City Guide to Sacred Spaces
– Chicago, IL
Within this “City of Big Shoulders,” lies a vast network of spires and steeples. Churches, synagogues and mosques appear like hidden jewels buried within the fabric of the city, integrated into the urban grid and set amidst Loop skyscrapers. As an organization, Chicago is our physical home, where Sacred Space International was born and it’s a city we know well. The curated selection of sacred spaces we present in the guide have leaders who expressed interest in interfaith understanding and collaborated with us in our work. Architecturally, they encompass the magnificent and the modest, from the soaring nine-sided structure of the Baha’i Temple in Wilmette, to the Downtown Islamic Center – a quiet, unassuming space, hidden behind a commercial storefront.

Look at this city through the lens of its religious architecture and gain an appreciation for the people who carved out their space – setting it aside from everyday life for the purpose of ritual, worship or simply peace. Mainly, we chose spaces sited in or near the Downtown Loop, but we also included a small group of historically and architecturally significant sites at the periphery of the city.

The evolution of Chicago as a center for architecture has been well documented. Its other history as an historical hub for interfaith dialogue is lesser known. The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, also known at the Chicago World's Fair, was the site for the First Parliament of the World’s Religions. As a result, the Baha’is chose to stay here and build their only Temple in North America. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science, came to share her new religion with the rest of the world – and took the influence of the Beaux Arts style back to Boston when she left. The continuity of architectural evolution and interfaith dialogue make Chicago an ideal city to explore sacred space. We hope you are inspired to visit and uncover the same beauty and marvels we experienced when we entered inside this group of sacred spaces. We know you will be awed by what you find.

Deirdre Colgan,
Executive Director, Sacred Space International
Chicago, 2010
“Dedicated on Easter, the Sky Chapel is the highest place of worship above ground level in the world with a carving of Jesus weeping over the city of Chicago because people still do not know ‘the things that make for peace.’”

ERIK NUSSBAUM, MUSIC DIRECTOR

The Chicago Temple

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS 77 W Washington Street, Chicago, IL 60602

NEIGHBORHOOD Chicago Loop

COORDINATES 41.883088, -87.630608

PARKING Garage at 172 W Washington has discount Sunday rates (validate ticket at the church).

NEAREST TRANSIT Washington stop on CTA Blue Line. Buses 22 and 36 run along Dearborn (NB) and Clark (SB) – all have stops near Washington St.

WEBSITE www.chicagotemple.org

PHONE (312) 236-4548

OPEN HOURS Call for an appointment or attend a service.

Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 8:30 a.m.
11:00 a.m.

Weds 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. Holy Communion
12:10 to 12:30 p.m. Noontime Worship
12:30 to 1:00 p.m. Holy Communion

Thursday 5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer

Friday 6:30-7:15 p.m. Taizé Worship
(first Fridays of the month)

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS

There are essentially two spaces to visit here – the main sanctuary on the ground level and the Sky Chapel on the 23rd floor. Elevators up to the chapel are very small. Allow extra time for groups larger than four. Tours of the Sky Chapel happen every Wednesday at 2 p.m. Daley Plaza and its famous Picasso sculpture are located across the street where you can get a great view of the skyscraper church.
As the oldest Church in Chicago, First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple was founded in 1831, when Chicago was no more than a small trading town still unconnected to the railroads that would make it a burgeoning metropolitan center. The congregation of First United Methodist Church hails from humble origins, having first met in members’ homes and later in a log cabin. The city was incorporated in 1837 and began to develop on the other side of the river, in what would become known as the Chicago “Loop.” In 1838, the log cabin was floated across the Chicago River to the congregation’s current home on Washington Street. The corner has since been known as “Methodist’s Corner.” At that time an innovative mixed-use space was built, allowing the congregation and its ministry to flourish in a self-sustaining way.

The Chicago Fire destroyed the congregation’s third permanent place of worship in 1871. The church was rebuilt and served its community until the 1920’s, when the demands of a growing population necessitated the construction of a new space. The 23-story Chicago Temple was dedicated in 1924. To this day, it contains the highest place of worship in the world, the Sky Chapel, which rises 400 feet above street level. The chapel was dedicated in 1952 in honor of Charles R. Walgreen, founder of the drugstore chain and member of the congregation. Today the Sky Chapel hosts weekly prayer services, weddings and other small gatherings.
Located in the heart of the Loop, The Chicago Temple was constructed by the architecture firm of Holabird & Roche in the neo-Gothic style, a popular architectural “rival” to the famed Prairie School in 1920’s Chicago. The form of the church is an ingenious mixed-use solution to the problem of maintaining a church in the business district of a major city. To create income, the church took the architectural form of a Gothic church and stretched it upwards into a skyscraper! Now sandwiched between the main sanctuary on the ground floor and the tower structure are eighteen floors of rentable commercial office space. The administration offices and property management offices occupy the first four floors.

The Chicago Temple’s primary sanctuary space seats its 1,000-member congregation. The interior continues in the neo-Gothic tradition through decorative elements such as carved wood paneling, painted vegetal motifs and a brilliantly colored rose window. Around the space, stained glass panels narrate scenes from the Old and New Testaments, and depict the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Ten exterior stained glass windows on the building’s west façade narrate the history of the church and its relationship with the city. The carved wood altars of both the main sanctuary and the Sky Chapel express a parallel message for peace by depicting Jesus weeping over Jerusalem and Chicago respectively. The Sky Chapel’s thirty-seat interior reveals the building’s wind bracing, indicative of Chicago’s tradition of structural expressionism and reminiscent of St. Andrew’s cross. In both spaces, congregants are called to reflect on the biblical context of city life and to look to faith in resolving the issues of urban life today. With its twenty-three floors and a total height of 568 feet, the structure held the record as the tallest skyscraper in the city until 1930, when the Chicago Board of Trade, by the same architects, claimed the title at forty-four floors and 605 feet. Today, the building’s neo-Gothic architecture stands in stark contrast to the modernist boxes that surround it.
Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS
55 E Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601

NEIGHBORHOOD
Downtown

COORDINATES
41.887112, -87.626136

PARKING
There is parking available for members attending a service, entry is from lower Wacker Drive. Call the Reading room for more info and permission to use these parking spots.

NEAREST TRANSIT
Lake stop on CTA Red Line, Clark/Lake stop on CTA Blue Line. CTA Bus 146 exit at Wabash and Wacker Drive.

WEBSITE
www.christiansciencechicago.org

PHONE
(312) 236-4671

OPEN HOURS
Reading Room open from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday – Friday

SERVICE HOURS
Sunday 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday 6:00 p.m. Testimony Meetings

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
The Christian Science Reading Room is open to the public five days a week from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Ask the person at the desk can you have a peek inside the wonderful amphitheater-like space of the main sanctuary; or attend a Testimony service on Wednesday evening to get a sense of how this space is used.

“A Greek theater would be the very good way of bringing people close together.”

HARRY WEESE, ARCHITECT
ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVED BY THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

The monolithic poured concrete structure seems to float above the space. Light pours through the oculus above.
ABOUT: HISTORY & ORIGINS

Mary Baker Eddy came to Chicago in 1893 to attend the World Parliament of Religions and represent her recently founded religion: Christian Science. While she was there, she was inspired by the Beaux Arts architecture of the World’s Columbian Exposition and from that point on Christian Science churches were constructed in the Greek and Roman Classical Revival style. However, the common architectural thread among all Christian Science churches is simplicity, such that the architecture fosters a focused study of the Bible and founder Mrs. Eddy’s text *Science and Health, With Key to the Scriptures*. Christian Science approaches these texts and testaments to spiritual healing, from a scientific perspective, based on study and rational understanding of God.

There is no formal hierarchy within the leadership structure and no formal ritual. To aid believers in this pursuit, each Christian Science church houses a Reading Room in addition to a central worship space, in addition to areas for administrative and educational needs. The Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist was founded in 1924 and rented worship space in various locations around downtown Chicago, including Symphony Hall. In 1956, they voted to purchase the odd, seven-sided lot at the corner of Wabash Avenue and Wacker Drive. From an original list of thirty-four architects, including his friend and fellow MIT graduate, I.M. Pei, Harry Weese was chosen to design their new church, which was dedicated in 1968. Interestingly, Weese had previously completed a major renovation of Symphony Hall in 1966–67, while the congregation was in residence there. Renowned for his preservation work in Chicago, Weese demonstrated in his design for the Seventeenth Church that he was able to apply classical principles of architecture to a new modern building style.

All seats are arranged auditorium-style facing the Readers and the organ.

Even the basement, where the Sunday School meets is flooded with light.
Harry Weese, a renowned humanist Chicago architect, is celebrated for bringing human needs to the forefront of his practice as a modernist. Trained also as a city planner at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, his work reflects a profound sense for how the individual part fits within the whole. Weese designed the Seventeenth Church using modernist materials such as travertine, raw concrete and glass. The low, conical shape and uniform, travertine-clad façade contrast sharply with its imposing skyscraper neighbors along the Chicago River. The brief called for no exterior windows in the sanctuary space, so Weese crowned the building with an oculus – a round opening allowing for a mysterious source of light within – reminiscent of the Roman Pantheon. Weese viewed churches as a type of “high theater,” and he designed this space “in the round,” evocative of Greek and Roman amphitheaters.

Weese believed that churches serve the rare function of providing a space for contemplation, such that “in churches there’s an abstraction which puts it more into the realm of art than functionalism.” When explaining his own spirituality in an interview, he said, “History is my higher power.”

Because there is no hierarchy or clergy in the Christian Scientist church, “Readers” are democratically elected by the community to represent them for a limited period of time. At Seventeenth Church, no seat is more than 54 feet from the Readers’ desk, allowing every congregant to share in a sense of togetherness and equality. Integrated speakers were part of the original design for each seat, reflecting the importance and equality of each voice.

Weese has used the site’s quirky nature, being situated on the double-deck of Wacker Drive to its best advantage. Seven stories of office and support space are located behind the main sanctuary, and a Reading room is located in the glass-enclosed lobby. The Sunday School for members under the age of eighteen, is tucked away on the lower level, but opens into a sunken plaza – which floods even this basement level space with an ethereal light from above.
“The building became known as ‘The People’s Palace.’”

TIM SAMUELSON, CHICAGO CULTURAL HISTORIAN

Chicago Cultural Center – Tiffany & G.A.R. Domes

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS
78 E Washington Street, Chicago, IL 60601

NEIGHBORHOOD
Chicago Loop/Downtown

COORDINATES
41.925472, -87.635964

PARKING
Grant Park North Garage at 25 N. Michigan Ave. Enter from middle lane on Michigan Ave., East Monroe St. Garage at 5 S. Columbus. Downtown parking is expensive. Average $27 for 2–8 hours of parking. Use public transit and wear good walking shoes!

NEAREST TRANSIT
Metra Electric Line Stop at Millennium Station; All Michigan Avenue Bus lines stop within a block of the Cultural Center.

WEBSITE
www.chicagoculturalcenter.org

PHONE
(312) 744-6630

OPEN HOURS
Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Closed holidays

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS

On Wednesdays at noon the public is invited to come to this sacred space to enjoy a free classical recital. The fine art of the live music and the space of the room make for a wonderful experience. The concert is simultaneously broadcast on the WFMT classical music station in Chicago.
The Chicago Cultural Center was built in 1897 as Chicago's first central Library.

When Michigan Avenue was still developing, the site chosen to build the new library was called Dearborn Park. A Civil War veteran's organization owned part of the land and negotiated to include the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Memorial Hall as part of the design. Even though there were many fine architects in Chicago at the time, the commission for the library went to the Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, who won the competition to design the new structure. This firm was the successor to H.H. Richardson's in Boston and had recently finished the Glessner House in Chicago after Richardson's death. Even though the firm had previously built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, the structure of the Library was pure Beaux Arts Classical Revival. This was the style of the moment after its rapturous reception at the Columbian World's Fair in 1893. For this event, the firm had designed what is now The Art Institute of Chicago, close by on Michigan Ave, built in the same Classical style.

By the mid-1920's, the library had outgrown its space. Chicago began to consider building a new library in 1970. At the time, it was common to demolish old buildings in the name of progress but Eleanor "Sis" Daley, Mayor Richard J. Daley's wife, spoke out against the proposed demolition and in a rare public comment said "I am for restoring and keeping all the beautiful buildings." As a result the library was transformed into the Cultural Center. The heavenly domes of this building, the G.A.R. dome and the Tiffany Dome in Preston Bradley Hall form the basis for our selection of this space as one that is sacred, but not affiliated with any particular faith tradition.
ARCHITECTURE DESCRIPTION

Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge constructed the first City of Chicago Library using the finest materials available and the best craftsman of the time. The neoclassical exterior is made of Indiana limestone with a granite base. The building is constructed without steel, using thick compressive masonry walls. Both entries have a distinct façade and are inspired by different classical periods of architecture. The south side has white marble Roman arches and is Italian Renaissance inspired. The north side is classically Greek with Doric columns and a portico.

As you enter from the north side on Randolph Street and climb the stairs to the second floor, you will see the G.A.R. – Grand Army of the Republic dome, located in the rotunda of Memorial Hall – reminding people of the loss that accompanies war. The forty-foot diameter stained glass dome was made by Healy & Millet of Chicago, who also designed work for the Auditorium Building by Adler and Sullivan. The G.A.R dome’s center oculus was restored in 2006 bringing daylight into the rotunda.

To see the other dome, enter from Washington Street and take a grand white marble staircase to the third floor and Preston Bradley Hall. In the center as you look up, is the largest Tiffany dome in the world. At thirty-eight feet in diameter it spans more than 1,000 square feet. During a restoration in 2008, each art glass panel was dismantled and cleaned by hand. The concrete and copper exterior dome added in the 1930’s was removed and replaced with a new translucent exterior dome. Now natural light once again illuminates the space.

Traces of its original use are preserved within this former library space. Names of authors and great thinkers line the arches and walls, sparkling with glass tesserae. The walls appear jewel-like; inlaid marble with Favrile glass, colored stone, mother-of-pearl, gold leaf and mosaic. The green stone is Connemara marble from Ireland; the white from the same Carrara marble quarry Michelangelo used in Italy. It seems fitting that immigrants from both countries would have come to this library in Chicago to study and read.
“This mosque began in the late 60’s as a much needed service in a prime location when a few congregants were looking for a place to pray our Friday prayer. Today, you can find almost every nationality here.”

BOARD MEMBER, DOWNTOWN ISLAMIC CENTER

Downtown Islamic Center
VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS  231 S State Street, 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604
NEIGHBORHOOD  Chicago Loop
COORDINATES  41.878712, -87.62723
PARKING  Surface lots are located on Wabash St. for a fee in addition to metered street parking.
NEAREST TRANSIT  Jackson stop on CTA Red Line. CTA Buses 2, 6, 29, 36, 146, 147 - exit at Adams stop.
WEBSITE  www.dic-chicago.org
PHONE  (312) 939-9095
OPEN HOURS  Call ahead for appointment.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
Before entering the space it is respectful (but not required) for women to cover their heads with a scarf while in the Prayer Hall. Shoes need to be removed upon entry and placed in the shoe racks provided in the foyer upstairs.
In the second half of the 20th century, Muslims from around the world began to settle in Chicago. The Downtown Islamic Center (DIC) was created in the 1960’s in response to the need for Muslims working in the Chicago Loop to have a place to gather for daily prayer and Jummah Friday prayer. Since the 1960’s, the community met in various rented office spaces in the Loop, changing locations as the number of congregants grew. In 2004, the Center purchased an existing storefront property on South State Street.

The Center currently serves a congregation predominantly of South Asian descent, although other nationalities are both welcomed and represented. Wudu or ablution areas for washing the hands, feet and face before prayer, are located on the third floor. The main musalla or prayer hall is on the fourth and top level.

The newly purchased five-story building at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and State Street was originally built to showcase automobiles. Today the building is home to an urban masjid which specially caters to working Muslims in the Chicago Loop. The Qur’an provides no clear rules as to what a mosque should look like, and the Downtown Islamic Center has creatively adapted traditional mosque architecture and design to this existing commercial structure. For ritual prayer, a mosque requires nothing more than a clean, unobstructed floor space and an indication of the qibla, the direction of Mecca. At the DIC, the mihrab, or alcove designating the qibla, is situated in a corner recess in the North East corner of the space. Diagonal lines in the carpet mark this departure from the regular north-south Chicago city grid. During prayer, the entire congregation shifts diagonally within the space to face Mecca together. Skylights above illuminate the prayer hall with natural light.

The third floor is home to the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, and the ground floor is leased as retail space. The exterior of the building is unadorned corrugated metal, added to screen the facade. From State Street, it is hard to believe that there is a sacred space inside.
“It is a place where we aim to engage both your heart and your mind. A home for your spirit in the South Loop.”

FR. TED CURTIS, RECTOR

GracePlace

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS 637 S Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60605
NEIGHBORHOOD Printer’s Row
COORDINATES 41.873539, -87.629023
PARKING Free parking available on Sundays, 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the lot located at the SE corner of Harrison and Plymouth, park only in spots marked “Visitor Parking” or “Permit Parking.”
NEAREST TRANSIT Harrison stop on CTA Red Line, Bus 22, 62, 129 exit Dearborn or Polk St. stop.
WEBSITE www.gracechicago.org
PHONE 312.922.1426
OPEN HOURS Call ahead for an appointment, or show up during one of the service times for access to the space.
SERVICES Sunday 8:00 a.m. Quiet Communion Service 10:00 a.m. Communion with Music 11:30 a.m. Adult Formation 7:30 p.m. Light, Prayers, and Music Weds 12:15 p.m. Sandwich, Scripture, Sacrament 6:00 p.m. Centering Prayer

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
GracePlace is not a typical sacred space – it’s a church in a loft! Because of that it may be hard to find the door… look out for this unassuming entrance along Dearborn Street and ring for entry. The main sanctuary is on the second floor of the building. You will be sure to receive a warm welcome at the services on Wednesday evening or Sunday morning.

Looking up into the void space of the third level, from the altar.
In 1851, parishioners of Trinity Church came together to form Grace Episcopal Church, making it one of the oldest church communities in Chicago. In its 150-year history, Grace Church has relocated and rebuilt six times throughout Downtown Chicago. In the 1960’s, before occupying its current space, the Church was situated on West Jackson St. when it began a tradition of ministry for the Loop’s business and newer student populations.

In 1983, the congregation bought a warehouse building – a former printers loft – in historic Printer’s Row whose bright literary history is alive today in its popular annual book festival, as well as in the distinctive character of its brick and terra cotta commercial architecture, most of which was built for the print industry.

Since moving to its current location in Printer’s Row, just south of the loop, GracePlace has opened its doors to the surrounding community through its many social outreach projects. It has become an example of continuous interfaith understanding by sharing its worship space and facilities with a variety of nonprofit organizations and with congregations of various Christian and Jewish faith traditions. Its outreach program to the homeless feeds over 50 people every weekend.
In 1985, Grace Church converted their recently purchased three-story loft building in Chicago’s historic Printers Row neighborhood into a sacred space. In one of Booth Hanson’s first design projects, the architect Larry Booth had a chance to return to architectural “First Principles,” stripping the space down to the earthy materiality of its heavy timber frame with brick wall infill.

On the building’s second floor, a simple circular, haven-like space was created for worship. This clean, white gypsum-board wall, punctuated with stylized Gothic pointed arches, delineates the sanctuary from the ambulatory around its periphery. At the boundary, as if to define sacred from profane, is a reflective dark linoleum border, which holds the white structure apart, making it appear to float within the space. Entry points to this sanctuary are on the sides, compelling visitors to find their way into the space. A triangular wedge from the third floor above was removed and restructured, creating a double-height space. This void allows a skylight cut through the third-floor roof to bathe the altar and chancel in natural light. The structure is revealed within the space, and the junction of the exposed beams and supporting columns are accentuated with a structural “fishplate” splice in the form of a cross.

The innovative design ensures a calm space while preserving the raw character of the building’s heavy timber-frame skeleton, visible in the supporting wood post and beam structure. The original Chicago brick defines the square exterior walls of the sanctuary, while large east-west windows allow strong natural light to permeate the space and to remind congregants of their dense urban environment.

At the time of construction, existing zoning laws, prohibited a church being built within a certain distance of a tavern. As a workaround GracePlace opened as a community center. A large, open hall, which steps up from street level and the raised basement below are used for diverse church functions and community outreach events. The third floor houses office space that is rented out to other not-for-profit organizations.
SACRED SITES SELECTED

[CHI 06] Holy Name Cathedral
[CHI 07] Fourth Presbyterian Church
[CHI 08] Christ the Savior Orthodox Church
[CHI 09] First St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church
[CHI 10] The Moody Church
[CHI 11] Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool

MORE TO SEE IN THIS AREA

C. St. James Episcopal Cathedral
D. Sinai Congregation
E. Church of the Ascension
F. LaSalle Street Church
G. St. Michael’s in Old Town
H. Midwest Buddhist Temple
Holy Name Cathedral

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS
730 N Wabash Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611
Entrance on State, between Chicago and Superior

NEIGHBORHOOD
Downtown, Magnificent Mile

COORDINATES
41.895809, -87.62814

PARKING
Paid parking available on the surrounding streets at non-rush hour times.

NEAREST TRANSIT
Chicago stop on CTA Red Line. CTA Bus 36, exit at Chicago Avenue.

WEBSITE
www.holynamecathedral.org

PHONE
(312) 787-8040

OPEN HOURS
Monday – Saturday 8:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Sunday 8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
Be sure to visit the quiet chapel to the right of the main sanctuary.
ABOUT: HISTORY & ORIGINS

Two years after Pope Gregory XVI declared Chicago a diocese in 1843, St. Mary’s Church on Madison St. was consecrated as its cathedral. Though it was the seat of the bishop, the larger Holy Name parish at Superior St. and State St. was used for diocesan events. Therefore, plans were made to move the site of the cathedral to its current location. After the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, those plans were set into more immediate motion as both St. Mary’s and Holy Name were destroyed. The Archdiocese began construction of its new cathedral in 1874 according to plans by Irish-born, Brooklyn-based architect, Patrick Keely. Joliet limestone was chosen as the primary exterior material, a choice that may have been influenced by the fact that the only buildings to have withstood the fire north of the Chicago River, were the Water Tower and Pumping Station, both built from the same stone.

By 1890, two decades after its completion, the cathedral required major renovations, which were undertaken by Chicago architects James R. Willett and Alfred F. Pashley. The original “Carpenter’s Gothic” structure was weathering badly and required reinforcement. At this time, Victorian-era interiors were replaced by those in a medieval-inspired style. New stained glass windows and statues of the Virgin Mary and Sacred Heart brought the cathedral to life with detailed imagery. The plaster vaults of the ceiling gave way to the intricate paneling of walnut and oak that we see today.

In 1914, a renowned religious architect in Chicago, Henry J. Schlacks was commissioned to extend the sanctuary. He sliced a section through the rear of the church and using new foundations, moved the entire structure back fifteen feet toward the east. This innovative change enlarged the altar and created space for a new baptistery.

During the most recent renovations in 2009, the roof and interiors had just been restored and were all but complete, when disaster struck. A fire ignited in the ceiling and severe water damage was sustained throughout. The entire roof had to be rebuilt. After being restored once again, Holy Name Cathedral is now open and this sacred space looks better than it has in many years.
The original 1875 Patrick Keely exterior façade of Holy Name Cathedral has remained largely unchanged over time, but the interior has been significantly altered, most dramatically in 1969 under architects C.F. Murphy and Associates.

Liturgical reforms set in place by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, which met in part to discuss the position of the church in the modern world, greatly directed this renovation and the cathedral was truly transformed to its present form. Layers from previous additions were largely removed and the space was reorganized to reflect the messages of a modern church allowing closer, more diverse participation by congregants. This resulted in a relatively simple interior for the cathedral, dominated by the large altar and crucifix. Interior walls were scraped down to their original brick, and the Communion Rail and large altar screen were removed. The interior structural columns were strengthened once again, but this time with steel supports.

Upon first entering through the large bronze doors, several of the cathedral’s motifs come together to produce the feeling of being in the biblical “Tree of Life,” beginning with the doors themselves, which are richly decorated with extending branches. The Expressionist stained glass windows in the clerestory space above, created in Milan, Italy, describe a symbolic shift from earthly existence to one that is heavenly and divine. One processes through the space, passing red colors to windows casting progressively cooler yellow and green colors. Blue and white stained glass illuminates the most sacred space above the altar. Prominently displayed galeros, the brimmed hats worn by all the previous Cardinals of Chicago hang over the altar. The cathedra, the physical seat of the bishop, is of a plain design: black with three panels depicting the first Christian teachers, Christ, Saint Peter and Saint Paul. Five sanctuary panels depict the scenes relating to the Holy Name of Jesus, from which the church gets its name.

Holy Name Cathedral integrates elements of the modern Catholic Church despite its Gothic Revival style. The changing liturgical ideas of its founders and historical guardians are reflected by the changes within the walls of its continuously evolving architecture.
“Since 1914, Fourth Presbyterian Church has been a presence in the heart of Chicago, seeking to live out the gospel through vibrant worship within its walls and through committed service reaching out into the community.”

DR. JOHN BUCHANAN

Fourth Presbyterian Church

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS 126 E Chestnut Street, Chicago, IL 60611
NEIGHBORHOOD Magnificent Mile, Gold Coast
COORDINATES 41.898644, -87.624497
PARKING Pay parking at 875 N Michigan Ave (John Hancock Center), validate ticket at the church (only on Sundays).
NEAREST TRANSIT Chicago stop on CTA Red Line. Walk east to Michigan Ave and turn left. Walk 3 blocks. Take any bus along Michigan Ave and get off at Water Tower or Delaware Street stop.
WEBSITE www.fourthchurch.org
PHONE (312) 787-4570
OPEN HOURS Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
SERVICE HOURS 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m. – Jazz Vespers Morning Prayer - every weekday at 9:30 am except Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. (takes place in the Stone Chapel to the right of the main entry).
Taizé service – a form of ecumenical prayer founded in France, happens every Fourth Friday

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
Find peace and quiet in the middle of the Magnificent Mile by stepping inside the courtyard garden or “Garth” of Fourth Church. The fountain was donated by one of the church’s architects, Howard Van Doren Shaw.
In 1833, pioneers in the frontier town of Chicago united under Presbyterianism to found Chicago’s first church. Some of the principles articulated by John Calvin remain at the core of Presbyterian beliefs. Among these are the sovereignty of God, the authority of the scripture, justification by grace through faith and the priesthood of all believers. The Presbyterian Church is governed at all levels by a combination of clergy and laity, men and women alike.

The Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago was established in 1871 through the merger of two prominent Presbyterian congregations. In the same year, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed the church building. Legend has it that the congregation saved the Communion service silverware by burying it in the sand at what is now the Oak Street Beach. A new structure was completed in 1874, which served the community until 1914, when the congregation moved to its current home on Michigan Avenue.

Fourth Church has been home to many prominent Chicago families. Reaper inventor Cyrus H. McCormick played an active role in establishing Fourth Church’s predecessor congregation. His family underwrote the cost of the Michigan Avenue church. Fourth Presbyterian Church moved to Michigan Avenue as part of the sweeping northward migration of society in the early 20th century. With the growth of Chicago’s industries on the south side, the city’s affluent Prairie Avenue community sought a safer, cleaner district, and looked to the church as a spiritual home in the evolving River North neighborhood.
Renowned Gothic revivalist Ralph Adams Cram was the principle architect of Fourth Presbyterian Church. He believed that the 12th and 13th Centuries marked the Golden Age of religious architecture, and the design of Fourth Church reflects the medieval belief that a sacred space should rise to the heavens. Instead of using a steel structure clad with stone or brick, like many contemporary churches built in the Gothic Revival style, Cram used stonemason techniques to create a space true to the original Gothic principles. Regarding materials – in this building – what you see is what you get. The exposed buttresses and stone spire are carved in vegetal and foliate motifs characteristic of both the European Gothic style and its resurgence in Protestant architecture in 20th Century America.

Cram’s associate Frederick Clay Bartlett designed the decoration for the ceilings above the nave. Colorful timber ceiling peaks above the center aisle, while carved and vaulted stone differentiates the ceiling above the chancel. Along the piers of the nave, fourteen carved angels holding musical instruments symbolize music’s capacity to praise God. The church’s 6,603-pipe organ and choir loft aid the congregation in fulfilling this mission in its weekly services. The stained glass windows of the main sanctuary were designed by Charles J. Connick of Boston, whose study of medieval glass inspired his work in Fourth Church. The abstract and floral motifs of these windows are painted in the grisaille style, permitting soft, multi-colored natural light to illuminate the sanctuary. The east and west windows of the space features more grandiose, figural designs, depicting the four evangelists, prophets from the Old Testament, and parables from the New Testament on the east window, and the risen Christ, the heavenly host, and the peoples of the earth on the west window.

Cram’s friend and associate Howard Van Doren Shaw’s strong interest in the American Arts and Crafts movement is visible in his designs for the auxiliary buildings. The church courtyard, the Garth, is delineated by a covered walkway, reminiscent of a monastic cloister. Its centerpiece is a stone fountain donated to the church by Shaw. Carvings of mothers and their children circle the fountain to symbolize the continuation of God’s message through the generations.
“The altar table is the crux and center of worship in a viable and thriving Orthodox community. Church offices are located around the perimeter of the altar making even the mundane aspects of office work take on a spiritual dimension.”

THE LATE ARCHBISHOP JOB

Christ the Savior Orthodox Church
VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS
927 N LaSalle Boulevard

NEIGHBORHOOD
Near North Side / Gold Coast

COORDINATES
41.899603, -87.632678

PARKING
Street parking available in the surrounding neighborhood. One or two spots available on site.

NEAREST TRANSIT
Chicago stop on CTA Brown and Red Lines. CTA Bus 156, exit Delaware Stop.

WEBSITE
www.xcthesavior.org

PHONE
(312) 202-0423

OPEN HOURS
By appointment. Office closed on Friday.

SERVICE HOURS
Sunday 9:10 a.m. Hours & Divine Liturgy
Wednesday 6:30 p.m. Daily Vespers
Thursday 6:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
Experience the sanctity of this beautifully decorated space, but do not enter the area past the Royal Doors. The altar area behind the icon screen of an orthodox space is off-limits to everyone except vested clergy.
ABOUT: HISTORY & ORIGINS

Built in the late 1880’s as an Apostolic Catholic Church, this now Orthodox Church has seen multiple changes. In the mid 1920’s LaSalle Street was being widened into a boulevard, and the church had to be moved back about ten feet to allow for the new right of way. The building was picked up on giant rollers and moved eastward, while the front steps had to be redesigned and integrated into the church. After some time, the original congregation, which had been in decline for some years, no longer had use for the building. As the Apostolic Catholic Church was actually an offshoot of the Scottish Anglican Church, usual procedure would have determined that the building be returned to The Church of the Ascension, the closest Episcopal Church. The pastor of this church, who was retiring from his position, was in the process of converting to Orthodox Christianity. So in 1996, the church was donated instead to the Orthodox Church of America, which extensively renovated the aging structure. On May 17, 2008, thirty priests and the Archbishop were present for the ceremonial re-dedication, or Chrismation, of this space to the Orthodox Church. Sacred Chrism or holy oil was used to anoint the architecture and altar, just as it would have been used to confirm a person. This process designated the old Apostolic structure a new sacred space for the Orthodox Church.

Relics of the holy martyr Ignatius of Jableczna, a contemporary saint, were interred within the holy table on the altar during the ceremony. Today this church is based on an Eastern Orthodoxy, but the diverse congregation comprises Russian, Greek, Serbian and Romanian traditions. Fifty percent of the current congregation has converted from other faith traditions. Now this space is home to the Midwestern Diocese for the Orthodox Church and is the seat of the current Archbishop.
ARCHITECTURE DESCRIPTION

Traces of the original congregation are still extant in the recently dedicated Orthodox space. Heavy timber beams still support the ceiling, each capped by a carved wooden shield – a relic from the founding families of the Apostolic faith. The Bishop’s chair or cathedra is still present and used by the resident Orthodox Archbishop. The area above the altar is divided by the original structural members, which delineate the icon frescoes into a series of panels. The icon screen or iconostasis (also known as the iconostas, or templon) physically separates the nave from the sanctuary area in an Orthodox Church space, but symbolically it connects the two. The altar area behind the Royal Doors is off-limits to the general public and to the congregation. Only fully vested priests and bishops may enter this sacred space. Christ, the namesake of the space features largely in its iconography. Icons serve as illustration and as a tool within the religion for communication with God. The position held by the iconographer is traditionally one of sacred importance. Eventually, almost every surface will be covered with iconography, a process predicted to be complete by Christmas 2012.

In this tradition the congregants stand during service and so in its current incarnation, all the pews have been removed. Administrative offices for the church and the Archdiocese are accessed from an ambulatory corridor surrounding the sacred altar space. Their site imbues these functions with a sense of the divine. The icon screen in Christ the Savior Church was commissioned and crafted with the help of the current rector, Fr. John Baker, who was formerly a union carpenter. Celtic imagery is contained within the woodwork, which is used as a structure to support many icons. It is the most striking feature of the current space. Auxiliary structures include the former rectory for the original church, which is now used to house the rector and the Archbishop’s residence. Twelve-foot high windows and tall mahogany pocket doors are features of this exquisitely preserved residential space adjacent to the church building. It’s now used as a community space for fellowship and events.
First St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS 1301 N LaSalle Drive, Chicago, IL 60610
NEIGHBORHOOD Carl Sandburg Village – Gold Coast
COORDINATES 41.905866, -87.632553
PARKING Street parking available in the neighborhood.
NEAREST TRANSIT Clark/Lake stop on CTA Red Line. CTA Bus 156, exit at Goethe stop.
WEBSITE www.fspauals.org
PHONE (312) 642-7172
OPEN HOURS Call for appointment.
SERVICE HOURS Sunday Worship: 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Wednesday Morning Spoken Eucharist: 7:00 a.m.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
Try and figure out where the light is coming from while you are in this space, the source is at first mysterious.

“It’s a simple, curvilinear, non monumental building to express a feeling of a ‘working church.’”

EDWARD "NED" DART, ARCHITECT
First Saint Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church is the oldest Lutheran congregation in the city. Founded in 1843, the area north of Chicago Avenue was little more than a swampy marshland. The current congregation is a member of the Missouri Synod, which accepts and teaches the Bible-based teachings of Martin Luther that inspired the reformation of the Christian Church in the 16th century. The teachings of Luther and the reformers can be summarized in three short phrases: Grace alone, Scripture alone, and Faith alone. It seemed an unlikely choice for the congregation of 1969 to choose the celebrated Chicago modern architect Edward “Ned” Dart to design their new sacred space, sited in the midst of the new urban renewal, mixed-use development project: Carl Sandburg Village, developed from 1960 to 1975. The Pastor at that time, Rev. James Manz, had known of Dart through his earlier residential projects and his ongoing project, the St. Procopius Abbey for the Benedictine Monks of Lisle. He chose Dart because of his skill as a modern architect and his ability to use common materials in a profound way.

The congregation is originally German and would have encompassed workers and craftsmen who used their hands. Dart’s design is stripped-down and simple, allowing the experience of the word to have the deepest emphasis and reflecting the tenets of this reform Protestant Christian tradition as a “working” church.

Chicago common bricks are used to celebrate the divine.

The pews gently angle towards the simple asymmetry of the altar.
Sited within the Carl Sandburg Village development, the church reveals its functional difference from the other buildings. Its circular form gently curves amidst the other strictly orthogonal forms. Its color draws attention too-standing out from the darker brick and concrete materials used throughout the rest of this “superblock” complex. Bricks were Dart’s chosen material for the Benedictine Monastery he designed in suburban Lisle, but in this urban church he used Chicago common bricks, normally seen on the exterior or back of a building, to celebrate the Divine. Dart refined his use of this material, articulating them to form a textured screen encompassing the roundest part of the chancel, to the south of the space. The bricks bring a sense of scale and intimacy to the otherwise soaring space, and their porous structure allows for acoustical dimension. Their reddish color holds and warms the northern light diffusing the expanse of the chancel wall through high clerestory windows above the choir and organ. The light source is mysterious, unknown – imbuing the space with a heavenly sense. This device, to bring light in from above to illuminate the altar area is also in a very similar way to the primitive mission churches located in what is now the American Southwest.

Like Frank Lloyd Wright, Dart realized the power of a lowered entry and used it in this church space to full effect. The low entry or Narthex forms a hinge between the church space on the left and the community space on the right, like that of Unity Temple in Oak Park. After entering the church, you will find yourself in a slightly higher space, where darkened utilitarian metal trusses hold the ceiling and roof above you. This area is functionally built using warehouse construction techniques. As you continue your procession through the space, the closer to the altar, the higher the ceiling stretches above and the more light there is. Here, right at the place where the cross is hung, there is the most height and luminance. This is a space that celebrates common materials, where natural light reveals rich textures and colors. Using the lessons he learned at St. Procopius, Dart designed First Saint Paul’s as a sacred space – at once monumental and intimate.
“The Moody Church looks a bit like heaven.”

SENIOR PASTOR DR. ERWIN W. LUTZER

The Moody Church

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS 1635 N LaSalle Drive, Chicago, IL 60614
NEIGHBORHOOD Lincoln Park
COORDINATES 41.911699, -87.632831
PARKING Public pay lots available nearby.
NEAREST TRANSIT Sedgwick stop on CTA Brown Line, Clark/Division stop on CTA Red Line.
WEBSITE www.moodychurch.org
PHONE (312) 327-8600
OPEN HOURS Call for appointment. Tours are available after the Sunday service.
SERVICE HOURS Sunday Morning Worship Service: 9:50 a.m.
Sunday School: 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service: 5:00 p.m.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS

While you are in The Moody Church, ask can you see the wonderful green roof in the new extension building to the north of the historic sanctuary building. Look out over Lincoln Park to Lake Michigan and back to see the city skyline at close range, from the Near North side.
Dwight L. Moody moved from Boston to Chicago in 1856, taking a job as a traveling shoe salesman. He began preaching extensively as an evangelist, especially in bars and taverns. In 1858 he founded the original Chicago congregation in a rented beer hall with a capacity to seat 500 people for Sunday services. Moody gained national attention, visiting the front lines of the Civil War on occasion. In 1864, he opened the Illinois Street Independent Church with a capacity of 1,500, where he was appointed Deacon. The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 destroyed this church, and a new structure was hastily constructed in the weeks following the conflagration. This building was known as the Northside Tabernacle and became a place of refuge for people rendered homeless as a result of the fire. Louis Sullivan was responsible for the interior ornamentation for this older space, located on the corner of Chicago and LaSalle – now demolished.

Moody passed away in 1899 following a lifetime of national and international evangelism. In 1924, The Moody Church built their sixth and current building. They continue the Evangelical Christian tradition expounded by Dwight L. Moody and currently have an average attendance of 2,000 people every Sunday. Their Christmas concerts attract 3,200 people. There is a broadcast quality radio studio behind the sanctuary. All the Sunday services are recorded and are streamed online, to a far-flung international audience. This is in keeping with Moody’s original intention of spreading the Word as far afield as possible.

In the year 2000, new auxiliary spaces for fellowship and education were designed by McBride Kelley Baurer Architects to enhance and complement the original structures. The commodious community lounge area attracts regional and national attendees to church on Sundays. The new structures are designed so that one can observe the old arched brickwork of the old from the new extension. These new spaces extend toward the North – out to a patio area with views across Lincoln Park and over Lake Michigan.
ARCHITECTURE DESCRIPTION

The Moody Church commissioned the architecture firm of Fugard and Knapp, usually known more for their warehouse and theatres, to design their new church at the corner of LaSalle and North Avenue in 1923. During the design phase, LaSalle Street was widened to create a Boulevard, pushing the lot line back by twenty feet. This greatly affected the architects’ design, and is thought to account for the steepness of the choir loft and the compact nature of the entry from LaSalle St. The church was constructed in the Romanesque style and references the Byzantine Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

The auditorium is structured as a long-span space, through the use of a cantilevered balcony – the first of its kind. Architecturally advanced for its time, the space used cutting edge techniques of engineering, building systems and technology. Brick and terracotta details are used both structurally and decoratively throughout, in an efficient, functional, economical way. An ambulatory encircles the auditorium, accommodating the 4,000 people who can be seated within. Labyrinthine staircases entwine and connect the various church, community and administration spaces in a Byzantine manner. Huge, wonderfully ornate chandeliers hang throughout the space. All original, these great lamps are thought to be designed by Tiffany, although they remain unsigned. Their scale can only be perceived when one imagines that there is a small catwalk inside each one in order to change the bulbs. There is a choir loft directly behind the pulpit under a terra cotta arch.

Within the sanctuary space there are no crosses visible because Scripture, the Word, is central to The Moody Church. All structure and decoration points towards this importance, in a physical as well as symbolic manner. There are five different sizes of seats to accentuate this directional curve, and all are aligned towards the central pulpit and immersion baptism area, being of primary importance for the church. If you look underneath the seats – you will find a strange wire contraption. Being the 1920s, this was placed for the gentlemen who would have removed their hats upon entry to the church. A modern convenience for its time!
"A hidden garden for the people of Megalopolis"

ALFRED CALDWELL

Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS 2391 N Stockton Drive, Chicago, IL 60614
Entry on Fullerton

NEIGHBORHOOD Lincoln Park

COORDINATES 41.925472, -87.635964

PARKING Lincoln Park Zoo pay lot.

NEAREST TRANSIT CTA Bus 151 and 156 from the Chicago Loop, exit at Fullerton stop.

WEBSITE www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/custom.natureOasis06

PHONE (312) 742-7736 (Lincoln Park Conservatory)

OPEN HOURS Daily 7:30 a.m. to Dusk

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS

The entry is a little hard to find, but if you watch out, you’ll see the gate on Fullerton Ave., between Stockton and Cannon Drive. The Lily Pool is near the Lincoln Park Conservatory, and just north of the Lincoln Park Zoo.

Ask the very well-informed docents, stationed at the entry to the park, to show you around. They will give you a tour and answer any questions you have upon request.
ABOUT: HISTORY & ORIGINS

Constructed in Victorian times as a site to cultivate tropical water lilies, the Lily Pool was redesigned in the 1930s by landscape architect Alfred Caldwell to function as a sort of hidden garden – a place of refuge from the "Megalopolis," where Chicagoans could relax and unwind and find peace in the industrialized city.

Alfred Caldwell was not only a renowned landscape architect but also a visionary urbanist passionate about social change. Caldwell trained with Jens Jensen, the legendary Danish landscape architect. Jensen first made the idea of indigenous prairie environments and plantings acceptable to the general public during his tenure as Chicago Parks District Supervisor. Although criticized for his leftist, anti-establishment views, Caldwell was ahead of his time – positioning himself squarely as an environmentalist long before it became fashionable. He worked closely with architect Mies Van der Rohe and city planner Ludwig Hilberseimer, at IIT, the Illinois Institute of Technology where Mies was the Director of the School of Architecture. During his time as professor at the University of Southern California, he was known to encompass everything from construction, philosophy, literature and history in his design studio and lessons. His passion and integrated approach to landscape architecture is apparent in his work, especially in the design of the Lily Pool. Caldwell believed that being in touch with nature would have a "civilizing" effect on the masses. He was so passionate about this vision that in order to complete the project he cashed in his life insurance policy to purchase the native wildflowers he needed to complete the design. For Caldwell, completing the Lily Pool for the City of Chicago was a personal quest.

By 1997, the pool had suffered greatly from lack of maintenance and neglect so the nonprofit Friends of Lincoln Park began a campaign to restore the space. The landscape architecture firm Wolff Clements and Associates was hired to complete the task and decided to restore the gardens to Caldwell’s original plan.

With the renovations completed in 2001, the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool functions once again as a quiet and well-preserved area for rest and relaxation amidst its setting in the urban environment.
Built in the tradition of the Prairie School, common to the Midwest and pioneered by architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Jens Jensen, Alfred Caldwell designed the Lily Pool to evoke the Midwestern landscape and its indigenous plants. His use of Niagara limestone slabs highlighted the horizontal quality of Midwestern terrain. Caldwell explained his choice of this material as a statement to the natural forces that created the original terrain of Chicago.

The space is reminiscent of Japanese gardens in the Kai-yu or “Go-Around” Style. Paths wind through and around a series of carefully constructed “natural” views. The way is connected by features where there are places to stop and enjoy these perspectives. After walking around the sheltering horizontal pavilions that lean over the water, one can follow the path up a small hill where the same structures are revealed from above, in their entirety. Multiple overlapping perspectives like this allow visitors to feel both far away, and yet grounded back to earth.

The relationship between the urban and natural is visible in many symbols and aspects of duality in Caldwell’s design. The pavilions and structures juxtapose the natural, yet are by design unobtrusively integrated into the scenery. The large lily pool is the still body of water at the center of the garden but Caldwell’s waterfalls are constantly rushing and in motion, helping drown out the sounds of the outside urban environment. Both the still and moving water, despite contrast, contribute to the same calming collective experience.

Wolff Clements and Associates researched old photos and Caldwell’s original drawings and notes to restore the pool in 2001. The architects identified historically significant plants, which are preserved and set about removing and recycling the invasive and diseased species. Original stonework paths circling the Lily Pool were recreated and the waterfall and two Prairie Style pavilions carefully restored. The strong inward orientation of the site encourages personal reflection and relaxation, despite its outwardly urban, busy setting. Relatively hidden, this natural haven is once again a botanically diverse, thriving sanctuary for the wildlife and the city-dwellers who visit it.
CITY GUIDE TO SACRED SPACES
CHICAGO, IL

Map C

SACRED SITES SELECTED
[CHI 12] Unity Temple
[CHI 13] Baha’i House of Worship
[CHI 14] North Shore Congregation Israel

MORE TO SEE IN THIS AREA
F. Holy Trinity Cathedral Church
G. Holy Family Church
H. Second Presbyterian Church
“Why not, then, build a temple, not to God in that way ... but a temple to man, appropriate to his uses as a meeting place, in which to study man himself for his God’s sake?”

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, FROM HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Unity Temple

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS 875 Lake Street, Oak Park, IL 60301
NEIGHBORHOOD Oak Park
COORDINATES 41.888605, -87.796829
PARKING Limited free parking on Kenilworth, meters on North and South Blvds. and Lake St. on Sundays) garages at North & Oak Park as well as Lake & Forest
NEAREST TRANSIT Oak Park stop on CTA Green Line.
WEBSITE www.unitytemple.org and www.unitytemple-utrf.org
PHONE (708) 848-6225
OPEN HOURS Monday – Friday 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Sunday 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
Your donation will help Unity Temple Restoration Foundation. Best to enter along S. Kenilworth Avenue – the main entry is there and not along Lake Street.
The Unitarian Universalist Church in Oak Park traces its history to 1871 when a unified group from both traditions came together to establish a new, liberal approach to religious worship in the town. Lightning struck their original church structure in 1905, burning it to the ground. A group of local Universalists and Unitarians set out to rebuild and famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the grandson of a Unitarian preacher, was chosen to design their new edifice. Wright was perfectly positioned to design a new edifice for the congregation in 1905, having been connected with the church through his mother. His uncle and grandfather were both Universalist ministers — and so he was familiar with the faith and the resulting architectural requirements.

Wright had achieved prominence as an architect, first in the office of Adler and Sullivan and then independently. He had designed the Larkin building in Buffalo, NY the previous year, which formed the basis for his work at Unity Temple. This commission was his chance to be recognized in his own city, in the neighborhood where he resided.

From the beginning Unity Temple merged both Universalist and Unitarian traditions. Historically Unitarianism was an intellectual and often emotionless tradition; whereas Universalism embraced emotion as part of their tradition. In time the two traditions grew closer together, both affirming their role in helping people usher the Kingdom of God into this life on Earth. That was their shared vision when the denominations officially merged in 1961. It is said, “The Universalists believe that God is too good to damn them,” and the “Unitarians believe they are too good to be damned!” A famous Unitarian, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once said: “It is not what we believe, but the universal impulse to believe...that is the principal fact.” A liberal, open-minded religion, Unitarian Universalism embraces multiple beliefs and invites people from a diverse collection of other faith traditions into their membership. Freedom, Reason and Tolerance form the basic tenets of the faith.

Within the sanctum of Unity Temple, you are encouraged to cultivate your own individual connection to the Divine, in keeping with the liberal Unitarian Universalist tradition.
The commission to build a new sacred space for the Unity Church congregation was a very personal one for Frank Lloyd Wright. His final design for Unity Temple solved multiple design problems: a long narrow site with busy streets on two sides, the need for combined worship and secular spaces and severe budget constraints.

The year prior to beginning the design for Unity Temple, Wright had traveled to Japan. He was inspired by Japanese concepts of space – including the importance of the void. Here he has manifested his ideas for an “organic architecture.”

Although it appears as a modern building, this 1909 structure is built according to classically conservative principles. The plan of the sanctuary takes the form of a Greek cross, with staircases in each corner. Reinforced concrete was poured on site – an innovative and shocking technique for the time. Ornamentation was integrated into the concrete, unifying the monolithic form.

Two spaces – sacred and secular – are united by a low foyer space, with entry doors concealed from the street, a signature of Wright’s Prairie Style. Unity House is the lower, more open space. You must find your way to the sacred space by choosing a narrow stair on either side. Only one person can enter the narrow cloister at a time. After processing through a series of compressed spaces, you are now within “The Noble Room.” The space unfolds marvelously. Light from above illuminates art-glass windows in the coffered ceiling. Clerestory windows silhouette the concrete columns on the exterior façade. Oak bands define the angles of these layered spaces, connecting vertical and horizontal planes in all dimensions.

Three levels of seating and the altar are integrated into the structure of the space. None of the 400 seats are more than 45 feet away from the minister. Wright designed the sanctuary so that congregants enter the space as individuals, but must leave by walking past the pulpit in unity, an unusual reversal of traditional church layout.

Historically, churches declare their connection with heaven on the outside, pointing upwards with a steeple. Unity Temple does the opposite – earthbound and low, its solid form compels one to find heaven inside.
“The real temple is the very word of God, for to it all humanity must turn, and it is the center of unity of all mankind.”

GLEN FULLMER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS,
U.S. BAHÁ’Í NATIONAL CENTER

Baha’í House of Worship
VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS 100 Linden Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091
NEIGHBORHOOD Wilmette/Evanston
COORDINATES 42.074474, -87.684504
PARKING Parking lot located west of the temple.
NEAREST TRANSIT Linden stop on CTA Purple Line train. Walk east on Linden Ave. (5 min).
WEBSITE www.bahai.us/bahai-temple
PHONE (847) 853-2300
OPEN HOURS Visitor Center and bookstore are open Monday – Friday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
SERVICE HOURS Silent worship and meditation 6:00 a.m. – 10 p.m. daily
Brief prayer services 12:30 p.m. daily

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
All must observe silence in the Meditation Hall. Talking and interior photography not permitted. House of Worship and gardens are wheelchair accessible. Elevator to bookstore has limited capacity. Be sure to see the architectural model of the temple while you are there.
The Baha’i faith was founded in Persia by Baha’u’llah, “Glory of God” in the 19th century. Persecuted for his beliefs, he spent most of his life imprisoned in the City of Acre. Baha’is believe that God has been revealed through the messages of a series of prophets including Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ and Muhammad. Baha’u’llah is believed to be the most recent of these Divine Messengers for humankind.

The core concept of the faith is one of independent investigation and this sacred space provides a space to do just that.

Using scriptures from many faith traditions, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, The Baha’i faith was first introduced to the United States at the first Parliament for the World’s Religions, which occurred during the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Inspired by Chicago as a spiritual and geographic center of the continent, in 1903 a group of about 1,000 American Bahai’s began planning for the first House of Worship in North America. A site was chosen in Wilmette, then a rural site outside the city. Louis Bourgeois, a French Canadian architect, was selected to design the building. Since childhood, he had dreamed of designing a temple of unity for humanity.

The cornerstone was laid in 1912, by Abdu’l-baha, the son of the founder of the Baha’i faith. 41 years later, the Baha’i House of Worship was dedicated. The Baha’is consider it a gift to humanity, for all to use as a place of quiet refuge and meditation.

According to Baha’i tradition, there are no clergy; sacraments, rituals or sermons and no lectures or sermons are allowed in this sacred space. People come at dawn to use the space, as it’s intended – a place for centering and connecting with the divine. Membership is approximately two to three thousand in the Chicagoland area, and 170,000 nationwide. Below the main sanctuary is Foundation Hall, the oldest part of the temple, and a venue for lectures and events. This is the location for the visitors’ center and the best place to begin your visit.
There is a total of seven Baha’i Houses of Worship built throughout the world at present. Each one is architecturally distinct, yet they all embody certain design requirements. They are circular structures featuring a central dome, nine sides, with the same number of entrances, gardens and fountains, surrounding the structure. The number nine symbolizes unity, oneness and completion. The word Baha in Arabic means “Glory” and its letters add up to nine. No matter which direction you come from, you can enter the temple and worship one God.

The architect of the Baha’i House of Worship in Wilmette, Louis Bourgeois, had envisioned elaborate arabesque forms designed to encase his inspired bell-shaped structure. Finding the right material to manifest this vision was a difficult task. With assistance from architectural sculptor, John Earley, he innovated the use of pre-fabricated concrete panels, made using an aggregate of quartz and white cement. Each panel was cast in Earley’s plant near Washington, D.C. and then transported by train to the construction site north of Chicago. Over time the completed cast multiples were attached to the rising steel structure like a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle. The design and building process took some thirty years to complete.

Upon first entering the Meditation Room, you will be amazed by the soaring, 138-foot tall dome above. Glass is sandwiched between two layers of the quartzite concrete panels allowing natural light to illuminate the space. In the Baha’i tradition, there is no figural imagery within the space. Instead calligraphic decoration is integrated into the overall design. At the apex of the dome is an Arabic inscription, which means “O Glory of the All-Glorious.” A choir gallery surrounds the main meditation hall on the upper level, with curtains concealing the singers so it appears that the choir has a unified voice.

On the exterior façade, symbols from different world religious traditions are integrated into the nine ornamented towers. The building is surrounded by beautifully designed gardens, extending the sacred space into nine exterior “rooms.” Fountains drown out the sounds of traffic and other distractions. The main entry faces Haifa, Israel, Baha’u’llah’s final resting place.
1. North Shore Congregation Israel

"A needed small sanctuary, seating less than 200, fusing traditional symbolism and the decor of two historic Jewries, European (Ashkenazic) and Middle Eastern (Sephardic), now united in America with a high dome, flexible seating, center symbolism evokes both a sense of sacred mystery and intimacy."

RABBI HERBERT BRONSTEIN, SENIOR RABBI EMERITUS

North Shore Congregation Israel

VISITOR INFORMATION

ADDRESS 1185 Sheridan Road, Glencoe, IL 60022
NEIGHBORHOOD Glencoe
COORDINATES 42.150304, -87.758952
PARKING Parking lot on site.
NEAREST TRANSIT Braeside stop on Metra UP-N line; walk east along Lake Cook Road, which will merge into Sheridan Road. Follow the curve south, the entrance will be on the east side of the road.
WEBSITE www.nsci.org
PHONE (847) 853-2300
OPEN HOURS Call synagogue for appointment.
SERVICE HOURS
Shabbat Friday 6:15 p.m.
Shabbat Minyan Services Saturday 9:15 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Service Saturday 10:30 a.m.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR VISITORS
Walk over to the Stone Circle to the right of the new addition. From here you can see the lake and there's a wonderful side view of the Yamasaki structure.
North Shore Congregation Israel began in 1920, created from members of the Classical Reform Sinai Congregation in Chicago. Wanting a local place to worship, the congregation started out as a branch of Sinai, with a traveling rabbi making irregular visits to their rented space at an elementary school in Winnetka, Illinois. In 1924 it became known as the North Shore Branch of Sinai Congregation, holding weekly services at Winnetka Congregational Church. Two years later the growing membership voted to become independent and created North Shore Congregation Israel. A new site in Glencoe was selected to build their new synagogue with hundreds of congregants contributing to the building fund. In the 1950’s an addition was built to accommodate the expanding congregation, but it was becoming apparent that a new facility would soon be needed. A congregant secured a 50-acre property atop a bluff adjacent to Lake Michigan, and the renowned architect Minoru Yamasaki, who would go on to design the World Trade Center towers in New York, was commissioned to design the modern synagogue, which was dedicated in 1964. He asked artist, craftsman D. Lee DuSell, who completed his training at Cranbrook Academy of Art with Saarinen and Bertoia to design the furniture and millwork of the bimah; the wall, platform, lecterns for the Rabbi and Cantor, menorah and Ner Tamid.

An addition, designed by the Chicago architecture firm Hammond, Beeby and Babka, was built on the south end of the building in 1982 to provide a more intimate sanctuary to complement the large, cathedral-like space Yamasaki had designed. Outside the main sanctuary is a meeting hall, and large, sliding doors allow the two spaces to be combined, providing seating for up to 1,650 on the High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). This original portion of the synagogue also houses ten classrooms, offices, and a resource center.

A later extension to the synagogue built in 1982 added a smaller sanctuary space and adjoining social hall, specifically designed to feature views of Lake Michigan.
Minoru Yamasaki described his 1964 design for North Shore Congregation Israel as “architecture of light.” The main sanctuary, which seats 1,200, uses 55-foot tall sculptural concrete vaults with a glass skylight system to achieve a sense of lightness. Even on overcast days the sanctuary is bathed in natural light from above, intensified by the whiteness of the materials. An arch used in flamboyant Gothic architecture, originating in the Middle East was used to generate the form of the building. This shape, where convex meets concave in a kind of “s” is termed an ogee. When you are inside the space, it feels undeniably feminine. Ogee arched windows at ground level allow for views outside to the wooded lawn and Lake Michigan.

All the directional forms orient the eye towards the bimah and the Ark, containing the Torah scrolls. Designed by D. Lee DuSell, the bimah is made of teak and gold leaf with great skill. All furniture and millwork is completely integrated into the design of the space. DuSell collaborated with Yamasaki for over thirty years. When opened, the red interior of the Ark stands out as the only color within the pure white of the sanctuary – the symbolic heart of the space.

The modern building is reflective of the formality of the congregation when the synagogue was constructed and the Reform impulses to occupy grand cathedral-like spaces. Rabbi Herbert Bronstein realized there was a need for a less formal, more intimate worship space and commissioned architect Tom Beeby of Hammond, Beeby and Babka to design a setting for weekly Shabbat services. Beeby designed the new Perlman Sanctuary in the postmodern style, using motifs from the Federal Period. The bimah in this space is centrally located within the circular room and seating can be arranged as required. An oculus casts mysterious light from above and connects with a circular motif on the ground, creating a subtle axis mundi in the space. Bronstein was a student of Mircea Eliade at the University of Chicago Divinity School and the formal motifs in this intimate sacred space seem a fitting tribute to his teachings.
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* Interview served as primary source material for Sacred Space International.
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