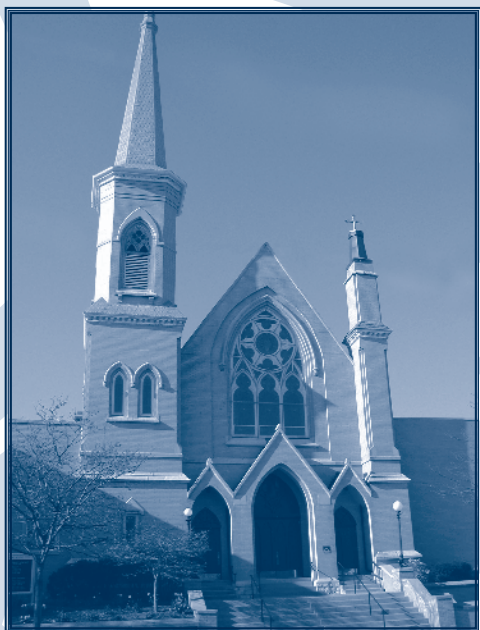
door with panels and carvings. The stained glass window in the front of the building is unusual in that it changes from a menorah to a kiddush cup from daylight to darkness.

St. James Lutheran Church

6

800 Cincinnati Street

The church was formed in 1850 for the German Lutheran community of Lafayette. The first church was built on Ferry Street, the present Bethel A.M.E. Church location, although the building has been altered. The church continued to grow and soon built a two-story building on the corner of Seventh and Alabama Streets. They were at that location for almost twenty years before they again needed a bigger church. This Gothic style building was complete in 1872 and one author stated that it was considered



to be the handsomest church structure in the city. The Grace Episcopal Church, a congregation that had separated from St. John's Episcopal Church because of doctrinal differences, built it. After several years, the congregations rejoined and this building was offered for sale. St. James bought the present building in 1884. There is a set of three Gothic arched double entrance doors at the front of the building below a large stained glass window with elaborate Gothic tracery. The belfry of the west tower has decorative carvings over the belfry vents, and is surmounted by a tall steeple. A brick spire on the east side balances the tower. In 1965, a large addition was built on the west side of the church. An addition to the east was built in the 1990s. Stained glass windows in the interior of the church portray the life of Christ in sequence as you walk to the left around the sanctuary.

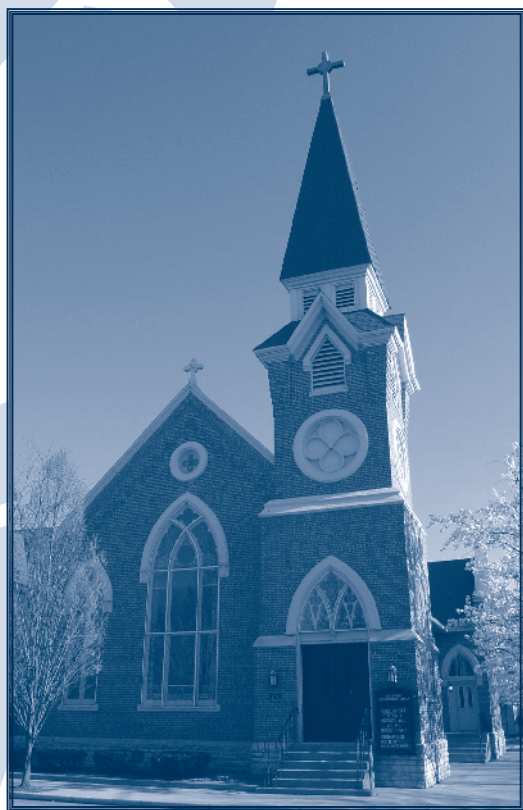
Originally, all of St. James' services were conducted in German. About 1906, the members began to discuss having services in English—younger members heard and spoke English in all other life situations, older members did not understand English well and wished to continue with the German. A compromise was reached by having German services on Sunday morning and English services in the evening. The first English morning service was held in 1917.

Brown Street United Methodist Church

7

905 Brown Street

The Methodist Church was one of the first religious groups to send circuit riders into the Lafayette area. They also placed a high value on education and opened five of the six early academies in the Greater Lafayette area. The Brown Street Church was formed in 1851 as the German Methodist Episcopal Church with its services in that language. The present building was constructed in the mid-1880s, in what was then the heart of the German community. This brick church was built during the summer of 1885, at a cost of \$15,000. The church has a gable-front, with a tower on the northwest corner, and a cross gable at the back that faces Ninth Street. The original steeple was struck by lightning in 1933 and was later rebuilt, although the present steeple does not appear to be as tall as the original. There is a cross on the apex of the front gable, which appears to be the same one shown in an 1890 photograph. The front is divided into three bays, with a large central stained glass window, and a tower in the western bay.



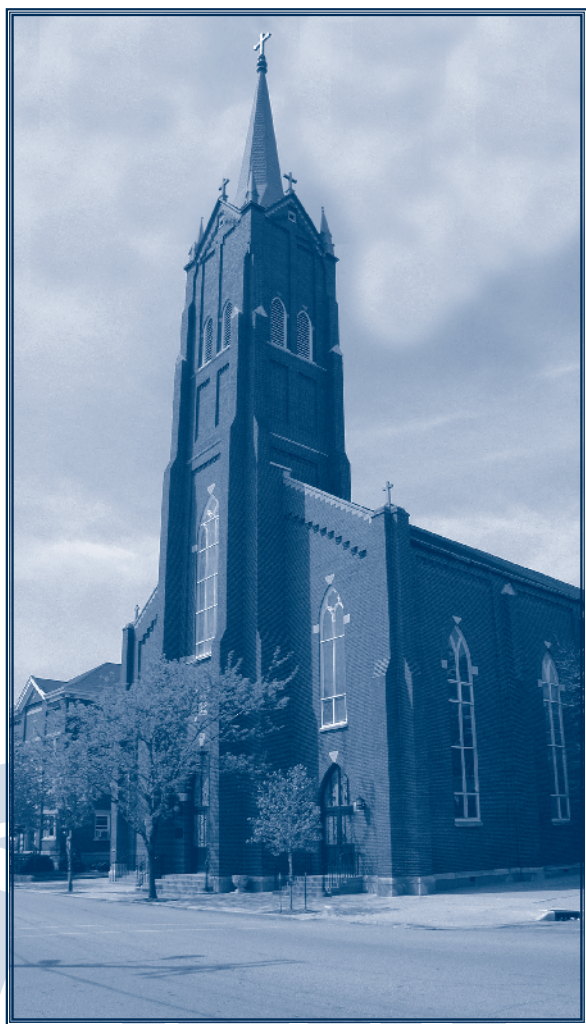
The windows are all Gothic arched, as is the door transom, and all are stained glass. The double doors are surmounted by an elaborate divided Gothic arch transom, with stained glass and elongated quatrefoil patterns. The church's original bell still rings for their services. Services were conducted in German until the congregation voted to have English services in 1919. The building's exterior was restored in 1974 and the church is recognized as one of Tippecanoe County's historic buildings.

St. Boniface Catholic Church

8

318 North Ninth Street

By 1853, there were enough German speaking Catholics in the area that they decided to establish a parish of their own. The first St. Boniface Church was built on Tenth Street in 1854. By 1863, the new parish had grown so quickly that it was decided to build a new church on this corner of Ninth and North Streets. This was the site of an early burial ground for settlers and Native Americans. Arrangements were made to move the bodies to Greenbush Cemetery. The present multi-story Gothic



revival building was completed in 1865 in what was then the heart of the German-American community. The façade has three parts with a projecting central tower and flanking side bays. The tower was originally flat on top with a large stained glass rose window at the top level. The present tower and spire were added to the church in 1887. At one point, the exterior of the church was covered with imitation stone to preserve the early brick structure. This was removed in 1954 and replaced with a veneer of brick and stone.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

9

820 Ferry Street

In 1850, a Lutheran church was built on this site. The Bethel A.M.E. Church purchased the building in 1866. The church was originally a gable-fronted frame structure with a small tower over the entrance. Parts of this building are incorporated in the present day structure. Church offices were added sometime after 1922 in the space between the façade and the sidewalk. This resulted in the current look with three triplets of stained glass windows and the main entrance.

The building has been remodeled a number of times over the course of its history and was probably covered with stucco sometime in the 1920s.

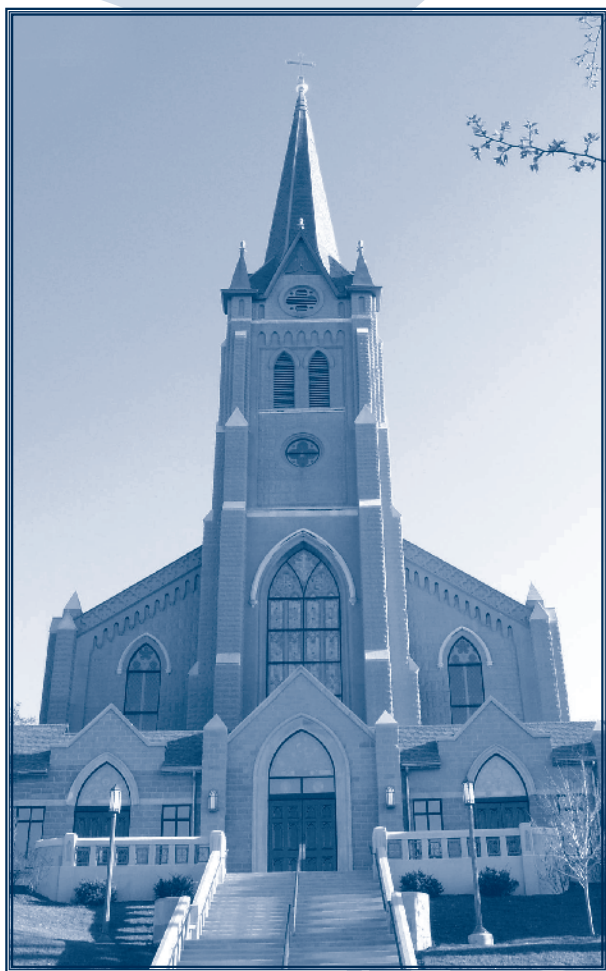
The Bethel AME Church founded one of the earliest schools in the community. When the state established free education for black children in 1869, the church offered the city this school. It was used until Lincoln School was opened in the mid-1880s.



St. Mary's Cathedral

10

1207 Columbia Street



Lawrence B. Stockton, a non-Catholic, donated a plot of ground known as Seminary Hill for a Catholic Church, school, and parochial residence. Work on the present church began in 1861, when the site of the old Tippecanoe County Seminary was leveled off and the limestone foundation for the church was laid. However, the Civil War interrupted the construction and the church was not dedicated until August of 1866. St.

Ignatius Academy, a private Catholic boarding school, was also once located on the west-side of the lot. The cathedral has a Gothic design with a central aisle, tower, and a three bay facade. Frescos and many of the stained glass memorial windows were added during the 1880s. A new belfry and steeple were constructed on top of an old flat-topped tower in 1898. The height to the gilded cross on top of the new steeple was 180 feet. The front entrance steps and balustrade replaced the wooden railed steps in 1904. The 1920s and 30s saw the exterior brick veneered and the elaborate front entrance and steps added. As the church entered the 21st Century the church's exterior, interior, and steeple were renovated. The fellowship area was also added at this time.

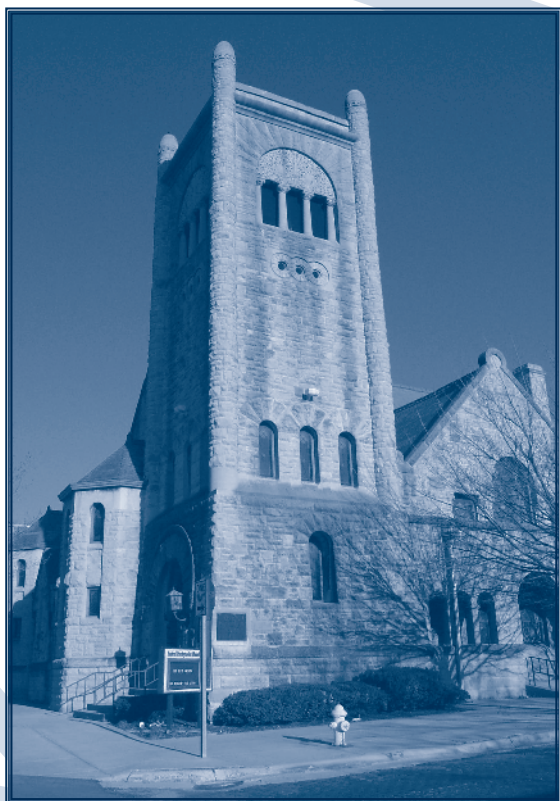
Central Presbyterian Church

11

31 North Seventh Street

The Presbyterians sent missionaries into this area to establish a church in 1828. They built their first church in 1832. In the 1840s, the church split on a national level into the New School and Old School factions. The local congregations also split and the First and Second Presbyterian Churches were formed. The First Presbyterian Church was on the southwest corner of Sixth and Columbia Streets circa 1870.

From 1851-55, the Second Presbyterian Church was on the northeast corner of Sixth and Main Streets. The Second Presbyterian Church completed this building in 1895.



It is an excellent example of Romanesque design built from rough-faced limestone. The entrance tower at the northwest corner was originally topped by a conical roof, but this was removed after a fire in 1913. Entrance to the sanctuary is through a rounded arched doorway on the north side of the tower, and through an entrance of the opposite end of the north façade. There are large rounded arched windows in the cross gables on the east and west sides of the sanctuary. Note the graceful loggia on the west façade. The education building, Colonial Revival style of architecture, was built in 1927. The First and Second Presbyterian Churches merged in 1914, and Central Presbyterian was formed.

Unitarian Universalist

12

17 South Seventh Street

The Jewish congregation known as Ahavas Achim or “Brotherly Love” constructed this building in 1867. It is thought to be the oldest standing brick synagogue in the state of Indiana. The congregation split in 1889 with the conservative group, the Sons of Abraham, moving to a different building. The Temple Israel congregation continued to use this Seventh Street building until moving to West Lafayette in 1976. The primary façade is divided into three sections by four brick pilasters that extend beyond the roofline and are corbelled, almost chimney-like elements. All of the window and door openings on the front of the building have arched openings with corbelled hood moldings. There is a round opening, called a roundel, where a Star of David was inscribed during the building’s life as a temple. After several years, the Unitarian Universalist purchased the building and following renovations, it was re-dedicated as their church in 1979. The building is on Indiana’s Register of Historic Places. The Unitarian and Universalist congregations, who merged in 1962, had met in a home in West Lafayette before they purchased this building.





*We hope you have enjoyed discovering
the historic churches of Downtown.*

*We invite you to enjoy other historic
architecture and interesting buildings
by using the Downtown Lafayette Guide,
Self-guided Architectural Walking Tour,
Tippecanoe County Courthouse Guide,
or the audio-tour of Lafayette's Main Street.*

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